

### Green Energy Savings Checklist

Not that you need more to do, but how about taking a weekend and giving your home or business a green energy savings review. I looked through a few of my resources (listed below) and came up with this checklist of things to consider when trying to save some money on your utility bills.

1. Change your furnace air filter. This is an easy thing you can do regularly to improve not only your air quality but your heating and cooling bill, helping your system not have to work so hard.
2. Program your thermostat. If you have a programmable thermostat, use it set the temperature cooler at night (when you are sleeping, you don't have to have the heat up so high) and turn it down when you are gone during the day—just set it to kick back on to your preferred temp 20-30 minutes before you wake up or before your return. If you don't have a programmable thermostat, consider installing one for under \$100—you'll get that back in savings.
3. Clean your refrigerator coils. Once or twice a year, pull out that fridge, unplug it and clean the coils using a vacuum attachment or warm, soapy water (see your manufacturer's directions). It will help the appliance run more efficiently.
4. Skip the heated dry cycle and the rinsing with your dishwasher. You know to only run the dishwasher once it is fully loaded, but how about just allowing the dishes to air-dry inside the dishwasher. You can skip the rinsing before you put the dishes in if you are going to run it the same day, as most models and detergents already take care of that (you'll save up to 20 gallons of water per load). Even if they are going to sit overnight, use your dishwasher's Rinse feature, which uses far less water than hand rinsing.
5. Wash only full laundry loads in cold water. Most detergents now work very well in cold water. Even if you use warm water, you'll save energy, compared to using hot water. Also, be sure and regularly clean your dryer's lint filter.
6. Wrap your water heater. If you have an older model that doesn't have thick, thick insulation, you can get a hot water heater blanket which costs around \$5 or so. Check your water heater temperature while you're at it—only 110-115 degrees is all you need.
7. Check the insulation in your home. If you can see the floor joists, you may need more insulation in your attic. You could even consider getting rid of your fiberglass insulation and using the more energy-efficient, more earth-friendly and healthy option of recycled cotton insulation (you can install it yourself).
8. Use power strips. Plug your electronic devices into power strips that can be turned off when not in use, or simply unplug the devices directly. This will keep the constant drain of these "energy vampires" at bay.

These are just a few things you can do to give yourself an energy boost and help your bottom line this year. (Sources: *Living Like Ed* by Ed Begley, Jr. and *Green Living* by the Editors of E/The Environmental Magazine.)

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