

## Energy Saving Tips for the Home

The high cost of energy can be a major roadblock to saving money in a household. Monthly air conditioning expenses can be especially hard on an energy bill. There are, however, certain strategies that you can implement to live in a cool home at a reasonable cost. Sealing air leaks, covering windows, using fans, and installing Energy star equipment can do wonders for energy efficiency. Cooling only certain parts of your house, getting regular tune-ups on cooling equipment and knowing when to plug and unplug your appliances can also help reduce your energy costs.

### Check for Air leaks and Close them

Your energy consumption will be increased if there are leaks in the house. Tempered air will escape through these leaks causing your air conditioner to work harder and more often. Caulk Windows and install weather strips on doors to ensure that your tempered air does not escape. Also check some of the less obvious sources of air leaks, like light switches, air ducts, attics and basements and when replacing windows ensure that these are Energy Star rated.

### Cover your windows

During the summer months direct sunlight is a major contributor to high cooling costs. Pay particular attention to shading the East and West sides of your home, as these are the prime locations for heat to come in and increase cooling cost. Shade provided by trees in one the best ways to block out the direct sunlight. If you do not have trees or can't plant them, use awning, insulated drapes or curtains to block out the Sunlight.

### Turn on the fan

Stagnated air can make an environment feel uncomfortable. So in these areas use fans to move the air around. Circulating air not only makes you feel cooler but it can reduce the amount of time your HVAC system is on or provide for comfortable environment at a lower setting. Install a programmable or a smart thermostat that will turn your system off and on when you need to so that your environment will be comfortable when you come house and don't have to run your HVAC system all day. The Electrical companies even offer a rebate to make this option even more affordable. The smart thermostat that are available now a days will interface with your smart phone so that you can control your HVAC system From just about anywhere.

### Install Energy Star-compatible Equipment

When replacing equipment or appliances make sure that it is Energy Star rated. An Energy Star item will not only reduce your operating cost but it can reduce reliance on natural resources. In this way these items are green friendly and protect the environment from further disruption.

### Regular HVAC check ups

Ensure that your HVAC system is inspected regularly to ensure proper and efficient operation. This is in addition to checking that the filters are changed regularly to ensure that the HVAC operates as efficiently as possible.

### Know when to plug and unplug

Out of all of the energy savings tips, unplugging appliances that are not in use is probably the easiest way to save energy. Electronics and appliances that are plugged in but not being used still consume some amount of energy also known as phantom load or the energy that is used when your items are in Standby mode. Phantom loads actually account for about 5% of all energy used in the United States or about 19 million dollars. If you are not able to unplug your devices consider plugging the device into a power strip and turning this off when not using the devices. A smart power strip will cost about \$40.00 but it can save roughly \$100.00 per year. The top ten phantom load appliances are:

1. TV
2. Home Computers
3. Home Theater
4. Cell phone chargers
5. Microwave
6. Printers
7. Coffee makers
8. Computer modems
9. Satellite/cable boxes
10. Fans