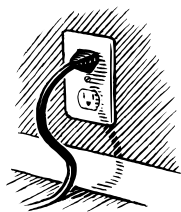


A Nurtured World Fact Sheet

Tips to Save Money and Energy in Texas



Energy is one of the top consumer environmental impacts and is hitting us all harder in the wallet each year (the average American spends \$1,500 per year on energy use). How would you like to lower your electricity and gas bills by 50 percent or more? New behaviors and investments in efficiency will save you more money each year as the price of energy keeps going up. Energy use in the average home is roughly 45% for heating and cooling, 42% for appliances and lighting; and 13% for water heating.

*Important Note: The largest portion of your bill is probably air conditioning (AC). So, to get the biggest bang for your buck, focus first on reducing cooling needs. The most important thing is to **take action!***

1. **Stop heating and cooling uninhabited spaces.** Close vents and doors to unused rooms and turn the AC up or the heat down when you leave the house (you can automate this with a programmable thermostat).
2. **Turn the AC up and the heat down a few degrees while you are in the house.** Think you'll be too hot? To acclimate, try increasing the temperature just one degree every couple of weeks, go to the pool, or spend more time outdoors.
3. **Don't heat up so much water.** Take shorter showers, install low flow showerheads, wash clothes in cold water, upgrade to a high efficiency clothes washer, and lower your water heater temperature to 120 degrees.
4. **Stop "Living La Vida Loaded"™.** Many appliances use electricity even when they are off or not in use (e.g., phone chargers, computers). Unplug equipment when not in use, plug your equipment into a standard power strip and shut off the power strip when you're done, or get a 'smart strip' to help automate shutting phantom loads off. Learn more at: www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~recycle/ssec/download/Phantom%20Load.pdf.
5. **Use compact fluorescent bulbs (CFL).** Fluorescent bulbs use less energy, last about 6 times longer, and don't heat up the house. Did you know that the mercury contained in a CFL is about ½ the mercury that would be emitted by a coal-fired power plant if you used an incandescent bulb? <http://local-warming.blogspot.com/2007/08/mercury-compact-fluorescent-cfl-bulbs.html>
6. **Maintain your AC unit and change the filter monthly.** Have the coils cleaned and the coolant pressure checked annually and change filters monthly to increase efficiency.
7. **Hang-dry your laundry.** You can save about \$150-200 per year and your clothes will last longer too!
8. **Keep the air moving.** Ceiling fans will help you feel cooler. You can also have 'security screens' installed by most security companies so you can open up your house during cool nights.
9. **Cook outside in warm weather.** When you turn on the oven, you heat up your house and the AC has to work overtime. Consider using a portable oven on the back porch when it gets hot.
10. **Use shade.** Install solar screens to keep the heat out of your house. Shade your AC unit and plant trees to shade the south and west sides of your home.



11. **Vacuum the coils on the bottom or back of the refrigerator** (and get rid of the extra one). Dirty coils make the fridge work harder so keep them clean.
12. **Weatherize your home** - A lot of heat radiates down from your attic, so adding insulation to your attic is important. Weatherizing your doors and sealing ducts will also help reduce heating and cooling costs.
13. **Get an efficient AC/heating unit and efficient appliances.** Get an AC unit with a high SEER rating and make sure you don't oversize the unit. An oversized unit will use more energy and cost more to run. If you want to go completely green, get a PURON unit. High efficiency refrigerators, clothes washers, and clothes driers are also good investments. Laptops also use less energy than desktops. Web sites to help you select upgrades include: www.rmi.org; www.energystar.gov; www.eere.energy.gov.

Note: The federal government offers tax credits for many types of upgrades such as high efficiency central air conditioners, water heaters, and energy-saving windows. To be eligible for the tax credit, improvements must be implemented in 2006-2007, or 2009-2010. There are no refunds for 2008 improvements. For more information visit Energy Star at www.energystar.gov/taxcredits.

14. **Build Green.** If you are remodeling or building a new home, apply green building methods. Helpful Web Sites for Green Building include: www.toolbase.org, www.homes-across-america.org and www.austinenergy.com/Energy%20Efficiency/Programs/Green%20Building/index.htm.

Note: There are certain tax credits available if you are building a new home. For more information visit the Energy Star Web site: www.energystar.gov/taxcredits.

15. **Local Resources for the San Antonio Area.** Check out the Metropolitan Partnership for Energy website, tips and links for energy conservation and building green: <http://www.buildsagreen.org/>.

