

Williams

Real Estate & Construction

Getting a Little Green - Energy Saving Tips

Many of us know people that go to extremes to be green. They make their own soap, refuse to own a car, and perhaps never use the air conditioner at home. To most of us these examples are extreme, but what if you could become a little greener, save some money, and feel better at the same time? Let's start by using less electricity at home.

How many people dread seeing the electric bill for the month of August? It's been 100°F for 20 days, and you know the pain that is coming in the bill. What if you could make a few minor changes and lower that bill by 10% - 20%? Let's first look at where we waste energy and thus spend the most money. In our homes these applications consume power:

1. Cooling and heating the home
2. Heating water
3. Running appliances (washer, dryer, refrigerator, freezer, etc.)
4. Lighting the home

Our goal, then, is to limit the energy used by these devices while maintaining our desired lifestyle. The following are a few steps that will help you make a dramatic impact on your electric bill:

1. Set the AC to 78°F.
2. Turn all ceiling fans to high in **occupied** rooms. It will feel 4° to 5° cooler than what the thermostat indicates.
3. Install a programmable thermostat if you are gone from your home for large blocks of the day.
4. Have insulation added to your attic space if needed.

Williams

Real Estate & Construction

5. Most appliances (computers, TV's, phone chargers, etc...) will continue to draw power even if turned off. Unplug everything you can and turn off the other items not in use.
6. Use your microwave instead of a conventional electric range or oven.
7. If your house has two or more ACs, the maximum temperature difference between these units should not exceed 3°.
8. Keep the window coverings closed at least 75% during the hottest periods of the day.
9. Replace or clean HVAC filters every month. (Always consult the manufacturer's manual for suggested maintenance schedule.)
10. Keep the outside HVAC unit(s) clean of grass, leaves, and dirt.
11. Have a licensed HVAC technician inspect the AC ducts and repair/seal all openings and have the system serviced before summer and before winter.
12. Only wash full loads of dishes and clothes.
13. Only do laundry or heavy cooking in the cooler periods of the day. Keep the laundry room door closed when the washer and dryer are operating.
14. Air dry dishes and clothes when possible.
15. Replace old light bulbs with compact fluorescents or even LED's.
16. Ensure that all kitchen and bath vents are ducted to the outside. Run the kitchen vent while cooking, and run the bath vent for ten minutes after showering. Lower humidity translates into superior comfort in the cooling season.
17. Lower the temperature on water heaters to 115°F and take showers instead of baths.

In following these few easy steps, you can save energy and impact your budget in a positive way.