25 Low- and No-Cost Ways to Make Your Home More Energy Efficient

Reducing your home’s energy use is one of the best ways to lower your monthly costs. It’s also easier than you might think. Making simple changes to how you heat and cool your home, use electricity, and do things around the house can add up to big savings over time.

BGE’s Quick Home Energy Check-up, available at no additional cost to all residential electric customers in the utility's service territory, provides even more ideas for saving energy and money. But more on that later.

Try these energy-saving tips* today!

In the kitchen:

1. **Match your pots to your stove's burners.** Using a 6-inch pot on an 8-inch burner wastes more than 40% of the heat. Use lids to keep heat in and cook foods faster.
2. **Let your dishes air dry.** If your dishwasher doesn’t have an automatic air-dry switch, turn it off after the final rinse and prop the door open slightly so the dishes will dry faster.
3. **Clean dishes properly.** Scrape—don’t rinse—off large food pieces. Soaking or prewashing is generally only needed when food is burned or dried on. Only run full loads in the washer.
4. **Cover liquids and wrap foods stored in the refrigerator.** Uncovered foods release moisture and make your refrigerator work harder.
5. **Don’t keep your refrigerator or freezer too cold.** Recommended temperatures are 35˚ to 38˚F for refrigerators and 0˚F for separate freezers for long-term storage.
6. **Clean your refrigerator’s condenser coils twice annually.** Dirt and dust on the coils can cause your refrigerator to run inefficiently.
7. **Make sure your refrigerator door seals are airtight.** Test them by closing the door over a dollar bill halfway sticking out of the refrigerator. If you can pull the dollar out easily, the latch may need adjustment, the seal may need replacing or you may want to upgrade to a new ENERGY STAR® certified fridge.
8. **Use small electric pans, toaster ovens or convection ovens for small meals rather than your large stove or oven.** A toaster or convection oven uses one-third to one-half as much energy as a full-sized oven.

In the laundry room:

9. **Remove lint from your dryer.** Use the long nozzle tip on your vacuum to remove the lint that collects in the screen slot of your clothes dryer.
10. **Buy new, more efficient appliances.** If you are in the market for a new clothes washer or dryer, look for ENERGY STAR models, which use electricity and hot water more efficiently.

In the living room and home office:

11. **Turn off TVs, computers and other electronics when not in use.** Plug them into a smart power strip so when you turn it off, devices don’t use power in the standby mode.
12. **Use the sleep mode on your laptop.** It is a common misperception that screen savers reduce a monitor’s energy use. Use automatic switching to sleep mode or turn it off.
To heat and cool your home

13. **Have your heating and air conditioning systems tuned up annually.** Heating and cooling account for up to 50% of the energy you use at home. Clean or replace filters once a month or as recommended.

14. **Open and close window coverings based on the season.** On summer days, close window coverings to block the sun’s heat. In the winter, open coverings on south-facing windows during the day to let the sun in, and close them at night to keep cold air out.

15. **Avoid setting your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner.** It will not cool your home any faster and could result in excessive cooling and, therefore, unnecessary expense.

To light your home:

16. **Switch out old light bulbs.** Replacing 15 inefficient incandescent bulbs in your home with energy-saving LEDs could save you about $50 per year.

17. **Keep your curtains or shades open to use daylighting instead of turning on lights.** For more privacy, use light-colored, loose-weave curtains to allow daylight into the room. Also, decorate with lighter colors that reflect daylight.

In the bathroom and kitchen:

18. **Use less water.** Take showers instead of baths to use an average of 50% less water. Don’t run the water while brushing your teeth. Turning off the water while brushing your teeth can save as much as 3,000 gallons per year.

19. **Set the temperature on your water heater to 120°F.** Water heating is the second largest energy expense in your home, typically accounting for about 18% of your utility bill. When leaving home for extended periods, set the temperature even lower or turn your water heater off.

20. **Repair leaky faucets promptly.** A leaky faucet wastes gallons of water in a short period.

21. **Drain a quart of water from your water tank every 3 months.** This will remove sediment that impedes heat transfer and lowers the efficiency of your heater. Follow the manufacturer’s directions.

22. **Insulate your water heater.** Insulate your natural gas or oil hot water storage tank, but be careful not to cover the water heater’s top, bottom, thermostat, or burner compartment. Follow the manufacturer’s recommendations. You also can insulate the first 6 feet of the hot and cold water pipes connected to your water heater.

In your insulation:

23. **Look for dirty spots on your ceiling paint and carpet, and caulk around them.** They may indicate air leaks at interior wall/ceiling joints and wall/floor joists.

24. **Seal air ducts, particularly in your attic.** The unsealed ducts in your attic and crawlspace lose air, and uninsulated ducts lose heat—wasting energy and money.

25. **If you use tape to seal air ducts, avoid cloth-backed, rubber adhesive duct tape.** It tends to fail quickly. Instead, use mastic, butyl tape, foil tape or other heat-approved tapes.

In addition to the low- and no-cost tips above, BGE’s [Smart Energy Savers Program](#) offers the [Quick Home Energy Check-up](#), which can help you save even more. When you schedule a Check-up, an energy efficiency
professional visits your home to visually check the condition of your insulation, heating and air cooling system, lighting and appliances, and then he or she will suggest simple ways to help you save.