

Adjust Your Thermostat And Save Money

(KAIR)--Unless there is a noticeable change in temperature in a home, many people may not pay much attention to where their thermostat is set. However, our love of technology may change that.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, you can save as much as ten percent a year on heating and cooling costs by turning the thermostat up or down 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting for eight hours a day. K-State Research and Extension family resource management specialist Elizabeth Kiss says a smart thermostat or a programmable thermostat can automatically make those adjustments. She says “a smart thermostat can actively learn what your preferences are, and you can control it remotely. Whereas a programmable thermostat you go and you stand there and you program it, but they can have many settings so you can do daytime, you can do nighttime, you can do weekend, you can do during the week, so you have it already done for you and then it is automatic, that's the beauty of a programmable thermostat.”

If your utility company offers free energy audits or will install a free programmable thermostat they can cycle to reduce energy use during peak times, Kiss says don't be skeptical. She says that “you know, we sometimes think that oh, they want us to spend more because its good for them, but yet, the more we spend, the more capacity they have to have to provide it, so there is a balance there, and really I think that the energy companies would like us to use less energy because then their current power plant is good, it lasts longer.”

Sometimes reducing energy costs can be expensive, such as having to replace an old furnace or air conditioner. Other times, it's relatively inexpensive such as adding foam gaskets to outlets. And, Kiss says other times it just takes a behavioral change to reduce energy costs. “I suppose we all remember stories of grandparents or parents saying how many sweaters do you have on? Or..put on another pair of socks or whatever, and you know some people don't want to live like that, and I totally get it, but just a little bit, even a couple of degrees when you are at home, and then a more significant six to eight degrees or eight to ten degrees when you are gone. And that is what it is all about. If you do the easy things, like turning it down in the winter and up in the summer when you are gone, you are not even affected by it.”

More information on reducing energy costs is available online through the U.S. Department of Energy at energy.gov. You can also find more information and publications at county and district Extension offices and on the Extension website ksre.ksu.edu.

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