



# 10 Ways to Cut Your Energy Bill

Where  
do  
your  
energy  
dollars  
go?

One of the easiest ways to lower your utility bill is to eliminate unnecessary energy use. To do that, you need to know how your home consumes energy.

In a typical household, approximately 80 percent of your energy bill is used to heat and cool your home, as well as heat your water. All other appliances, electronic equipment and lighting consume the remaining 20 percent.



\$40  
Heating

\$20  
Cooling

\$20  
Water

\$20  
Lighting, etc.

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## Follow these tips to save!

Now that you know how the average home uses energy, you can look for ways to conserve in your own house. By making a few simple changes, your home will be more energy efficient and you'll have more money in your wallet. The tips on the following pages will get you started.

## 1 Control room temperature

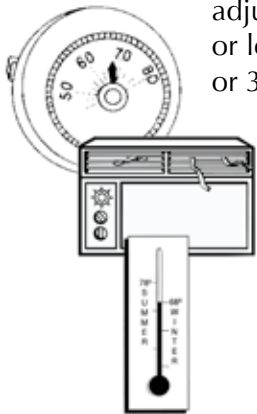
Dial down in the winter.

Dial up in the summer.

More than half of your utility bill is spent to heat and cool your home. When you're at home, one of the best ways to save energy – and money – is to use less air conditioning and heating. Just a few degree changes in temperature levels can make a big difference in the amount of energy used.

If you will be away from the house for more than four hours, turn the heater down or the air conditioner off to save even more.

No thermostat? If the controls on your air conditioning and heating systems do not have degree markings like 70, adjust the controls to medium or low or to a number like 1, 2 or 3 on a dial. Then use a wall thermometer to make sure you have selected an efficient setting.



## 2 Reduce water heater setting

How hot is hot?

Your water heater may be heating water hotter than necessary. A temperature setting as low as 120° is high enough for most household needs, including bathing and washing dishes.

To adjust your water heater setting, first locate the temperature controls. A gas water heater control is easy to set since the temperature control is on the outside of the tank. Simply turn the dial to “low.”

The electric water heater has two temperature controls. Unplug the heater or turn off at the fuse box or circuit breaker, then remove both panels and adjust the temperature. Replace the panels and turn the power on.

If you don't know how to adjust the setting, call MLGW and a customer service representative will do it free of charge.

Going out of town?

Turn the gas water heater to its lowest setting or use the “vacation” setting. An electric water heater can be unplugged or turned off at the fuse box or circuit breaker.

## 3 Insulate your water heater

Wrap it up to keep the heat.

Your water heater is working 24 hours a day to provide hot water for your family. To keep heat from escaping, wrap the tank with an insulated blanket. Be sure to follow package directions to install the blanket properly.

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## 4 Control water flow

Take five and save.

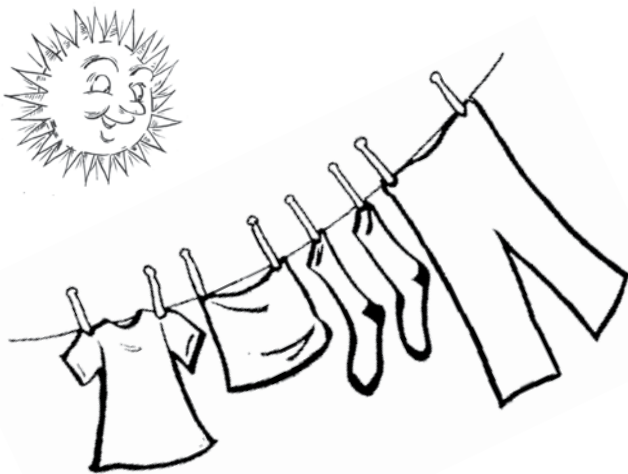
When you shower, keep it short. A five-minute shower uses less water than a tub bath, but longer showers are wasteful. You can save even more by installing a water-saver showerhead, fixing plumbing leaks and washing only full loads of dishes.

## 5 Use laundry logic

Wash with cold.

Dry with the sun.

On your next washday, try using cold water with a cold-water detergent. On nice, sunny days, hang clothes outside to dry rather than using the dryer. Do laundry and other heat producing chores at the coolest time of the day to reduce moisture build-up. To save even more, make sure you wash full loads of clothes.



## 6 Plug air leaks

Don't let the cold winds blow inside.

It's easy to locate air leaks in your home on a cold, windy day. Walk around the inside of your home and see if there is air coming from:

- Windows
- Exterior doors
- Plumbing/cable entrances
- Baseboards

Plug the big holes immediately to stop heat or air conditioning loss. Use large pieces of batt insulation or rags, or cover holes with cardboard and seal with duct tape. Small holes and cracks can be repaired with caulk or other weatherization materials.

Make sure your fireplace damper is closed when the fireplace is not in use. You can also block chimney drafts by putting plywood or heavy cardboard over the front of the fireplace when not in use.

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## 7 Install storm windows

Keep warm air in and cold air out.

If you are unable to install permanent storm windows, here's a low cost way to reduce heat loss: install plastic storm windows. Adding a thin plastic sheeting over drafty single-pane windows can reduce your need to raise the temperature setting in your home. Keep the plastic on for year-round comfort.

## 8 Change furnace filters

The heat is on.

Your air conditioner and furnace filters should be changed every month for maximum efficiency. Metal mesh filters can be washed and reused, while fiberglass filters must be replaced. Record the filter size needed and follow installation instructions on the package.

## 9 Adjust refrigerator setting

Some chilling facts about refrigerators.

Your refrigerator operates 24 hours per day all year long. To increase efficiency, set the refrigerator temperature between 38° and 40° and the freezer section at 0°. Open the doors as seldom as possible and close them quickly to prevent temperature loss. Frost build-up of one inch or more will cause the motor to run longer to keep foods cold, so defrost whenever necessary.

Unplug all unused refrigerators or freezers. For safety reasons, lock doors on unplugged appliances or dismantle the door hinge.

## 10 Start an energy action plan

Save energy and money.

Use these suggestions to develop your own energy plan. See how easy it can be to reduce use and save money.

- Use energy-efficient thermostat settings
- Reduce water heater setting
- Insulate water heater
- Control water flow
- Wash clothes in cold water, dry in the sun
- Plug air leaks
- Install storm windows
- Change furnace filters monthly
- Adjust refrigerator setting
- Start now to save energy dollars



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