

Summer Energy Conservation Tips

Raise your thermostat to at least 78 degrees. For every degree higher you set it, you'll save 2 to 3 percent on the air conditioning part of your electric bill.

Installing a programmable thermostat can help you reduce your heating and cooling bills by as much as 10 percent a year.

Sealing air leaks in your home can reduce energy usage of 10 percent or more.

Clean or replace central air system filters once a month.

Shade your air conditioner by planting a tree. This can increase operating efficiency.

Cover sun-struck windows with sun screens, reflective film, or awnings to keep the heat out.

Turn lights off when not in use. Not only do they use energy, but they also heat up the room and make your air conditioner work harder.

Consider replacing your regular incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent ones. Fluorescent bulbs last longer, use less electricity, and help your home stay cooler in the summer because they generate less heat than conventional light bulbs. Compact fluorescent bulbs are four times more energy efficient than incandescent bulbs and provide the same lighting.

Let Mother Nature light your home. Sunlight is brighter than a multitude of light bulbs, and it's free.

Use a microwave or toaster oven to cook small portions of food and a conventional oven or stove-top for larger items.

If your home has a fireplace, be sure the damper is closed tightly.

Wrap air conditioning ducts with insulation; seal the seams with duct tape. You can save up to 10 percent of your cooling costs by insulating and tightening up ducts.

Do all of your ironing at one time to prevent having to heat the iron several times.