

Simple Ways to Spend Less on Energy and Create a Healthier, More Comfortable Home

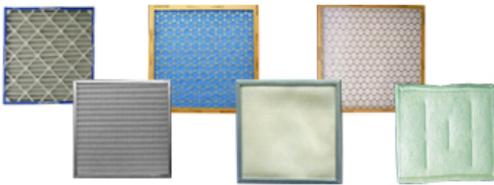
Heating and Cooling:

Set your thermostat to a moderate temperature at the beginning of each season and leave it where you set it. Recommended settings are 68 degrees in winter and 74 degrees in summer. Wear warm socks and soft, loose, layered clothing in the winter to stay comfortable while saving money.



Heat Pumps:

If you have an electric heat pump, do not turn your thermostat up more than 3 degrees at a time in winter. Rapidly raising the temperature will force the heat pump to use its more expensive, auxiliary/emergency heat system to get the temperature up and that costs about 3 times as much money. Don't lower the thermostat more than 4 degrees at a time in summer. Schedule a tune-up every year (preferably in the fall) to save money and prolong the life of the system. Keep the coils clean on the indoor and outdoor units. Regularly change the filter to keep them clean.



Space Heaters:

If you have a gas furnace or a heat pump, avoid using electric space heaters; they use a lot more energy than heat pumps and are dangerous if used incorrectly. Always keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from all flammable items such as curtains, blankets, and furniture. Use them only on level, non-flammable floor surfaces, NEVER on carpets, furniture, or countertops.



Water Heating:

Set your water heater's thermostat to 120 degrees F. This temperature is warm enough for showers and washing dishes. Use cold water to wash clothes whenever possible. Most of today's detergents work quite well with cold water.

Other Ideas:

Install smart power strips at entertainment centers and/or computer stations. Turn off computers, lights, fans, and televisions when they're not in use. Unplug appliances and electronics that use a "phantom load" even in the OFF position. (These usually have a red light glowing in the OFF position.)

Consider turning your water on to a slight drip when the temperature outside is well below freezing to avoid having burst water lines. Remove hoses from outside faucets in winter as well.

If you have a vented crawl space, close the vents (or block them off with foam board) in the winter to avoid frozen pipes.