

10-Minute Energy Saving Tips

◆ Doors & Windows

- Seal Gaps Around Windows...

Apply silicone caulk to window casings, the wood trim around windows.

- Weatherstrip Casement Windows...

Install self-adhesive foam or rubber compression strips on outside of the window stops.

- Seal Window Sashes...

Close and lock window, then put clear, peelable caulk strips between the sash and the window frame.

- Selecting Window Treatments...

High-quality honeycomb shades with a triple-cell construction for excellent insulation in colder months. White-colored shades to help reflect heat away from your home in warmer months.

- Dress Windows In Layers...

Air retains heat, so each layer of the window treatment traps some heated air in the room during colder months. During warmer months, layered treatments provide buffers between hot outside air and cool indoor air. Blinds or shades covered by sheers and topped by drapes is an excellent energy efficient example.

- Block Drafts With A Door Sweep...

Position the door sweep to touch the floor but not interfere with the door's ability to open & close.

◆ Insulation

- Add Insulation To Walls & Attic...

Check for wall insulation by removing outside light switch cover plate and shining a flashlight into the space between the switch box and the wall. *Always consult a professional contractor for installation of wall insulation.* For attic insulation, measure the depth of the insulation between the support beams, or joists. If you find six or less inches of insulation, more insulation should be added. *Twelve to fifteen inches is recommended for a grade of at least R-50.*

- Seal Cracks & Holes In Interior Walls...

Around kitchen and bathroom cabinets, around fireplaces, under counter ledges, and along the edges of your countertops are some key areas where you may need to fill cracks or openings. Fill with high-quality caulk.

- Seal Mechanical Openings...

The openings for water spigots, gas lines, electric service, phone & data lines leak air unless they're filled in some way. Expandable foam is an excellent inexpensive solution for sealing such openings.

- Kitchen & Bathroom Drainpipes...

Check under kitchen and bathroom sinks for gaps around entrance of drainpipe. Caulk backer rope and expandable foam are excellent ways of eliminating these gaps.

- Insulate Area Above A Rim Joist...

The rim joist is the large board at the top of your foundation walls, to which the floor joists are connected. From your basement or crawlspace, batts of unfaced R-19 insulation can be placed into the cavities above the rim joist.

◆ Appliances

Refrigerators

- **Setting Refrigerator Temperature...**

Keep refrigerator's thermostat set between 37 and 40 degrees fahrenheit and the freezer's set between 0 and 5 degrees fahrenheit. A 10 degree difference could increase the energy usage by as much as 25%.

- **Clean Refrigerator's Coils...**

Dirty coils force the motor to work harder, which keeps your fridge from running efficiently. To clean, pull refrigerator away from the wall and unplug. Use a brush attachment on vacuum to clean dust & lint from coils on back of unit. Next, remove plastic panel on the front of the refrigerator, at the bottom. Use a crevice attachment to clean coils behind the panel.

- **Keep Refrigerator Level...**

The compressor requires more energy when the fridge is not level.

- **Check Door Gaskets...**

The doors on refrigerators and freezers have rubber gaskets that seal the cold air inside. If a gasket is worn out, the compressor has to work overtime to keep up. Check for cracks or damage a couple times a year. To test a seal, close the door on a sheet of paper. When you pull the paper out you should feel the gasket gripping it. If it slips out without resistance, the gasket may need to be replaced.

- **Defrost Freezer Regularly...**

Ice crystals in a freezer reduce its efficiency.

Ovens & Cooktops

- **Thaw Foods Before Cooking...**
Cool food cooks faster than frozen foods.
- **Put Lids On Every Pot...**
Lids increase cooking efficiency by 8 to 14 percent.
- **Leave Oven Door Closed When Cooking...**
20 percent of the oven's heat escapes when you open the door. Try using a timer or using the oven light rather than opening the door while baking.
- **Keep Gas Burners Clean...**
Keeping the burners clean and the gas orifices open helps gas burners work efficiently. The flames should be blue. If they're yellow, something is amiss. Check for burned-on food stuck in the holes.
- **Clean Microwave Oven...**
A clean microwave cooks faster than one filled with spills and spatter.

Dishwashers

- **Stop Hand Washing Dishes...**
Running a dishwasher actually uses less energy than washing dishes by hand! According to a recent Ohio State University study, energy-efficient models use almost six fewer gallons of water per load than you would use washing the same number of dishes by hand.
- **Let Dishes Air Dry...**
Using the air-drying setting or leaving the door open rather than using the heat-drying setting uses a considerable less amount of energy.

◆ Lighting

- **Replace Incandescent Bulbs with CFL's...**
Nothing will lower your energy costs as much as exchanging incandescent bulbs for compact fluorescent bulbs. CFL's use only 25 percent of the energy used by an incandescent bulb and last at least ten times longer.
- **Install Motion-Detector Fixtures...**
You can have the security without the expense by replacing your outside lights with motion-detector fixtures that turn on as you approach. Same applies to indoor closets or restrooms.
- **Set Often Used Lamps On A Timer...**
Setting a lamp to come on shortly before you get home from work and turning off shortly after going to bed rather than leaving it on all day greatly reduces your amount of energy expense.

◆ Plumbing

- **Set Water Heater Thermostat To 120°F...**
That's hot enough to clean clothes and dishes efficiently and makes for comfortable showers and baths, but won't burn children when it comes out of the tap.
- **Insulate Water Heater...**
Installing an insulating blanket on the sides and top of the heater will help it retain more heat.
- **Install a Low-Flow Showerhead...**
A low-flow showerhead can save \$10 to \$20 per person every year.
- **Install a Faucet Aerator...**
Water flow is reduced to 2.2 gallons per minute with an aerator and you'll save money.

◆ Ventilation

- **Use Exhaust Fans Wisely...**

Turning off exhaust fans after they've cleared the air can save energy and money on heating and cooling cost. Installing a timer is also recommended.

- **Close Foundation Vents When Heating...**

Though necessary during warm, humid weather, foundation vents are unnecessary and expensive to let cold air circulate beneath your living space in the winter.

- **Increase Ventilation in Attic...**

If your attic doesn't have enough ventilation, truly unpleasant problem can develop, such as ice dams in the winter and moisture problems in the summer. Poor ventilation can also lead to higher heating & cooling costs.

Secret Benefits Of Energy Saving

Purchasing new, energy-efficient windows, doors, or appliances has an immediate impact on utility bills, just as buying a fuel-efficient car immediately reduces the money you spend on gasoline.

What Most People Don't Know Is This: Some utility companies offer rebates on the purchase of Energy Star appliances, certain states allow tax deductions on those same purchases, and the federal government offers tax deductions on energy-saving home improvements and purchases.

To take advantage of these added benefits, check with your local utility company before buying a major appliance, consult an accountant about the tax advantages of making your home more energy efficient, and save all related receipts.