



CHECKLIST: LOW-COST WAYS TO BE ENERGY EFFICIENT AT HOME

Are you looking for ways to save money and reduce energy consumption at home? Below is a list of no- or low-cost ways to reduce your energy consumption. Do as many or as few as you can each month, and watch the savings add up!

GETTING STARTED

- ❑ Get a Thurston Energy HomePLUS™ energy evaluation for your home. This comprehensive energy audit uses high-tech diagnostic tools to find air leakage, missing insulation, water damage and more. A customized report provides you specific information about how efficient your home currently is, and what can be done to improve its energy performance.

HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING

- ❑ Install a programmable thermostat. If you use it to set back the temperature by 10 degrees for eight hours every night, you'll lower your heating bills by 10%.
- ❑ Change or clean your furnace filter once a month. Dust can clog vital parts, making your furnace run harder.
- ❑ Have your heating system inspected regularly. An annual tune-up can help reduce your heating costs by up to 5%.
- ❑ Vacuum registers and vents regularly, and don't let furniture and draperies block air flow.
- ❑ If your home has electric baseboard heating, keep furniture and draperies away from the heaters.
- ❑ If you have a forced-air furnace, do NOT close heat registers in unused rooms. Your furnace is designed to heat a specific square footage of space and can't sense if a register is closed - it will continue working at the same pace.
- ❑ Don't set the thermostat higher than you actually want it. It doesn't heat your home any faster, and it keeps your furnace running longer than necessary.
- ❑ Keep curtains and blinds closed at night to keep cold air out, and open them during the day to let the sun warm the room.
- ❑ Avoid using space heaters. Not only are they expensive to operate, they can also be very dangerous.
- ❑ If you have hardwood or tile floors, add area rugs to keep your feet warm.
- ❑ If you'll be going on vacation during the winter, set the thermostat to 55 degrees (or 82 in summer).

- ❑ Maintain your central air conditioner by cleaning the outside compressor regularly.
- ❑ Shade south- and west- facing windows during the hottest part of the day.
- ❑ Raise the A/C thermostat to about 78 to 80 degrees at night or when you leave the house. A programmable thermostat can do this for you automatically.
- ❑ Use ceiling fans to help circulate air throughout the house. A ceiling fan should run clockwise during the summer, and counter-clockwise during the winter.
- ❑ If your home can't accommodate central air conditioning, try a whole-house attic fan. Attic fans cost less than 25 cents per day to operate.
- ❑ During the winter, remove window air conditioners and seal the windows with caulk and weatherstripping.

FIREPLACES AND WOOD STOVES

- ❑ If you have a wood-burning device, have the chimney cleaned and inspected regularly.
- ❑ Check the seal on the damper. If it's drafty, repair or replace the damper.
- ❑ When using your fireplace, turn down your furnace to 55 degrees.
- ❑ Add fireproof caulk where the chimney meets the wall, inside and outside.
- ❑ When not in use, make sure fireplace dampers are sealed tight, and keep the doors closed. If you don't use your fireplace, plug the chimney with a chimney balloon and seal the doors with caulk.

WEATHERIZING YOUR HOME

- ❑ Seal doors and windows with caulk, weatherstripping and plastic film (for windows or unused doors).
- ❑ Add foam gaskets behind all outlet covers and switch plates, and use safety plugs in all unused outlets.
- ❑ Check the exterior of your home for air leaks, especially around openings for water spigots, air conditioner hoses, dryer vents and gas pipes. Use caulk or expanding foam to seal spaces.



665 Woodland Square Loop SE, Suite 201 | Lacey WA 98503
360.528.2112 direct | 360.754.6320 main | 360.407.3980 fax
info@thurstonenergy.org | www.thurstonenergy.org



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- ❑ Don't forget to weatherize the attic and crawl space access. Secure batt insulation to the back of the hatch or door, and use weatherstripping to seal the opening.

WATER HEATING

- ❑ Set the water heater temperature to 120 degrees - this will help save energy and prevent scalding, while keeping unhealthy bacteria from growing.
- ❑ Install a water-saving showerhead. A family of four, each taking a five-minute shower a day, can save \$250 a year in water heating costs by switching to a high-efficiency showerhead.
- ❑ Fix leaky faucets. One drop per second can add up to 165 gallons of water wasted a month!
- ❑ Use aerators on kitchen and bathroom sink faucets.
- ❑ Take showers, not baths. A 5-minute shower uses about 10 gallons of hot water, while filling a bathtub can use 20 gallons or more.

IN THE KITCHEN

- ❑ Use smaller kitchen appliances whenever possible. Microwaves and toaster ovens can use 75% less energy than a large electric oven.
- ❑ Use lids on pots and pans to reduce cooking times, and don't put a small pan on a large burner (or vice versa).
- ❑ Vacuum the refrigerator coils about twice a year to keep the compressor running efficiently.
- ❑ Don't leave the refrigerator door open. Every time it's opened, up to 30 percent of the cooled air can escape. The same rule holds for the oven, too.
- ❑ Don't overload the refrigerator or freezer. The cold air needs to circulate freely to keep foods at the proper temperature.
- ❑ Use your oven's self-cleaning feature immediately after cooking, while the oven is still hot. This will reduce a lengthy warm-up time.
- ❑ Keep the grease plates under range burners clean to reflect heat more efficiently.
- ❑ Run the dishwasher only with full loads, and use the air-dry cycle.

IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM

- ❑ Wash only full loads of clothes, and be sure to set the water level appropriately.
- ❑ Use hot water only for very dirty loads, and always use cold water for the rinse cycle.

- ❑ Clean the lint screen on the dryer every time you use the machine. A clogged lint screen can make your dryer up to 30% less efficient - and it can be a fire hazard.
- ❑ Remove clothes from the dryer while they're still damp and hang them up. This will save energy, prevent static and reduce wrinkles and shrinkage.
- ❑ Dry one load of clothes immediately after another. This will reduce warm-up and drying times.

LIGHTING YOUR HOME

- ❑ Switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs. These bulbs use 75 percent less energy than typical incandescents, and last 10 times longer.
- ❑ Use lighting control devices like dimmers, motion detectors, occupancy sensors, and timers to provide light only when you need it - especially outside.
- ❑ Keep lamps away from thermostats; the heat produced can cause your furnace to run less than needed or your air conditioner more than needed.
- ❑ Dust light fixtures regularly. A heavy coat of dust can block up to 50 percent of the light output.

OTHER ENERGY SAVERS

- ❑ Get rid of spare refrigerators or freezers.
- ❑ Keep outdoor hot tubs covered when not in use.
- ❑ Keep attached garage doors closed.
- ❑ Unplug any electrical device that's not being used. Many appliances, especially computers, televisions and DVRs, draw power even when turned off.
- ❑ When you vacation, turn off and unplug everything you can, and set your water heater to the lowest setting.
- ❑ When purchasing new equipment, always read the Energy Guide label carefully, and make sure you're comparing "apples to apples." Energy use can range significantly even within a single brand.
- ❑ Choose the capacity that's right for your family. Whether it's a furnace or a refrigerator, it doesn't pay to purchase a unit that's too large or too small.
- ❑ Look for the "EnergyStar" logo. This designation from the Environmental Protection Agency means that the appliance exceeds minimum federal energy-use standards, usually by a significant amount.

