

12 Ways to Save Energy and Money

Saving energy and money go hand in hand, so the Consumer Federation of America (CFA) has identified 12 simple ways consumers can save both. The CFA is a nonprofit association of more than 250 consumer groups, found in 1968 to advance consumer interests through research, advocacy, and education. The CFA supports nationwide efforts to become more energy independent, improve the environment, and save households hundreds of dollars in unnecessary energy costs.

As one of the nation's leading consumer organizations, we're pleased to provide consumers with energy-saving tips that also save money. CFA has long been a strong supporter of energy efficient policies and practices, especially those that benefit consumer's pocketbooks, said Mel Hall-Crawford, CFA's Energy Projects Director. Energy takes a huge bite out of household budgets, with the typical family spending about \$2,200 each year on utility bills. We're suggesting simple ways to put some of that money back into consumers' pockets, said Hall-Crawford.

Consider using these energy saving tools to also save money and help the environment.

12 tips to save energy dollars:

- 1. Air dry. Air dry dishes instead of using your dishwasher's drying cycle. Most new dishwashers have a setting for Air dry instead of Heat dry. Use this setting to save automatically.**
- 2. Turn it off. Use timers and motion detectors to turn off lights. Be sure to unplug TV entertainment systems when traveling (use power strips for easy on/off switching). Don't leave your computer and monitor on needlessly.**
- 3. Don't get burned with hot water. Lower the thermostat on your water heater to 120F. Water heaters are the second highest source of energy use in the home.**
- 4. Fill it up, please. Wash and dry only full loads of dishes and clothes.**
- 5. Keep em clean. Check furnace, heat pump, and AC filters once a month and clean or replace them regularly. A dirty air filter can increase your energy costs and cause problems with your equipment.**
- 6. Get a checkup. Get your heating and air conditioning system checked once a year. A licensed professional will make sure that your systems are operating**

efficiently and safely. Checkups can identify problems early.

7. Stop the breeze. Caulk and weather-strip around drafty doors and windows. Consider replacing windows for even more energy efficiency.

8. Get an audit. Your utility company may offer free energy audits that can identify expensive energy losses in your basement, unfinished rooms, attics and leaky duct work. Sealing your ducts can give big savings on energy bills and help keep you from turning up the thermostat because of one cold room.

9. Take a walk. Circle your home with an easy-to-use spray foam insulation and look for openings and gaps around pipes, chimneys, lights, windows and basement brick and cement work.

10. Get with the program. Install a programmable thermostat, which automatically adjusts the temperature during the day or at night, keeping you from forgetting as you dash off to work. A programmable thermostat can save up to \$100 a year.

11. Stay bright. As Aold-school@ incandescent light bulbs burn out, replace them with new, light emitting diode bulbs (LEDs) and save about \$90 a year in electricity costs. You pay more up-front, but shop around, prices are dropping. They use up to 25% less energy, can last up to twelve times longer and light like the old fashioned ones do.

12. Be a star. Look for products and appliances that have earned the ENERGY STAR label. They meet strict new energy efficiency criteria that will reduce your utility bills and help the environment. ENERGY STAR clothes washers, for example, use approximately 40% less water and 25% less energy for washing than standard models.

When you use these money saving tools, consider actually saving the money you saved to boost your emergency savings fund, or to make an extra payment on credit card or student loan debt. Money Asaved@ not purchasing somethingCin this case, energyCisn=t actually saved unless it is moved to a savings instrument, such as an emergency fund, or to pay down debt.