

DTE No-Cost, Low-Cost Energy-Saving Tips

The following do-it-yourself no-cost and low-cost energy-savings tips can help you lower your energy bill without sacrificing comfort:

Year-Round

Water heating

- Lower the thermostat on your water heater to 120°F. Water heating can account for 14 percent to 25 percent of the energy consumed in your home. For households with one or two members, set your water heater even lower to 115°F.
- Insulate your water heater with a water-heater blanket.
- Take showers instead of baths. A 5-minute shower typically uses less than 15 gallons of water, while a bath can use 30 to 40 gallons.
- Install water-saving shower heads.
- Don't let water run while brushing your teeth or shaving.

In the kitchen

- Switch your refrigerator's powersaver to "On," if available.
- Keep refrigerator coils and condenser area free of dust.
- Set the refrigerator temperature between 36°F and 38°F and the freezer between 0°F and 5°F.
- Defrost manual-defrost freezers when frost build-up is more than 1/4-inch thick.
- If possible, locate refrigerators and freezers away from direct sunlight and other warm air sources such as ranges and heating equipment.
- Use your dishwasher to wash only full loads of dishes.
- Let your dishes air-dry in your dishwasher rather than using the drying feature.
- When cooking on the range, use pot lids. Food will cook faster.
- Use cold water to scrape dirty dishes before putting them into the dishwasher and when running the garbage disposal.
- Use microwave for cooking when possible.

In the laundry room

- Wash laundry with less water and cooler water. About 90 percent of the energy used for washing clothes in a conventional top-load washer is for water heating.
- Wash and dry full loads. If you are washing a small load, use the appropriate water-level setting.
- Dry towels and heavier-weight items in separate loads.
- Clean the dryer lint trap in the dryer after every load.
- Inspect the dryer vent regularly to make sure it is not kinked or clogged. Clean if needed.

- Dry consecutive loads to take advantage of the heat remaining in your dryer from the last load.

Lighting

- Replace any light bulb that burns more than one hour per day with a compact fluorescent bulb (CFL) equivalent.
- Turn lights off when not in use.
- Replace outdoor lighting with outdoor-rated CFL bulbs.
- Use outdoor security lights with a photocell and/or a motion sensor.

Miscellaneous

- Turn off electronic devices when not in use. Home electronics account for up to 15 percent of household electricity use.
- Plug electronic devices into power strips, and use the shutoff switches on the power strips when devices are not in use. Many devices - including TVs, VCRs, stereos, personal computers, monitors, printers, hair dryers and curling irons - draw a small amount of power even when switched off. This can be prevented by using power strips.
- When making purchases, buy energy-efficient equipment and appliances whenever possible. Look for the ENERGY STAR® label to ensure energy savings.

During Heating Season

- Keep your furnace well-maintained following the manufacturer's guidelines. Clean or replace the air filter regularly.
- Check ductwork for air leaks, especially at joints. Seal off leaks with foil-faced tape rather than duct tape.
- Check vents and registers to ensure drapes and furniture do not block airflow.
- Keep your thermostat as low as comfortably possible. For each degree you set your thermostat below 72°F, you can reduce your heating costs by approximately 3 percent.
- Minimize the number of times that doors to the outside are opened and closed.
- Set ceiling fans at a slow speed with the blades running counter-clockwise. This will push warm air away from the ceiling without creating a breeze.

During Cooling Season

- Keep your air conditioner well-maintained following the manufacturer's guidelines. Clean or replace the air filter regularly.
- Keep your thermostat as high as comfortably possible. For every degree you set your thermostat above 72°F, you can reduce your cooling bill by 3 percent.
- Set ceiling fans to run clockwise to provide better air circulation. Turn off ceiling fans when leaving the room.
- Cook outside on a grill as much as possible. Use your stove's exhaust fan to blow hot air out of your kitchen when cooking indoors.

- Run your dishwasher, your clothes washer and clothes dryer in the evening when outdoor temperatures are lower.
- Consider air-drying clothes on clothes lines or drying racks.
- Use drapes, curtains or blinds to keep windows covered during the day to reduce heat from the sun.