

ENERGY MATTERS

Facts & Tips from the U.S. Department of Energy

Energy Tips To Help Your Pocketbook And America

(NAPSA)—According to the Department of Energy, household energy costs have increased a whopping 12 percent from 2004. Even more startling is the price of natural gas, which rose by 23 percent.

The good news is that there are many actions Americans can take to lower their energy bills, and at the same time help the nation become more energy independent.

Keep Your Cool This Summer

- Use a microwave oven instead of a conventional oven.

- Use a power strip to control your electricity use. A large number of electrical products—especially home electronics—can't be switched off completely without being unplugged. These products draw power 24 hours a day. Plugging them into a power strip to shut them off will save you money.

- Lower the thermostat on your hot water heater to 115° and take showers instead of baths.

- Wash only full loads of dishes and laundry.

Landscape For Efficiency

- The shelter from three trees, properly planted around a house, can cut annual heating/cooling costs up to \$250.

- Grow vines on trellises to shade windows, the side of a house or AC units.

AC, Appliances And Lighting

- Open windows, when conditions permit, and use fans instead of air-conditioning. Use a fan to maximize and spread the cooled air from air conditioner units.

- Use a programmable thermostat with the AC to adjust the unit at night or when no one is home.

- Keep lamps and TVs away from the thermostat. Heat from appliances and lamps could cause the air conditioner to run longer.

Shade The Windows

- Install white shades, drapes



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or blinds to reflect heat. Close curtains on southwest-facing windows during the day. Sunny windows can make an air conditioner work three times harder.

- Replace single- and double-paned windows with ENERGY STAR-labeled windows to save energy and money for years to come. Install them before December 31, 2007, and qualify for a tax credit.

Weatherize

- Caulking and weather stripping will help keep out hot outside air, thus keeping indoor air cool. If you see holes in ducts, hire a professional to repair them.

- Add insulation around AC ducts in attics and crawl spaces.

- Consider investing in insulation for the whole house.

Whenever possible, purchase products with the ENERGY STAR label. The label means you are investing in energy efficiency, value, comfort and high performance.

Homeowners can save an estimated 30 percent (about \$450) a year on their home energy bill by using ENERGY STAR-qualified products.

For over 100 energy-saving tips, visit the Web site EnergySavers.gov.