

Bright Ideas for Conserving Resources and Saving Money

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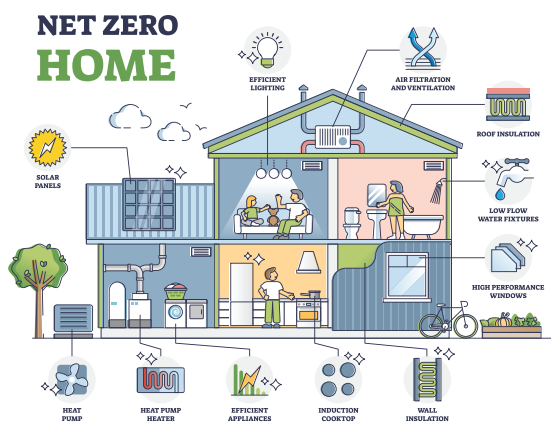
Conserving resources is not only better for the environment, but also for the bank account! There are many simple steps which can be taken to reduce household energy and water use and lower your utility bills. Investments in energy and water efficiency improvements can pay for themselves over time.

Simple DIY Household Energy Saving Tips

- Turn off or unplug electronics when they are not in use. Many electronics use electricity even when they are turned off or in standby mode. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that energy consumption from electronics that are powered off, but still plugged in, can cost a household hundreds of dollars a year. Using a power strip with an on/off switch for televisions, stereos, microwaves, dishwashers, and other appliances is a convenient way to disconnect power without having to regularly unplug.
- Turn lights off when rooms are not in use, take advantage of natural lighting from windows, and use LED light bulbs whenever possible.
- Electric hot water heater thermostats can be adjusted to lower temperatures. Consider how you can reduce hot water use: modern laundry detergents are designed to work with cold water; take cooler showers in the summer).
- Weatherize and air-seal drafty windows and doors. Window and door seals are common sources of air leaks and can be remedied with caulking or seal replacement. Taping heavy-duty plastic inside of single paned windows is a cheap alternative to window replacement.
- Replacing non-programmable thermostats with a digital programmable thermostat can allow heating and cooling systems to automatically adjust the temperature down in the winter and up in the summer when the home is not occupied.

Larger Home Energy Improvements

- A home energy audit can identify the best strategies for saving energy at home. Ask your home energy efficiency professional about conducting a blower door test to reveal sources of air leakage, which is a major driver of energy costs.
- Insulating attics, floors and crawlspaces, air-sealing, and upgrading old HVAC equipment are often the most effective home energy investments. Replace electric resistance heaters (i.e., baseboard heaters) or furnaces with high efficiency heat pumps for long-term savings.
- Avoid unvented gas appliances, such as propane space heaters, because they emit harmful gases such as carbon monoxide, contributing to asthma and other health risks.
- Consider installing storm windows before investing in replacement windows, and look for high-efficiency, high quality, Energy Star rated windows and doors.
- Always look for high-efficiency, Energy Star models when purchasing new appliances of any kind. Energy Star covers a wide range of options. So, look for the most efficient models.



- Contact your local electric utility or one of the organizations below to learn more about incentives and programs to assist homeowners, renters, farms and businesses to save energy and lower their bills. The Federal Inflation Reduction Act, passed in 2022, has created numerous new incentives for improving residential energy efficiency.

Household Water Saving Tips

- Limit showering time and only wash full loads of clothing and dishes.
- Repair leaking toilets, faucets, and hoses. A leaky toilet can waste hundreds of gallons of water per day.



- Sewer bills in urban areas are typically calculated based on water usage. Reducing water usage can also reduce municipal sewer charges.
- Minimize outdoor irrigation. Avoid watering your lawn or convert your lawn to native landscaping that does not require irrigation.
- Aerated shower and sink heads can reduce water consumption and thereby reduce hot water demand as well.

Additional Resources

Mountain Association, Energy Program



<https://mtassociation.org/energy/>

U.S. Dept. of Energy, Energy Saver



<https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/energy-saver>

New Incentives for Home Energy Efficiency



https://www.energystar.gov/about/federal_tax_credits/non_business_energy_property_tax_credits

Kentucky Housing Corporation, Weatherization Assistance Program



<https://www.kyhousing.org/Partners/Developers/Single-Family/Weatherization-Assistance/Pages/default.aspx>

U.S. Dept. of Energy, Home Improvement Expert Checklists



<https://basc.pnnl.gov/home-improvement-expert/checklists>