

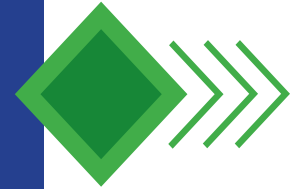


# SAVING HOME ENERGY

## DO-IT-YOURSELF ACTION CHECKLIST

Investing in energy efficiency may sound like it requires a lot of effort, time and money, but it doesn't have to. While there are certainly high-impact and high-cost measures that can be done, there are also smaller steps you can take to make your home more energy efficient, help you save energy and money, and live a more comfortable life. Yes, many energy efficiency investments are also associated with increased comfort!

Below is a list of eight simple measures to consider implementing.



### 1 UNPLUG OR TURN OFF UNUSED APPLIANCES AND ELECTRONICS.

Appliances and miscellaneous electrical loads are taking up more and more of our monthly electric bills. Therefore, one of the simplest things you can do is turn off your electronics, appliances and lights when they are not being used. However, some electronics, such as televisions, game consoles or computer chargers, can draw power even when turned "off," in what is known as phantom loads or vampire draw. This can also occur for smartphone chargers that are not connected. To avoid those pesky energy-wasting loads, consider completely unplugging them or shutting off the power strips they are connected to. You can also consider a smart power strip, which has certain outlets that can cut power to electronics that are not in use.



### 2 CHANGE OUT OLD LIGHT BULBS.

Light-emitting diode (LED) bulbs are the energy-efficient way to go. High-quality LED bulbs can last 20 or more years longer than incandescents while saving more than 75 percent on energy (they are also more efficient than compact fluorescent lamps, or CFLs). In the past, purchasing bulbs was based on the number of watts a bulb had. The more watts, the more powerful or

bright the bulb would be. However, watts refer to how much energy a bulb consumes, not how much light it gives off. Because LEDs are more efficient, they use fewer watts to produce light. The features to pay most attention to with LEDs are lumens (how bright the bulb is) and color temperature (how warm or cool the light is). For example, a 10-watt, 4000K LED bulb can emit the same brightness as a 60-watt incandescent bulb.



### 3 REPLACE HEATING AND COOLING SYSTEM AIR FILTERS.

The air filter(s) on your heating and cooling system can help keep the air in your home clean by reducing particles and other pollutants. A clean filter also allows your HVAC system to run more smoothly and efficiently because it does not have to work as hard to get air to each room. Most air filters should be changed every month. They are often found in your return grille or at a slot right at the air handler unit, and installation is usually as simple as removing the current filter and sticking in the new one. The arrow on the filter should point in the direction of the air flow. Just make sure you get the right size and type (your current filter should have this information on its side), and you are good to go. If you decide to change the type of filter, check with an HVAC contractor to make sure your system will still run smoothly, quietly and efficiently.

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## 4 SELECT "AUTO" FOR THE FAN SETTING ON YOUR THERMOSTAT AND KEEP AN EYE ON TEMPERATURES.

Setting your thermostat fan to "Auto" will ensure that it is running only when the system is heating or cooling, rather than all the time. When a single-speed fan is set to "On," it will operate constantly and can add significant cost to your monthly energy bill. Also, try to keep your thermostat to the warmest comfortable temperature in the summer and the coolest comfortable temperature in the winter. In the summer, aim for 78 degrees, and in the winter, shoot for 68 degrees. Depending on your daily schedule, you may consider investing in a programmable or smart thermostat to automatically set temperatures when heating or cooling is needed.

## 5 HAVE YOUR DUCTWORK CHECKED FOR LEAKS BY A HEATING/COOLING PROFESSIONAL.

Leaks at the return grille, air handler and supply registers can be a major source of high bills. For manufactured homes, also check at the crossover duct and down-flow air handler. You can enjoy the benefits of a good duct system by sealing your ducts with mastic instead of duct tape. Mastic is a goeey paste that can be slathered on ductwork joints in your system. You can check the ductwork closest to the air handler to see if mastic is used. Repairing leaky ductwork can improve indoor air quality by reducing the risk of pollutants entering ducts and circulating in your home.

## 6 WASH CLOTHES AND DISHES WHEN LOADS ARE FULL.

Use your washer, dryer and dishwasher only when loads are full. Use cold water when possible for general clothes washing, and use hot water only when needed and appropriate for the fabric. When dishwashing, try air drying instead of heat drying. If you buy electricity on a time-of-day rate, do these activities when electricity is lower in cost.

## 7 INVEST IN LOW-FLOW SHOWERHEADS AND FAUCETS.

Low-flow showerheads and faucets use fewer gallons per minute (gpm) of water and can save money and energy by reducing demand on your water heater. Look for one with the WaterSense® label, which indicates that the product met criteria set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reduce energy use without compromising performance.

## 8 SHOP AROUND FOR NEW APPLIANCES WITH THE ENERGY STAR® LABEL.

When ready to purchase a new appliance or electronics, consider upgrading those with an ENERGY STAR labeled model. ENERGY STAR is a program through the EPA that promotes and supports energy efficient products. Appliances and electronics with this designation have gone through testing to ensure they perform as expected and reduce energy consumption. A large number of products have been certified by ENERGY STAR, including refrigerators, ceiling fans and washing machines.

These simple actions are low-cost ways to improve your home's energy efficiency, increase savings and enhance comfort. Some can be done one time and not thought about again for years (e.g., changing light bulbs and faucets), others require maintenance every month or so (e.g., replacing filters), and the rest are behavior changes or things to keep an eye on as you go about your day (e.g., temperature settings, turning off electronics). But what they all have in common is their ability to increase comfort while saving you energy and money without taking over your day or breaking the bank. What's not to like?