

Saving Energy Starts at Home

Reducing your energy use helps the environment by reducing CO₂ and other emissions and can substantially reduce your yearly utility costs. Some energy saving tips cost nothing up front, and even those with up-front costs can have a big payoff over time both for the environment and your budget. Here are 7 steps you can take right now to start saving energy:

1. Adjust thermostat settings – During the heating season, it is recommended to keep the daytime temperature at or below 68°F and then set it even lower at night. During the summer, the recommendation is for 78°F or higher. And when you are away from home you can set the temperature several degrees warmer or cooler depending on the season. Programmable thermostats can help in this regard. Check out the details and note some exceptions to these rules based on the type of heating system at: <http://energy.gov/energysaver/thermostats>
2. Wash clothes and dishes wisely – Wash only full loads; use cold water for laundry when possible; air dry dishes rather than use heated dry setting. (Saves both water and energy)
3. Use passive solar heating in winter and block sun in summer - In the winter let the sun in during the day for solar heating and draw shades at night to reduce heat loss. In the summer, block sun from windows on the east and west sides of your house. Planting native deciduous trees around your house helps block sunlight in summer and will allow the sun in after trees lose their leaves. Plus, trees provide natural cooling. <https://www.ncsu.edu/project/treesofstrength/benefits.htm>
4. Save energy commuting and around town – Take public transit, walk, or use a bicycle when possible. Plan shopping and errands so you make all the needed stops while you're out and try to do them in a logical circuit that minimizes distance traveled. Coast up to stop lights and take it easy when accelerating. (All these tips save energy and wear-and-tear on your car)
5. Reduce lawn area in your yard and reduce power tool use – Increasing natural areas mulched with leaves in your yard will cut down on lawn mower use and support a better habitat for birds and other wildlife. When working in the yard consider using hand tools instead of powered ones, e.g., a rake vs. a leaf blower, and get more exercise as a side benefit!
6. Use energy-saving light bulbs – LED bulbs are the best all-purpose bulbs for energy savings, and although expensive now, they're quickly getting cheaper. Compact fluorescent bulbs also save energy and are cheaper up-front, but they can't be dimmed and will wear out prematurely if turned on and off frequently.
7. Better insulate your house: Make sure you have adequate insulation, especially in the attic. Add weather-stripping as needed around doors and windows and consider insulation kits for electrical outlets and switches on exterior walls. If replacing windows use double-paned Low-E windows. See <http://energy.gov/energysaver/tips-insulation> for more details.

Note: the first 5 steps cost you nothing while number 6 and 7 have some upfront costs but will pay you back over time. Not mentioned in these recommendations, but certainly highly recommended, are the energy-saving options of putting solar panels on your roof and driving an electric or hybrid car. Instead, we wanted to stress the small steps that work for everyone and have less upfront cost.

[Return to Community Church ECO home page](#)