

# 50 Energy Saving Tips



Small changes in our daily lives can add up to significant amounts of power saved, just as small investments in inexpensive energy saving products will immediately return their price and save more money as time passes. Here are 50 tips for conserving energy and helping save on your utility bills. When it comes to saving energy, watching your pennies definitely adds up to dollars saved.

## Heating and Cooling

*A typical household uses the bulk of its energy for heating and cooling – up to 44 percent of a typical annual utility bill. Investing a few dollars in insulation, installing a new thermostat and a few other smaller items can save much more in return.*

**1. Increase your attic insulation** by 12 inches of R-30 insulation and your electricity consumption will decrease by 20 percent. **It's the single most important step toward saving energy.** The biggest user of electricity in your home is the heating/cooling system. Retaining as much heat as possible only makes sense. Insulating to a greater extent is just good investing.

**2. Install an Energy Star programmable thermostat and learn how to use it.** You can easily trim hundreds of dollars from your energy bill each year if you do this. By programming your thermostat to lower the house temperature by 10° while you're asleep, you'll save 10 percent on electricity without sacrificing comfort. Programmable thermostats are available at most stores and allow you to realize the promised savings if programmed correctly. Install the thermostat on an inside wall away from windows and doors. Cold drafts will cause the thermostat to keep your heating system running. Each degree you heat your house above 68° F can add three percent to the amount of energy you use for heating. Lower the thermostat one or two degrees before you entertain a large group of people.

**3. Close hot-air registers and radiator valves** in unused rooms with all types of heating systems, except if you have a heat pump system.

**4. Make sure draperies and furniture are not blocking the registers in your house.**

**5. Plant more trees around your home** and they will cool the house in summer and insulate the house in winter. Studies show that a "green cover" benefits in many ways. You'll also increase your home's value.

**6. Consider using a water-saving shower head.** Water heating costs for a family can be lowered by at least \$250 a year.

**7. If you have a forced-air furnace, consider installing a heat pump** in your home to benefit from the most energy-efficient heating system you can buy. You'll also get air conditioning out of it if you don't have it already.

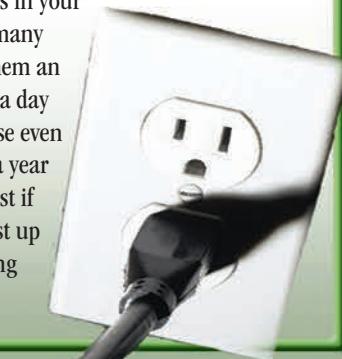
**8. Check your furnace filter at least once a month** during the heating season and clean or replace it as needed. Oil the motor and/or fan bearings of your forced-air furnace according to the manufacturer's instructions. A little regular maintenance on your furnace can save lots of money and help to prevent furnace mishaps.

## Lighting and Other Appliances

*The next-biggest user of household energy is lighting and appliances. Not counting the refrigerator, these comprise about 33 percent of a typical utility bill.*

**9. Use energy-efficient (Energy Star) appliances.** These use less energy and (believe it or not) a high-efficiency refrigerator uses less electricity than a regular light bulb. Among household appliances, the refrigerator is likely your biggest energy consumer, especially if it's more than 15 years old. A non-Energy Star refrigerator can account for up to 9 percent of your energy costs alone. Vacuum the condenser coils in the back (or at the bottom) of your refrigerator at least once every three months. Dust-covered coils impair the efficiency of compressor operation.

**10. Replace your regular bulbs with CFLs.** CFLs are those bulbs that look like small spirals, the ones most people skip by because they're "expensive." The truth is that the "expensive" bulbs are the ones that save a lot of money: if you have 15 bulbs in your home (many homes have many more than that) and use them an average of only four hours a day (again, some houses will use even more), you can save \$100 a year including the CFL bulb's cost if you switch to CFLs. CFLs last up to 10 times longer, according to Home Energy Saver.



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**11. When you are away even for a few hours or days, you should unplug every electrical appliance** possible and turn settings on the thermostat, water heater and refrigerator to the lowest setting.

**12. Install surge protectors for all of your electronic devices.** Not only will these protect your devices during a storm, but they will also prevent electrical “drag.” “Drag” refers to the small amount of electricity (5 watts or so) that all electronic devices continuously use even when they’re turned off, which can add up to a serious amount of electricity if you have a lot of electrical devices.

**13. Turn off your home computer.** People who make claims about how turning on your computer uses tons of energy are living in the 1970s. The truth is that modern PCs don’t use any extra energy when powering up, so you’re better off powering down your computer when it’s unused. Set up your PC to turn off every evening automatically.

**14. Locate window air conditioners on the north side of your house.** Direct sunlight will make them work harder. Draw shades or draperies to block sunlight during the hottest part of the day. Open draperies on south-facing windows on sunny winter days to take advantage of available solar heat.

**15. Use three-way switches or dimmer control switches** to keep lighting levels low whenever possible. Dimmer lights use less electricity. Please note that compact fluorescent bulbs often do not work with dimmer switches.

**16. Turn your outdoor lights off during the day** using inexpensive photo-electric controls and timers. This is just good common sense.

**17. Clean lighting fixtures regularly.** Dust on lamps, reflectors and light bulbs impair lighting efficiency.

**18. Locate floor, table and wall lamps in the corner of a room** rather than against a flat wall. Lamps in corners reflect light from two wall surfaces instead of one.

**19. When painting in your home, choose light colors for walls, ceilings, floors and furniture.** Light colors reflect light – dark colors absorb light and require bulbs with higher wattages.

**20. Check air conditioner filters** at least once a month during the summer and clean or replace them as needed.

## Water Heating

*Heating water is the third-biggest home energy cost and typically accounts for 14-20 percent of your energy bill.*

**21. Lower the temperature on your hot water heater** to 120° F (140° F if you have a dishwasher).

**22. Repair leaky faucets promptly.** A steady drip can waste gallons of hot water each month.

**23. Insulate long hot water supply pipes.** Foam insulating sleeves, available at most hardware stores, helps retain the heat and saves you money.

**24. Slipping a hot water jacket on your hot water heater can save you money.** They usually sell for \$10 to \$20 and pay for themselves within a month or so; another cheap and easy investment that pays for itself quickly.

**25. Consider purchasing aerating, low-flow faucets and shower heads.** Using less hot water costs you less money to heat it.

**26. Try turning off running water** when shaving or brushing your teeth, and fill a dishpan with rinsewater instead of letting the faucet run while you wash dishes by hand.

**27. Use cold water when operating your garbage disposal.** It saves energy and solidifies grease, which is then ground up and flushed away.

## Cooking

**28. Use pots and pans with flat bottoms that cover the burners on your range.** You can cook more efficiently when heat transfers directly from the surface element to the pan.

**29. Cook with the lids on.** Tight-fitting lids help keep heat in the pan, permitting you to use lower temperature settings and shorter cooking times.

**30. Heat only the amount of water you need for cooking.** The water will boil faster if you cover it with a lid.

**31. Start vegetables on high heat in a covered pan.** When steam appears around the lid, lower the heat setting and allow food to simmer until done.

**32. Use a pressure cooker more often.** It cuts cooking time to one-third that of conventional methods and uses less electricity than a burner or the oven. The same for your microwave—it uses less energy than any part of your stove.

**33. Consider buying a smaller coffee maker** if you’re only making one or two cups of coffee. It uses less electricity and keeps your coffee fresher (and tastes better).

**34. Carefully time your preheat period when baking.** There is no need to preheat for broiling, roasting or cooking most casseroles.

**35. Don’t peek while baking.** Each time you open the door, a considerable amount of heat escapes and that’s money lost.

**36. Activate the self-cleaning cycle on your electric oven only when the oven is heavily soiled.** Start the cycle right after using the oven while it is still hot.

**37. Never use an oven to heat the kitchen or to dry clothing.** It wastes energy and it’s dangerous!

## Doing the Laundry

**38. Wash only full loads.** It takes almost as much energy to run a small load as it does a full one.

**39. Use cold water for most loads.** Tests indicate that today’s cold-water detergents thoroughly clean most fabrics in cold water, generating considerable savings on the energy required for water heating.

**40. Always use cold water for rinse cycles.**

**41. Don’t use too much detergent.** Too many suds can hamper effective washing action and may require extra rinsing.

**42. Dry only full loads** in your dryer, but don’t overload.

**43. Remove clothes from the dryer as soon as it stops.** Clothes you promptly fold or place on hangers require little or no ironing so you can conserve electricity.

**44. Clean the lint filter after each drying cycle.** It lessens the energy required to dry your clothes and reduces your home fire hazard.

**45. Iron fabrics that require a lower heat setting first.** Irons heat faster than they cool, so it’s quicker to go from a low setting to a high setting than the reverse.

**46. Turn off your iron a few minutes before you finish ironing.** You can complete the ironing of the rest of your clothes with the heat remaining in the iron.

## General

**47. Unplug things you aren’t using!** Those cell phone chargers and can openers and garage refrigerators that aren’t in use still use electricity whenever they’re plugged into the outlet. (See #11, #12). Doing this can save up to 5 percent on your energy bill.

**48. Clean or replace filters on your furnace, exhaust fans, humidifiers and other electric appliances as needed.** Clogged filters will impair performance and cause units to run longer, using more electricity.

**49. Turn off the television when not in use.**

**50. Only run full loads in your dishwasher.** Dishwashers draw the same amount of energy whether you operate them fully loaded or half empty.