



100 Ways to Save on Your Energy Bill

Consumers Energy

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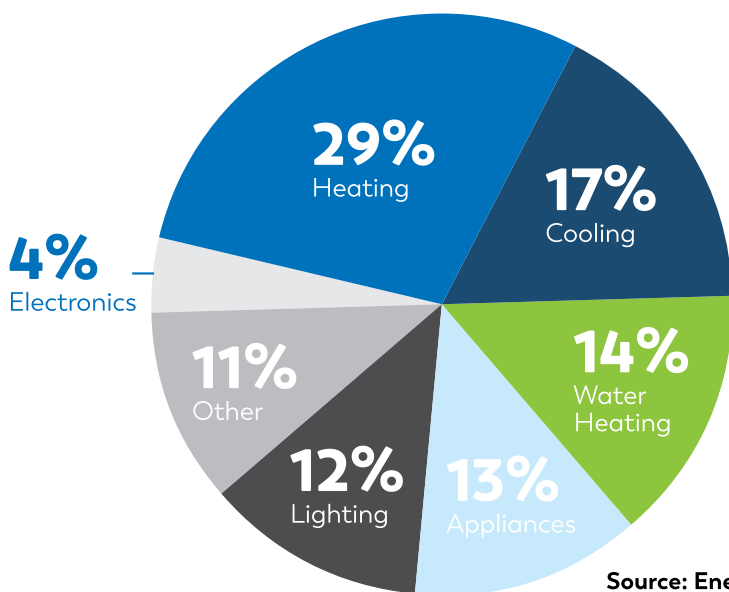
Save Money by Saving Energy

Looking for ways to save energy and money? Count on us to help.

If you're like most people, you're already doing some things to cut down on energy use, such as lowering the heat at night. To help you save even more, we've put together this guide of more than 100 things you can do to make your home more energy efficient, without sacrificing your comfortable lifestyle.

It's simple. When you use less, you'll pay less.

Download this guide as a PDF and view these energy savings tips at ConsumersEnergy.com/saveenergy



Source: EnergyStar.gov

Home Energy and You

As much as half of the energy used in your home goes to heating and cooling. So making smart decisions about your home's heating and cooling systems can have a big impact on your energy bills — and your comfort.

Home Heating

Heating your home is the largest use of energy and offers the greatest opportunity for savings. About 30% of your total home energy budget goes for heating.

- Have your heating system tuned and inspected by a service professional before each heating season. Heat losses from a poorly maintained system add up over time, sometimes at a rate of 1-2% a year.
- Clean or replace the furnace filter often during the heating season. Furnaces use less energy if they “breathe” more easily. Follow instructions in the furnace manufacturer’s manual.
- Keep furniture, carpeting and curtains from blocking heat registers and air return ducts.
- If radiators are located near cold outside walls, place a sheet of aluminum foil between the radiator and the wall to reflect heat back into the room.
- Don’t overheat your home and overwork your furnace. Use supplemental heating equipment for hard-to-heat areas.
- When replacing your furnace, look for one that’s at least 95% efficient. If you need to replace your HVAC system, ask your contractor about ENERGY STAR certified units. And make sure that your new energy efficient unit is properly installed for maximum savings.
- While sleeping, add an extra blanket for warmth.
- Close your attic, basement, garage and exterior doors to prevent cold drafts and keep in heat.
- Ceiling fans set at slow speed push warm air away from the ceiling and move it around the room without creating a chilling breeze. This spreads the heat more evenly and will make you feel more comfortable.

Your Thermostat

Wi-Fi and programmable thermostats are a great way to dial in savings and comfort.

- Using a programmable thermostat will let you turn heat or air conditioning up when you are home and down when you go to work or to bed. You could save up to 10% on your total annual heating and cooling costs with little or no impact on your home's comfort just by making this simple change.
- In the winter, set your thermostat at 68 degrees when you're home and at 65 degrees when you're away for a short time. If you're used to higher settings, dial down 1 degree at a time until you feel comfortable.
- Wi-Fi enabled thermostats allow you to control your home's heating and cooling remotely through your smartphone. Many smart thermostats learn your temperature preferences and establish a schedule that automatically adjusts to energy saving temperatures when you are asleep or away.



Remember

Warmer temperatures are recommended for homes with ill or elderly persons or infants.

Cooling

Beat the summer heat and stay comfortable with these energy savers.

- Buy an air conditioner with a high Energy Efficiency Rating (EER). It's printed on the EnergyGuide label attached to the unit.
- If you have central air conditioning, clean leaves and debris from the unit. To save energy, make sure they're not too close to the compressor because they can block airflow.
- Install your air conditioner in the shade. When it's in direct sunlight, it uses more energy.
- Make sure your central air conditioning system is the right size for the area you want to cool.

- Clean the furnace filter regularly. Dirty filters make your air conditioner work harder. Check the manufacturer's manual.

Here are more ways to stay cool.

- Cool air from your window air conditioner can flow into open registers. Cover or close them so cool air doesn't escape.
- Don't cool unused areas. Close doors and registers to cut energy costs.
- Operate your stove, oven, dishwasher and clothes dryer in the morning or evening when it's cooler outside. They add extra heat to your home and make your air conditioner work harder.
- In the summer, set your thermostat at 78 degrees during the day when you're home and higher when you're away.
- Install a WiFi programmable thermostat that starts your air conditioner shortly before you get home.
- Reduce air conditioning needs by installing an attic fan. Hot air trapped in stuffy attics sinks into rooms below, adding to your summer cooling costs.
- A ceiling fan cools fast and costs less than air conditioning.

Water Heater

Water heating is a typical family's third-largest energy expense, accounting for about 14% of utility bills.

- Take a shower instead of a bath. You'll use less hot water.
- Install a low-flow aerator or flow restrictor on an existing shower head, and you'll use 25-60% less water when it seems like more!
- Use an ENERGY STAR certified dishwasher instead of washing by hand. You'll save more than 8,000 gallons of water a year.
- Set your water heater temperature at 120 degrees. A family of four, each showering for five minutes, uses about 700 gallons of water a week. By lowering the thermostat, you can cut water heating bills without sacrificing comfort.
- Turn off hot water when you don't need it. Don't let it run when you shave or wash your face.

- Fix defective plumbing or dripping faucets. A single dripping hot water faucet can waste 212 gallons of water a month. That can increase your water bill and your energy bill.
- Keep your hot water hot by making sure pipes in unheated areas are insulated.
- Always use cold water when it will do the job as well as hot.
- Once a year, drain the water heater tank completely, then turn the incoming water on and off, alternating, for about 20 seconds. These actions flush minerals and sediment from inside the tank and make your water heater more efficient. Some newer models are self-cleaning. Check the manufacturer's manual.



Your Monthly Energy Use

Your monthly bill from Consumers Energy includes 13 months of your energy use data and cost per day.

Dishwasher

Your dishwasher uses hot water to do its job. Here are ways to save on water heating.

- Set your dishwasher at 120 degrees or “low.” Check your manufacturer’s manual to see if you can use 120 degree water.
- Look for a dishwasher with a “boost” mode that can allow you to set your water heater lower yet still get dishes properly clean.
- Wash only full loads, and use the shortest cycle to get your dishes clean.
- Turn off the dishwasher after the wash and rinse cycles. When dishes air dry, you’ll save on heating costs. On newer models, use the heat-off setting or the energy-saver dry option.
- Avoid using your dishwasher to warm plates. The extra heat will raise your energy bill.
- A dishwasher will operate more efficiently if you unclog the drain of food particles and clean it weekly.

Stove and Oven

You can cook delicious and nutritious meals and help lower energy costs by following these handy tips.

- Thaw foods and cut vegetables into small pieces. They'll take less time to cook.
- Put lids on pots and pans. Foods will cook faster and use less energy.
- Considering a new cooktop? Choose an induction model and you'll save energy and money.
- If the flames on your gas stove or oven are yellow, energy is being wasted and the burners need adjusting. Call an appliance repair professional.

When using your oven, follow these suggestions:

- Preheat the oven only when the recipe calls for it. Don't preheat if you're using the broiler.
- Use glass and ceramic dishes. They hold heat better and you can lower the oven temperature 25 degrees.
- Your stove or oven may not always be the best choice! Small appliances, such as crockpots, electric frying pans and your microwave oven may be more energy efficient.
- Open the oven door to peek at food inside, and you'll lose 25 degrees to 75 degrees of heat. It's best to look through the window or wait until the food is almost done before opening the door.
- If you have a self-cleaning oven, clean it immediately after use. Because it's already hot, it will take less energy to get to the heat-cleaning stage. In the market for a new gas stove? Choose a model with electronic igniters instead of pilot lights for the highest efficiency.
- A microwave is best for defrosting and cooking small portions; an oven is more efficient for cooking large items, such as turkeys and roasts.
- When your electric burners are worn out and don't work properly, they use more energy. Save by replacing them.

- Save energy by baking an extra dish or cooking entire meals in the oven at the same time.

Clothes Washer

These helpful hints can save you money and don't cost a penny.

- Wash and rinse your clothes in cold water instead of hot to save on water heating costs. Use a cold-water detergent.
- Set the water level on your washer to match the size of the load and save two ways — on water and energy.
- You'll save more by waiting to wash until you have a full load.
- Add the right amount of detergent. Too many suds make your washer work harder and use more energy.

Clothes Dryer

Here are more hot ideas to help you save.

- Fill your clothes dryer, but don't overload it. Your clothes will dry faster when they have room to tumble.
- Overdrying wears out your clothes and wastes energy. Stop your dryer when the laundry is dry by setting the timer or using the auto dry cycle.
- Your dryer's lint trap helps warm air flow better and dries your clothes faster. Make sure to clean it after each load.
- Need a new dryer? Heat pump models can reduce energy use more than 25% and are gentler on clothes.
- Dry your laundry in consecutive loads to take advantage of a heated dryer. Your laundry will dry faster and use less energy.
- On sunny days, hang your clothes outdoors to dry.

Refrigerator/Freezer

Your refrigerator/freezer uses more electricity than any other appliance in your kitchen. These tips can help you use less and save more.

- Avoid opening the refrigerator or freezer door to browse. When you do, cold air escapes and your energy costs increase.
- Let hot foods cool before putting them in your refrigerator or freezer. Hot foods cause the motor to work longer and harder.
- Leave room in front of your refrigerator/freezer to allow cold air to circulate better.
- Because frozen food stays cold longer than air, keep your freezer full, but not packed. You'll save energy by placing water-filled containers in empty spaces.
- Get rid of that spare refrigerator in the basement or garage - it's less efficient and it's costing you money. Plus, we'll pick it up for free and give you \$50.

[ConsumersEnergy.com/ApplianceRebates](https://www.consumersenergy.com/appliance-rebates)

- Condenser coils remove heat from inside the unit. Make sure they're at least two inches from the wall and clean them twice a year.
- If cold air is escaping around the door seal, adjust or replace the seal. To check, close the door on a dollar bill. If it's easy to pull out, cold air is escaping.
- If you have a manual-defrost freezer, it will work more efficiently when ice buildup is kept to 1/4 inch or less.
- Set the refrigerator thermometer at 38 degrees to 42 degrees and your freezer at 0 degrees to 5 degrees.

Other Appliances

Most homes have at least 50 household items that use natural gas or electricity. Look around your home for places you can save.

- When upgrading small appliances, look for ENERGY STAR certification and you'll use 10-25% less energy.
- To save water and energy, turn off faucets, indoors and out, when you're done using them.
- Make sure the toilet handle doesn't stick after flushing. It wastes water and makes your water pump run longer.
- Be sure the thermostats on appliances work properly. If the thermostat sticks, the appliance stays on and raises your energy bill. Turn off the humidifier or dehumidifier when they're not needed.
- After making your coffee in the morning, turn off your coffeemaker and pour the leftover coffee into an insulated container to keep it hot.
- Turn off the TV, DVR, DVD player, stereo or radio when no one is watching or listening.
- If your water pipes are wrapped with insulating electric heat tape, turn it off when the weather warms up.
- Use small appliances that plug into electrical outlets instead of rechargeable devices, such as hand-held vacuum cleaners and lawn trimmers which use more energy.
- Unplug electronics when not in use. Computers, DVD players, televisions and other electronics, including power strips, use energy when they're plugged in — even though they're turned off.



Use Smart Power Strips

Many electronic products continue to draw power from the wall even when they are powered off. Since it's not always practical to unplug these items whenever you leave your desk, "smart" power strips can effectively do so for you.

There are three types of smart power strips: timer-equipped, motion controlled occupancy sensing and electrical current sensing.

Lighting

Follow these bright ideas to save energy.

- Light emitting diodes (LEDs) use 80% less energy than standard incandescent bulbs and last 15 times longer. For example, a 12-watt LED bulb is equal to a 60-watt incandescent bulb. They can also be used as porch lights.
- Install dimmer switches and three-way bulbs. They use less energy and let you enjoy a choice of lighting levels for different tasks.
- For outdoor use, consider LEDs, which are more efficient and last longer than their mercury vapor or high-pressure sodium counterparts.
- When buying bulbs, check the lumens. The higher the lumens, the more light you'll get.


More energy-saving ideas

- Harness the power of the sun - open blinds during the day for a lighter, brighter room without turning on overhead lights or desk lamps.
- Because light bounces off walls and ceilings, you'll get more light for the money if you paint your walls light colors.
- Increase the power of reflection by putting lamps in corners where two walls reflect light into the room.
- Place security lights on a timer or photo-electric control so they'll turn on and off automatically.



Bright Idea

The Lighting Facts label on light bulb packages highlights brightness and yearly energy cost.

Lighting Facts		Per Bulb
Brightness	870 lumens	
Estimated Yearly Energy Cost	\$1.57	
Based on 3 hrs/day, 11¢/kWh Cost depends on rates and use		
Life	5.5 years	
Based on 3 hrs/day		
Light Appearance		
Energy Used	13 watts	
Contains Mercury		
For more on clean up and safe disposal, visit epa.gov/cfl .		

Windows

You can stop heat from going out your windows. Take a look at these energy saving ideas.

- Drapes can cut heat loss in half if they have an insulating liner.
- Let your drapes hang loose, and be sure they don't block heating and cooling registers and air-return ducts.
- Vinyl shades and quilted curtains help cut heat loss. Shutters and blinds don't work as well because air travels through their open spaces.
- Close drapes on north-facing windows to keep the chill out in winter.
- On cool days, let the sun shine in by opening curtains, drapes, shades, shutters and blinds on the southern and eastern windows. Close them on cloudy days and at night to keep heat from escaping.
- On hot summer days, open windows and doors in early morning and in the evening to let cool air in.
- Cut your heating losses by installing storm windows. Double-pane or triple-pane windows are best.
- Replace old windows with new high-performance windows.
- Repair open spaces in broken or cracked windows and door glass.
- Use clear plastic or vinyl sheeting on the inside of your windows to make a temporary double-pane window. Use weatherproof tape or duct tape, trim or tacking strips to hold it in place.



Fire and Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Please don't use gas grills, ovens or range tops for heating. These items can cause a fire or result in deadly carbon monoxide poisoning. And to be safe, be sure your house is equipped with a carbon monoxide detector.

Insulation

More than 50% of energy used for winter heating leaves homes through uninsulated walls, floors, ceilings and attics. Insulation traps small pockets of air between warm and cold areas inside your home and helps keep warm air in during winter. Insulation is the key to big energy savings. Try these tips.

- Check your home's insulation in the attic, ceiling, walls and floor. Insulation is judged by its R-value. The higher the R-value, the better the material keeps in heat during cold weather and keeps in cool air during hot weather. Required R-values vary across Michigan. Check with a store that sells insulation or a local contractor for the requirements in your area.
- Adding blown-in cellulose or batts of fiberglass insulation in your attic is one of the most cost-effective savings measures and something you can do yourself.
- Add extra insulation to non-carpeted floors by covering them with a pad and rug.
- Prevent heat loss as warm air travels through heat ducts from your furnace by wrapping heat ducts with insulation. Also, use duct foil tape where rectangular heat ducts join, and water-based acrylic latex caulk where round and rectangular duct fittings meet.
- Seal cracks where pipes, electrical wires, vents and ducts enter your home.
- About 2% of air escapes your home through electrical outlets, especially on outside walls. Install insulation made for electrical outlets. You can also use safety outlet plugs to stop cold air from entering your home.
- Insulate hot water pipes in unheated areas to keep hot water hot.

Caulk and Weather Stripping

You'll live more comfortably when you get rid of cracks and leaks that let warm air escape from your home on cold days. Here's how.

- Seal cracks in your basement floor to keep heat in and cold air out.
- Caulk windows, doors and anywhere air leaks in or out.
- Weather-strip around windows and doors.
- Seal cracks where pipes, electrical wires and ducts enter your home.
- Seal openings where doors and windows close into their frames with weather stripping — pieces of felt, rubber, metal or plastic that compress when you shut them.
- Replace torn or worn weather stripping and caulk.
- Do not caulk around your natural gas water heater exhaust pipes or furnace exhaust pipes.

Pool and Hot Tub

Efficient ways to heat your pool and hot tub can yield extra savings. Consider these recommendations.

- ENERGY STAR pool pumps can save pool owners more than \$2,800 over the pump's lifetime. They also run quieter and can help prolong the pool filtration system.
- Use a solar cover to get free heat from the sun and prevent evaporation. If too much water evaporates, the water temperature drops
- Keep the filters clean. You'll save energy
- Be sure the water temperature is comfortable, about 80 degrees. Overheating wastes energy

Fireplace

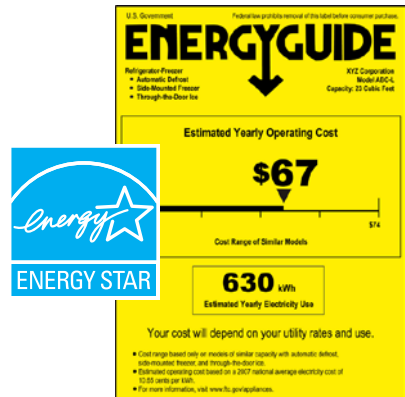
Add to the warmth and enjoyment of a fireplace by following these tips.

- Close the damper when the fireplace isn't being used. About 14% of air escapes your home through the fireplace chimney.
- Try not to run the fireplace and central heating system at the same time.
- Seal unused fireplaces to keep heat from escaping and cold air from coming in.

Shopping for New Appliances?

When shopping for new appliances, check EnergyGuide labels. They provide the annual operating cost and efficiency ratings of the appliance.

Look for ENERGY STAR® products that can save you money month after month. Buy the most energy efficient model you can to keep your energy costs down.



Save on Energy Bills

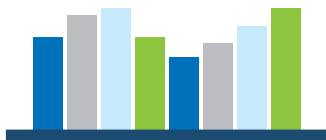
With 50 rebates for residential customers and more than 150 for businesses, there's something to help you reduce your cost with energy efficiency.

For home rebates and savings, visit ConsumersEnergy.com/MyHome

Get on the Budget Plan

Take those big seasonal surprises out of your energy bills with the Consumers Energy Budget Plan. You pay the same amount for energy each month — summer, winter, spring and fall — which makes budgeting a whole lot easier.

- Enrollment is free and easy
- Fits any lifestyle
- Great way to manage monthly energy bills



Uneven payments
without the Budget Plan.



Equal payment with the
Budget Plan.

It Pays to Have a Plan

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