

# 83 Ways To Reduce Your Home Energy Needs



While reading these following tips, you will learn that it does not cost a lot or take much effort to begin to save money. Some of these changes are small quick solutions while others are just new habits we can all incorporate that in the long run can make a major difference.

## Hot Water Heater Tips

1. **Showers** - Everyone knows how hot water uses a lot of energy right? Well when your shower starts to get cold and you want it to get warmer DON'T turn the hot water up. Just turn the cold down. This way you save energy and money for the hot water.
2. **Take Less Showers** - If you take showers every day, try every other day. Even better, take a sponge bath instead of a shower as often as you can. Alternative: When you shower, wet yourself and your bath sponge. Then turn the water off while you wash yourself. Turn the water on again to rinse off.
3. **Shower Cool-Down** - No one likes to get into a cold shower in the morning, so here's a tip to help save energy on hot water while keeping your shower comfortable. Start the shower water at your desired temperature. Once you're in and have gotten "warmed up", gradually decrease the temperature (a bit of a turn every minute or so), allowing your body to grow accustomed to the water. By the end of the shower, the water used will be much cooler than when you started, but your body will hardly have noticed since it was so gradual. Plus, you reduce the steam buildup with cooler water, and will get less of a cold shock when exiting!
4. **Let bathwater heat your home** - After bathing, keep the hot bath water in the tub. Pull the plug to drain the tub only after the water cools to room temperature. The warm water will keep the room warm, and in the winter will humidify the air to some degree. It prevents valuable heat from literally going down the drain.
5. **Unplug Water Tank** - when leaving on a vacation or short trip. If you have a power vented tank just unplug the power chord. When you come home just plug it back in. Water will heat up in less than 30 mins. Save gas and hydro

6. **Install water savers** - Showers use less water than baths. And low-flow shower heads and faucet aerators use even less than that. They reduce the amount of water that comes out of your shower or kitchen faucet per minute, which can save you water and energy.
7. **Shower Together** - Shower with your loved one. Saves time and hot water.
8. **Wash Hands with Cold Water** - use cold water to wash your hands instead of warm or hot water.
9. **Turn down your water heater temperature** - If you have a gas hot water heater, turn down the temperature so that a hot shower is all or almost all hot water and no or little cold water. That way you never have to worry about being scalded, and your hot water heater will last much longer. It also saves money because less energy is required to keep the tank hot.
10. **Drain your gas water tank** - If you have a gas hot water tank in your home, you should know we have to drain the tank 3 -4 time per years to get most of calcium sediment out of the bottom of your hot water tank. You will see good energy saving. The Gas tank has less sediment to heat.
11. **Tankless Water Heater** - If you need to replace your water heater buy a tankless water heater. It only works when you turn on the hot water tap! No more wasted hot water during the night and day when hot water is not needed.
12. **Wrap Hot Water Heater** - Get a heat-reflecting blanket from your local hardware store. They look like silver bubble-wrap and are sized according to the size of your water heater. Wrap the heater to conserve the energy required to keep the water hot. The blankets usually come with their own tape.
13. **Insulate water pipes** - Get some easy to install foam pipe insulation and slide this on the water lines from your hot water heater to each hot water valve, especially your shower, clothes washer and dishwasher. You'll never have to wait long for hot water again!

## Home Electronics Tips

14. **Unplug electronics** - Did you know that even though you may not have an electronic device on, if it is being plugged in it is still using electricity? It's

called 'Hidden Loads' and it's a small amount of electricity that seeps out into electronic devices when plugged in. So, if you're not using it, either unplug it, or turn off your power bars!

15. **Fax Confirmation Reports** - If your fax machine prints a report every time you send a fax, you can turn this feature off. It just wastes paper. Only print a confirmation when you absolutely need it. Just press the Function or Setup button on your fax machine, and follow the steps. When in doubt, check the owner's manual!
16. **Laptop sleep** - If you have to go eat or something, don't leave your laptop or computer on. To save energy just click the sleep button!!!
17. **Turn off your wireless network** - If you don't use your wireless, turn it off. If you do, attach it to your power bar, and turn it off when you're not using it.
18. **Eco Friendly** - When buying new electronics, look for the eco-friendly and energy star labels.
19. **Computer monitor** - Whenever you're not using your computer, turn off the monitor even if it's just for a few minutes. The monitor takes up more energy than the actual computer so save energy and turn it off! Also, lower the brightness on your monitor to save more electricity.
20. **Get a high efficiency power supply** - Most computer power supplies are less than 70% efficient, so 30% of the energy is wasted! Get a power supply that is 80% efficient and save on energy (look for 80 PLUS® certified on the power supply). If the computer is a server and left on every day, it will pay for itself in about 3 years. The power supplies cost about \$80, and about \$20 to have it installed.
21. **Use your laptop battery** - If you have a laptop computer you may leave it plugged in after the battery has been recharged. After your battery is charged unplug the charger and run on battery until it needs charging again. This will stop your power consumption for 2 hours or more depending on your battery
22. **Turn off your entertainment units** - TVs, VCRs, CD and DVD players and other home electronics use energy even when they are turned off. In the average home, 40 per cent of all electricity used to power home electronics is consumed while the products are turned off. Plug all the components of your entertainment system into one power bar. Then, turn off the power bar when you're finished with them.

23. **Unplug your chargers** - You know all those chargers you see plugged in, waiting for a laptop or cell phone to charge? Well, they're all drawing power – even when they're not working – so be sure to unplug yours, and stop the power drain.

## Cooling Tips

24. **Be comfortable, not cold** - For each degree your air conditioner is set below 75° F (24° C), you'll use 3 to 5 per cent more energy. If you set your thermostat at 77° F (25°C), can be comfortable and save energy. Also, don't set your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when you first turn on your air conditioner. It won't cool your home any faster and could well waste energy.
25. **Solar Window Film** - Having Solar Window Film installed on your south and west facing windows will dramatically reduce the heat coming into your space. This will result in lower air conditioning costs, saving you money. Alternative: Just close the blinds or curtains to block out the sun.
26. **Use fans instead of air conditioning** - Instead of using an air conditioner, use fans as they use 17.9 kWh of power while an Air conditioner uses 670 kWh. Ceiling fans cool the air in the summer and moves the heat off the ceiling in the winter.
27. **Open the windows** - open the windows at night to promote cool air circulation.
28. **Shade your home** - plant trees and shrubs to significantly reduce cooling costs.
29. **Clean and replace filters** - Clogged air filters just waste electricity. Make sure you clean your air conditioners filters once per month.
30. **Keep your AC unit cool** - Your air conditioning unit will use up to 10% less energy if it's out of direct sunlight, so think about planting trees or shrubs to shade it. (Just don't block the airflow.) Or, if it's a window unit, try and position it so it's facing north, out of the direct sunlight.
31. **Clean outside units** - Leaves, grass clippings, dryer lint and other debris can all clog an outdoor air conditioning unit. That can make it run less efficiently

and use more energy. To clean it, turn off the power at the service panel, then follow the manufacturer's instructions

32. **Get a whole house fan** - A whole house fan can pull cool air through the house and exhaust warm air through the attic. It's especially handy at night when the outside air is often cooler than the inside air.

33. **Leave your furnace fan on** - Your furnace fan can help cool your house. Leave it on continuously in summer and it'll circulate cooler air from the basement up to other floors. Closing off the dampers of your basement ducts will allow more cooled air to reach the upper floors. Your furnace may even have a duct to draw even cooler basement air into the system.

## Heating Tips

34. **Don't heat where you don't need** - Why spend money to heat unused rooms and closets? Especially when all you have to do is keep their doors and closed. Close the vents in the rooms you don't use regularly. Also, if your basement is unfinished, close the vents down there as well.

35. **The dirt on your furnace filter** - It only makes sense ... a dirty furnace filter means the fan has to work harder or deliver less air. And that means, you guessed it ... more energy for less result. The lesson is, make sure your furnace filter is clean. Replace your furnace filters at least twice a year.

36. **Use your fireplace** - enjoying a nice warm fire in your living room will help keep your electricity bills down.

37. **Dress Smart** - Dressing in layers isn't just for outdoors. Although you'll want to skip the down vest and parka when you're sitting in your living room, wearing a sweater over a shirt indoors traps air between the layers, air which acts as a great insulator to keep you warm.

38. **Direct your heat** - Why blow expensive hot air at your cold exterior wall? Instead, place heat-resistant radiator reflectors over your heat registers and channel the heat into the room.

39. **Use the sun** - There's nothing like sitting in a warm, sunny room on a cold day reading your favorite book or catching up with friends. Especially since that warmth is supplementing your heating system and saving you money.



Why not try positioning your chair so you're sitting in direct sunlight and soaking up the heat (and sun!)? It's a great way to feel toasty.

40. **Turn it down at night** - You don't need to have the heat blazing away while you're sleeping. Instead, use blankets to keep your body warm. Or, you can use an electric sheet or blanket to warm up your bed before turning in. Just turn the blanket on for 10 to 15 minutes before bedtime, and then turn it off when you get into bed.
41. **Avoid the draft** - Are you in favor of saving as much as 30% a year on your heating costs? Okay then, now's the time to act. Check around the house and fix any drafts you find, including gaps around fireplace dampers, attic hatches, air conditioners and doors. See? Nothing to it.
42. **Watch your heat levels** - Do you really need it hotter than 68° F in the house? After all, heating costs rise about 5% for every degree above 68° F (20° C) that you set the thermostat. And when you think about it, curling up in a polar fleece blanket is so much cozier, isn't it?
43. **Reducing Heat Needs** - If there is only 1 or 2 people living in your home and you spend a great deal of time in one room, then reduce the thermostat in the rest of the house and run an economical space heater to keep that area comfortable.

## Windows And Doors Tips

44. **Buy insulated curtains** - bought insulated curtains for my living room and dining room, I think they look great and they keep the heat out in the summer and the cold out in the winter. It just makes more sense than wooden blinds, and then I bought curtains to dress them out, it looks amazing and it was a lot cheaper than custom.
45. **Weather stripping** - Weather stripping prevents air from leaking through gaps around doors and the moving parts of an operable window. Weather stripping should be easy to replace. To be effective, it must close gaps completely. Weather stripping can be applied to the tops and sides of any

door frame. V-shaped weather stripping creates an excellent seal by making contact with the edge of the door. It maintains a good seal even if the door warps. At the bottom of the door, apply weather stripping to either the sill or the door itself.

**46. It's a door, not a window** - radiant heat losses occur primarily through glass.

That's why, wherever possible, you'll want to minimize the use of glass in doors. But if you do really want a window in your door, give serious thought to installing double-paned or double-paned Low-E glass. Insulated metal doors are the ideal option. They have a core filled with fiberglass or rigid foam for high insulation value. Plus they don't warp, shrink, or swell with temperature or humidity changes, so they can be installed to a much tighter fit. They can even incorporate magnetic-type weather stripping, similar to the seal on a refrigerator door, all of which can cut air leakage substantially.

**47. Replace old windows** - In the past, many homes had single-paned windows, metal frames, and other energy-wasting design features. Today, you can solve these problems using technological advances now available, including:

- Double and triple glazing to trap air and improve the U-value
- Vinyl (PVC) frame construction for better insulation and lower conductivity
- Inert gas replacing the air between panes of glass, achieving U-values of 0.33 or lower

**48. Caulk your window frames** - Did you know that you can save 10% or more on your energy bill just by reducing the air leaks in your home? Any kind of gap or break where your window glass meets your window frame – or in the frame itself – will allow warm air to escape in winter. What's the answer? Simple – caulk your windows to help plug the leaks and drafts.

**49. Curtains for the cold** - No matter how good your windows are, on cold winter days you're going to lose heat through the glass. That's where draperies help. At night and on cloudy days, when it's coldest, you can close them to insulate your warm interior air from the glass. And on sunny days, you can throw your curtains open to let the warming sunshine in.



## Appliance Tips

- 50. **ENERGY STAR® label** - Look for the ENERGY STAR label. ENERGY STAR is a program designed to help you identify energy-efficient appliances and products. It's better for your environment, your budget, and your peace of mind.
- 51. **Get the most out of your small appliances** - The more you use your toaster oven and slow cooker, instead of your stove, the more you'll save.
- 52. **Laundry saver** - Challenge your family to fill fewer laundry baskets per week. Don't wash things that aren't dirty, a lot of people throw them in the basket because it's easier than putting them away.
- 53. **Use a Laundry Line** - Have a line for your laundry in your laundry room if you live in a house, and in your bathroom if you live in an apartment. We hang laundry year round-and the other benefits include NO static, and in the winter the house air is not as dry-so no need for a humidifier. Starting in the spring, the line goes outside it goes outside.
- 54. **Get rid of your old fridge** - Getting rid of your old fridge (in your basement, for example) can help reduce your energy bill...big time.
- 55. **Replace your Water Conditioner** - Replace your old water conditioner if it's not 'on demand'. New on demand systems recharge about once every two weeks. You can imagine the savings both in the use of water, wear and tear on the pump and hydro costs.
- 56. **Beer Fridge.** - If you absolutely need to have a 'beer fridge', buy a smaller, Energy Star type of refrigerator. Keep it full as possible at all times, so it will run less often, and for goodness sake, TAKE OUT THE LIGHT BULB!!! You don't want that coming on every 5 minutes.
- 57. **Use a push lawn mower** - Use a push lawn mower instead of a gas powered lawn mower. Every little bit counts.
- 58. **You only need one fridge** - If you need to save some money get rid of your fridge downstairs in your basement.
- 59. **Dishwashers** - Try to wash your dishes in the sink with a sponge instead of the dishwasher.

60. **Fridge to oven** - Avoid putting food straight into the oven from fridge. Keep food outside until it reaches room temperature. Save energy and reduces your power bill!
61. **Deep Freeze the Freezer** - The best place in your home to keep your freezer is in the coldest place in your home. Move your freezer to an unheated back porch or garage. Do not store your freezer in a sunroom or next to your clothes dryer.
62. **Reduce Kettle usage** - Instead of putting the kettle on every time you want to make a hot beverage, have a thermos bottle handy and put the kettle on once and then fill the thermos with the remaining hot water. You have instant hot water and you save energy by not putting the kettle on each time you want a hot beverage.
63. **Save on laundry** - Get rid of those thick, thirsty towels (or hide them). They are so expensive to wash and take even more energy to dry. If you have kids or teens, towels are left everywhere on the floor or crumpled up and can start to smell if not hung up properly. Use beach towels instead, they are made intentionally thin, to dry faster when used at the beach or pool. Get the family to use bathrobes instead that can be hung up to dry, and use only smaller thinner towels for drying hair etc.
64. **Double Duty Cooking** - If you're going to fire up your oven or natural gas BBQ, why not think about tomorrow's dinner too? If you're cooking burgers tonight, toss on a steak or two as well. It's great cold and sliced on top of a fresh green salad. No worrying about dinner the next day or having to turn anything on, plus you would probably eat less meat and more vegetables which is also great for our environment and our health!
65. **Don't boil it to death** - If you need to bring something to a boil (and this is the most energy saving way to do it) you naturally will put the element on maximum. But if you need to keep it boiling, you should NOT keep it on maximum, which just wastes energy. If you have it covered, you can usually bring it down to 1/4 of the power (eg. from 10 to 8), and if it isn't covered, about 1/2 the power (eg. from 10 to about 4-6). As well, if the lid rattling bothers you, or if it's too hard to keep from boiling over, it's better to keep the lid partially on than to remove it completely.
66. **Thaw in the refrigerator** - When pulling things out of the freezer for thawing, pull it out a day or two in advance and let it thaw in your refrigerator. This is safer in terms of bacteria, but it also provides a cooling

effect to the refrigerator, it won't work as hard while the item is in there thawing.

- 67.**Use an electric kettle** - Electric kettles use a lot less energy to boil water than a stove top kettle (on the order of 40% less apparently).
- 68.**Get rid of your bottle water cooler.** - Replace your cooler with a tap mounted filter. If a water cooler is an energy star cooler you can save up to \$141.00 a year if it is not you can save up to \$256.00 a year.
- 69.**Use the toaster to toast, not the toaster oven** - Toaster ovens not only take longer, but it uses twice the watts as a toaster, taking 4x more power! So if you need to toast 2 or even 4 toasts, stick to your toaster, and save energy.
- 70.**Use Cold Water Detergent** - Most of the energy used to do laundry is for heating the water. Simply switching to cold water detergent and running the wash with cold water will save you lots of money and leave your clothes still smelling great.
- 71.**No peeking** - Did you know that every time you open the oven door you lose at least 20% of the heat? 20%! That's why they put that handy window in the oven door. That way, you can use the window to check on your foods and keep the door closed.
- 72.**The cost of frost** - Frost buildup in your refrigerator freezer can affect energy efficiency, so keep an eye on the frost level (even if it's a self-defrosting model). If you see more than 6 mm of buildup, defrost to keep the fridge working properly.
- 73.**Clean behind the fridge** - Keep the condenser coils at the back of the freezer or the fridge clean. If they are filled with dust then they will get inefficient and lose efficiency by about 25%. Hence you may incur higher bills even on an efficient device. Vacuum clean the condenser coils and keep the fridge economic.

## Lighting Tips

- 74.**Light the area** - You don't need a room full of blazing lights to sit and enjoy a good book or share a puzzle with your 7 year-old. Instead, why not turn down (or turn off) the room lights and use “task lighting” to get bright, concentrated light only where you need it. That can mean using a table lamp instead of a 3-bulb overhead fixture when reading at a desk.
- 75.**Install skylights** - this is a thing that can maybe make it so you do not have to use ac. you put in opening skylights on your top floor and maybe over parts of your main levee and open them. The heat will rise and go out of the skylight and even maybe put a quiet fan in the skylight to blow the warm air out of the skylight even more. Also this can bring natural light into your home and make it so you don't need to use lights.
- 76.**No lights all right** - always turn off the lights when you leave the room even if it is for a short period of time or when you go to sleep.
- 77.**Dimmers are your friend** - Requires basic electrical knowledge. Basically the concept is simple, all room lights in your house should be changed from switch to dimmer switch thus eliminating the amount of electricity used to light the room, and it also allows you to control the level of lighting for different purposes creating different atmospheres for your needs in the room. Combine with energy saving bulbs and it's a win-win situation!
- 78.**Use light from outside** - On a sunny day open the blinds instead of using the light inside
- 79.**Power saver light bulb** - Switch your light bulbs for LED lighting. LEDs produce more light per watt than incandescent bulbs. LEDs are ideal for use in applications that are subject to frequent on-off cycling, unlike fluorescent lamps that burn out more quickly when cycled frequently. Also, fluorescent bulbs may be harmful to your health. Energy saving bulbs can cost a little more but is well worth the price.
- 80.**Outdoor Accent Lighting** - If you like to keep your exterior lights on during the evening for security consider a light with a motion sensor. When motion is detected, the light will ramp up to full brightness for 1, 5 or 10 minutes, depending on your setting. I set it for 1. After the set time it will turn off.

81.**All-night light** - Some parts of the house – stairways, for example -- need to be lit at night for safety reasons, especially if you have young children or seniors in the house. In that case, replace the bulb with the lowest wattage you're comfortable with. If you want substantial lighting, put in a compact fluorescent bulb and get lots of light for very little energy or see if you can get by with just a night light. Make sure they have a light sensor so that they turn off in the day.

82.**LED Christmas Lights** - LED Christmas light use very little power when compared to tradition incandescent bulbs. Not only that, but their colors are more vibrant and the last up to 50x times longer.

## Insulation

83.**Electrical outlets** - Use the foam blankets that come as protective packing for many items to seal drafts around electrical outlets such as steak Styrofoam trays, just give them a good cleaning. Take the outlet cover off and trace around it on the foam padding with a utility knife. Carefully replace the cover with the foam on the wall side. Tighten the cover and you have an air-tight outlet.

84.**How to easily spot a draft** - Spiders tend to build their webs in drafts. If you have spider webs around plugs, vents, windows, you should probably improve the insulation around that particular area.

85.**Working around light fixtures** - Recessed light fixtures can look nice, but they can also be a major source of heat loss. However, because they are recessed in the ceiling, they can sometimes extend into insulated areas. Remember to be careful how close you place insulation to a fixture unless it is marked. "I.C." (designed for direct insulation contact). Check your local building codes for recommendations.

Not all of these tips can be done by everyone. Applying some of these cost saving methods is all one needs to make a difference on having a positive impact on the environment, and your utility bills. Let's all work together to make a change in a smart, positive way.