



# Smart Energy Tips

Americans invest more than 75 percent of their utility dollars on heating, cooling, lighting, cooking and running other appliances in their homes. In fact, heating the shower water for a family of four can cost as much as \$33 a month. With energy costs on the rise, becoming more energy efficient can mean money in consumer pockets. By incorporating a few simple changes, a typical household can reduce its energy and water usage and save from 10 to 30 percent on electric, natural gas and water bills a year.

## Living Room/Family Room

- In winter, keep draperies and shades on south-facing windows, which receive the most sunlight, open during the day to allow the sunlight to enter a home and closed at night to reduce the chill.
- Minimize the use of the fireplace. Warm air escapes through the chimney. Make sure the fireplace damper is closed unless a fire is burning. If the fireplace is never used, plug and seal the chimney flue.

## Kitchen

- Use kitchen ventilation fans wisely; in just one hour, these fans can pull out warm air.
- When baking, keep preheating time to a minimum. Use the smallest pan possible so that less energy is used to heat it. Limit the number of times you open the oven door is opened because heat is lost with each opening.
- Scrape, don't rinse, food from dishes.
- Cover pots and pans with lids to retain heat and reduce cooking time.
- Keep the refrigerator or freezer away from direct sunlight or warm air (range, dishwasher, heating ducts, etc.) so the appliance doesn't have to use more energy to remain cold.

## Bedroom

- Unblock and clean all heating registers, air supplies, baseboard heaters and return vents.
- Plug all holes in walls including light switches,

electrical outlets and windows to keep air from leaking out or in.

- If a window air conditioner is used, turn it off or reduce the setting when leaving the room.

## Bathroom

- Install low-flow showerheads in your shower and repair leaky faucets. Heating water is the second largest energy user in the home.
- Leave the bathroom door open after a shower to let the warm steamy air circulate through the house.
- Don't let water run while shaving or washing.
- Use bathroom ventilations fans sparingly. These fans temporarily can help remove humidity during and after a bath or shower. Overuse of the fans can pull heated or cooled air out of a home and wastes electricity.

## Laundry Room

- Only run the washing machine with full loads to maximize the use of electricity or natural gas.
- Wash as many loads as possible using cold or warm water, instead of hot water.
- Monitor the dryer and use built-in timers or moisture sensors to ensure the machine is stopped as soon as the clothes are dry.
- Do not overfill the dryer since the machine requires that warm air circulates around the clothes to efficiently dry the load.
- Clean the dryer's filter after each load.

## Attic/Basement

- Add insulation to the attic and ducts. A professional should do major insulation projects.
- Have a professional tune up and inspect the furnace once a year.
- Follow the instructions from the furnace manufacturer for cleaning or changing the filter on a regular basis. Some filters should be changed monthly to ensure that air is flowing efficiently.

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- Set the temperature of the hot water tank between 115 and 120 degrees.
- Wrap electric hot water heaters with an insulation blanket.

## All Rooms

- Save as much as 10 percent a year on heating and cooling bills by setting the thermostat as low as comfortable in winter and as high as comfortable in the summer.
- Add humidity to a home by keeping houseplants. Humid air feels warmer and is helpful in reducing winter colds and dry skin.
- Use fluorescent bulbs to light rooms. They last up to 10 times longer than regular bulbs and use 25 to 75 percent less energy.
- Always turn off the lights when not using them; or consider installing timers or occupancy sensors to reduce the amount of time lights are on.
- Use light colors on walls, ceiling and floors to reduce the amount of light needed.
- Monitor the charging of cell phones and digital camera batteries to ensure that their AC adaptors are only plugged in when they are recharging.
- Save money with a programmable thermostat that allows a preset heating and cooling schedule and better manage the temperature. Programmable thermostats store four or more settings per day and will adjust the temperature automatically based on a schedule of when the home will be empty or everyone will be asleep. For customers with heat pumps, be sure to use an appropriate programmable thermostat.
- Be aware of products that may use electricity in standby mode. Standby mode occurs when some products are not in use but are still plugged into an electrical outlet while the power is recharging a battery or waiting to be turned on by remote control.

- Shut down a computer instead of only logging off. Turn off the monitor instead of letting it sit in sleep mode.
- If a power strip is used, switching it off may be a convenient way to save electricity going to multiple appliances. Be sure to first properly shut down any computer plugged into the strip.
- When replacing appliances, be sure to look for the Energy Star logo to help determine which units meet or exceed efficiency standards. For major users of energy such as furnaces, air conditioners and washers, look at the efficiency information to determine whether the benefits outweigh the potentially higher initial cost of an Energy Star product. Visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) for more information.
- Research the availability of incentives. Many utilities now offer programs to help lower the cost of energy efficiency programs. Contact local utilities for more information on the available programs they offer.

## For More Information

For additional fact sheets on managing energy bills through water conservation, energy choice programs and budget billing, contact the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) toll free at 1-877-742-5622 or on the Web at [www.pickocc.org](http://www.pickocc.org).

For more information on ways to save energy, contact the Ohio Department of Development, Office of Energy Efficiency toll free at 1-866-728-6749 or [www.odod.state.oh.us/cdd/oe](http://www.odod.state.oh.us/cdd/oe).

Energy saving tips and information provided in this fact sheet were researched through the U.S. Department of Energy, National Energy Assistance Directors' Association, the Environmental Protection Agency and [www.waterinfo.org](http://www.waterinfo.org).

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**For additional information from the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel:**

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