

# ENERGY-SAVING IDEAS FROM THE EXPERTS



Most of the energy-saving ideas provided here will cost you very little; many of them are free. Give them a try and enjoy the savings.

For more energy-saving tips, request a copy of our *More Comfort, Less Energy* guide at [CenterPointEnergy.com/saveenergy](http://CenterPointEnergy.com/saveenergy)

**Making a few minor adjustments can make a big difference in the amount of energy you use. By dressing appropriately for the weather, sealing your house, and using appliances wisely, you can cut energy costs and increase comfort for you and your family.**

## Weatherize your home

- Weatherstrip and/or caulk around windows and door frames; seal bypasses.
- Insulate attic floor in the range of R-30 to R-44.
- Provide adequate ventilation for air circulation in your attic.
- Plant trees for a windbreak and sun protection.
- Insulate shades or drapes or hang liners behind drapes.
- Keep fireplace damper closed when not in use. Close doors and heat ducts to unused rooms.
- Keep doors to unheated areas (garage or attic) closed.
- Use kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans sparingly.

## Tips for keeping cool

- In summer, shade windows from direct sun with awnings and trees. Apply tinted plastic film to windows to reduce solar heat gain and reduce work for air conditioner.
- Keep cooling system clean, including filters, fans, ducts, vents and thermostats. Clean or change filter monthly during cooling season. Keep condensation drain open. Do not block circulation of air from vents or cold air returns with furniture or drapes.
- Keep outdoor cooling unit clean; remove leaves and debris. Clean exposed coils with garden hose.
- Plug cold air leaks around permanent window air conditioners. If grille plate is removable, tuck in cloth or plastic to shut off drafts; be sure to remove before turning unit on.
- Wear several layers of medium weight clothes versus one heavy layer.

## Using appliances wisely

### Range, oven or broiler

- Preheat oven five to ten minutes for pastries and foods that rise, such as cakes and breads. It is not necessary to preheat for meats and casseroles.
- Gas broiling is smokeless; broil with the door closed. Infra-red broilers do not need preheating.
- Bake multiple recipes and freeze extras for later use.
- Avoid opening oven door; you could lose up to 50 F.
- Never use oven to warm the kitchen; it was not designed for space heating and could be damaged.

### Range burners

- Cook on HIGH only when necessary. When food begins to boil, lower flame to smallest needed to maintain a gentle boil.
- Fit flame to pan size; cover pans whenever possible and cook foods in least amount of water necessary.
- If burner flame is yellow, ports (holes) and/or grates may need cleaning.

## Tips for keeping warm

Follow manufacturer's recommendation for proper maintenance of your heating system, or follow these instructions:

### Forced air furnace

- Check flue pipes for signs of rust, corrosion or holes.
- Check filters monthly and change as needed.
- Check ducts and repair leaks or separations; insulate if in an unheated area.

### Other tips

- Keep thermostat set at 65 to 68 F during the day and 58 F at night or when you will be gone four hours or more. Set at 55 F during winter vacations or long periods away from home.
- Keep furniture or other obstructions away from forced air vents.
- Open shades or drapes to let the sun warm the house. Other times, keep window coverings closed to keep cold air out.

### Microwave

- Use to heat small quantities of food (up to 2 cups).

### Refrigerator/freezer

- Allow space around unit for good air circulation.
- Set at highest temperature that will keep food from spoiling: 40 F for refrigerator, 0 F for freezer.
- Check refrigerator door seal; replace if necessary. Open and close door as little as possible, especially during hot weather.

### Dishwasher

- Wash only full loads; see owner's manual on loading.
- Scrape dishes but do not rinse; keep filter screen clean.
- Shut off dishwasher before drying cycle. Open door and let dishes air dry, or use energy-saver air-dry option, if possible.
- Use proper amount of detergent. Too much or too little reduces efficiency.

### Water heater

- Insulate hot water pipes that run through cold areas.
- Drain a few pails of water from faucet of new water heaters each month to remove sediment. NOTE: *If your water heater is an older model that has not been drained regularly, the build-up of sediment may be too much to drain.*
- Set your water heater to 120 F. Today's dishwashers typically have booster water heaters to further heat water to the higher temperatures needed for dishwashing.
- Fix leaky faucets or toilet tanks. A small leak can waste as much as 3,280 gallons of water a year.
- Avoid long showers and full tub baths.
- Install a controlled-flow showerhead to reduce hot water use.
- Run garbage disposal with cold water.

### Washer and dryer

- When convenient, wash and dry full loads.
- Use cold water rinse whenever possible.
- Clean dryer lint screen after each load. Dry fabrics only as much as necessary and run consecutive loads when possible.
- Vent dryer to outside.
- Separate lightweight fabrics from heavyweight fabrics.
- Use "automatic cycle" if your dryer has one. When replacing dryer, consider a large capacity model.

### Additional energy savers

- Turn off lights and TV in unoccupied rooms.
- Keep light bulbs clean; even a film of dust reduces efficiency. Fluorescent bulbs use less energy than incandescent bulbs, give more light, and last longer.
- Use less electricity during peak hours (4 to 8 p.m.) when possible.
- Check EnergyGuide labels when shopping for new appliances. Improved design and materials make new major appliances much more efficient.

For more information about efficient natural gas appliances, visit [CenterPointEnergy.com](http://CenterPointEnergy.com)



Always There.®