

How to Save BIG on Energy Costs

I *halved* my monthly energy costs by following these simple tips --

80% of the energy used in the typical American home is for Heating and AC --

Heating—

- + Buy a \$15 - \$25 [thermal blanket](#) and put it around your water heater.
 - You'll save up to \$8 per month.
- + Test how low you can turn your water heater dial to discover your minimal acceptable setting.
 - Set it to “Vacation” during absences.
- + When they're running, clothes dryers consume the most energy of any appliance in your house!
 - Dry laundry on a clothes line instead of using a dryer.
 - Hang a clothes line indoors for bad weather or if your town forbids outdoor lines. (I have mine in the basement, right next to the washing machine.)
- + Wash clothes in cold or warm water rather than hot.
- + In winter, you save 2 percent in energy costs for every 1 degree you lower the temperature.
 - + Program the thermostat as cool as is comfortable when you wear a sweater and pants.
 - 67 or 68 degrees feels fine to most people.
 - + Program the thermostat 10 degrees cooler while you're sleeping.
 - 55 degrees is comfortable with sheets and blankets.
 - + Why heat when no one is home?
 - Set the thermostat to 40 degrees when no one is home during the day.
 - And when you're out of town or on vacation.
 - + Heat selected rooms only. Don't heat the basement.
 - Close or block vents to little-used “cold rooms.”
- + Ensure you have clean furnace air filters.
- + Check around windows and doors for heat loss by using a match flame to check for airflow.
 - Caulk and reseal windows and put in weatherstripping around doors.

- + Read about attic insulation, then install some if you need it. This requires effort but is do-able.
- + If you don't have a [programmable thermostat](#), get one for only \$30 - \$50 to save big money.
 - This is important, everyone has one these days. They're easy to install yourself.

Air Conditioning—

- + Open windows at night to let in cool air, then close them and the curtains or blinds during the day to retain the cool air. This may sound dumb, but I can attest that it really works!
- + Hang out in the cool basement or downstairs rec room, rather than air conditioning upstairs rooms. Or just AC one upstairs “cool room” and hang out there.
- + Don't leave the AC on when you're not home.
- + Clean the AC filter monthly.
- + Substitute ceiling or other fans for AC. This can really save you money!
- + Plant shade trees around your house.
 - These reduce indoor temperatures enough to yield AC savings of between 8 and 18%.
 - Leaves will fall to let in sunshine for winter heating savings of 2 to 8%.The downside is that you may have to clean your gutters more frequently.

Take advantage of new technologies to save big on lighting!

Lighting –

- + Why light an empty room? Turn off the lights when you leave a room.
- + Direct outdoor lighting down and out by capping the light with a [redirective “hat.”](#) This reduces energy because you're not wasting light by sending it above the horizontal plane up into space. (Do you want to light your driveway or the area 50 feet above it?)
- + LEDs use **only 10%** of the energy of the old “hot” bulbs! And much less than CFLs!

Use Solar LEDs --

- + Solar LEDs don't use any grid energy, just free sun light.
 - I replaced my outdoor motion detector lights with solar LEDs.
I didn't have to place them near an electric outlet, and they stick on (no drilling!)
 - I replaced my outdoor Christmas lights with solar for cost-free holiday lighting

Kill Energy Ghosts! —

- + *Energy ghosts* are appliances that consume energy 24 by 7 without you realizing it. For example, TVs turn on by remote – they require a small continual energy supply to perform this trick. More examples are the clocks or always-on digital panels in your radios and microwave oven.
- + Ghosts only use 2 to 6 watts of energy each – but they're consuming it 24 by 7.
- + If you have 5 ghosts using 5 watts each, they use 600 watt-hours per day ($5 * 5 * 24$). That's 219,000 watt-hours per year!

Locate the ghosts you don't need and turn them off!

- An easy way to do this is put them on power strips, then flip the switch on the strip.
- Don't leave your modem and computers on all day unless you're really using them.
- Replace an electric alarm clock with a hand-powered (wind-up) alarm clock.

Use Rechargeable Batteries--

Buy batteries once a decade!

- + Get a *solar battery charger* (about \$20 to \$50) and use rechargeable batteries. Nickel-metal hydride (NiMH) are the best general-purpose rechargeable batteries.

Buy a High Mileage Car—

The key here is to buy only the car you need. Don't buy some big oversized SUV just because that's what everyone else drives.

- + Go hybrid or electric if you can.
- + Keep your car tuned up and your tires inflated.

+ Don't drive like a speed demon. For conventional gas engines:

→ Fuel economy drops 1% for every mile per hour over 55 mph

→ When you hit 75 mph your fuel economy is down by 25%

More Info -- see [MichaelBlueJay's website](#).