

Free Ways to Reduce Your Monthly Bills

These energy saving tips won't cost you a dime, but will save you a bundle on your electric and gas bills.

Keeping Your House Cool

- Air conditioning takes a lot of electricity to operate! Find your air leaks. Look at your windows, doors, electric outlets, and the fireplace and caulk or weatherstrip them.
- Raising your air conditioning thermostat by 5° will reduce your cooling costs by about 10%.
- Remember to turn off your air conditioning or raise the thermostat when you leave the house.
- Consider installing a programmable thermostat to help you control your air conditioner all day long.

Keeping Your House Warm

- Avoid using portable electric heaters because they can cost anywhere from 13¢ to 20¢ per hour, depending on your local electric provider. Multiply the total kilowatts (KW) for your heater by the price per KWH of your electrical power. For example, a 1.5 KW heater at 20¢ per KWH costs 1.5 times 0.2, which equals 30¢ per hour to operate.
- Use electric blankets at night. They cost about 10¢ per night and keep your body warm.
- Leave the drapes open to capture the warm sunshine during the day and close them in the evening to keep in that warmth.
- Turn off your heat when you leave your home.
- Consider installing a programmable thermostat to help you control your heating system all day long.
- Your water heater is the third highest energy expense in your home. Try turning it down to 120°F.

Entertaining Your Family

- Turn off cable TV set-top boxes, computers, monitors, and TVs when not in use.
- Use electric power outlet strips to disconnect multiple devices when not in use. Cable TV set-top boxes, computers, monitors, and TVs can draw power all the time, even when they are turned off.

Preparing Food

- Fill your refrigerator with large water bottles and jugs to keep it full. A full refrigerator is easier to keep cool than an empty one.
- When cooking, keep the lids on pots. Your food will spend less time on the stove.
- Vacuum the coils on your refrigerator at least every three months. The dirt build-up makes the refrigerator work harder to keep the contents cool and therefore uses more energy.

Washing Clothes

- Wash clothes in cold water instead of hot. 90% of the energy a washing machine consumes goes to heating the water.
- Make sure your dryer's outside vent is clear and clean the lint filter after every load.
- Put a dry towel in the dryer with each load of wet clothes. The towel will absorb dampness and reduce drying time.
- Hang your clothing on a clothesline to dry. Good for the environment, good for the pocket book, and you can't beat the fresh smell.

Become an Informed Consumer

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