101 Low-Cost / No-Cost
Home Energy-Saving Measures

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Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative has compiled this list of low-cost / no-cost energy-saving measures to help you better manage your home's energy costs.

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Water Heating

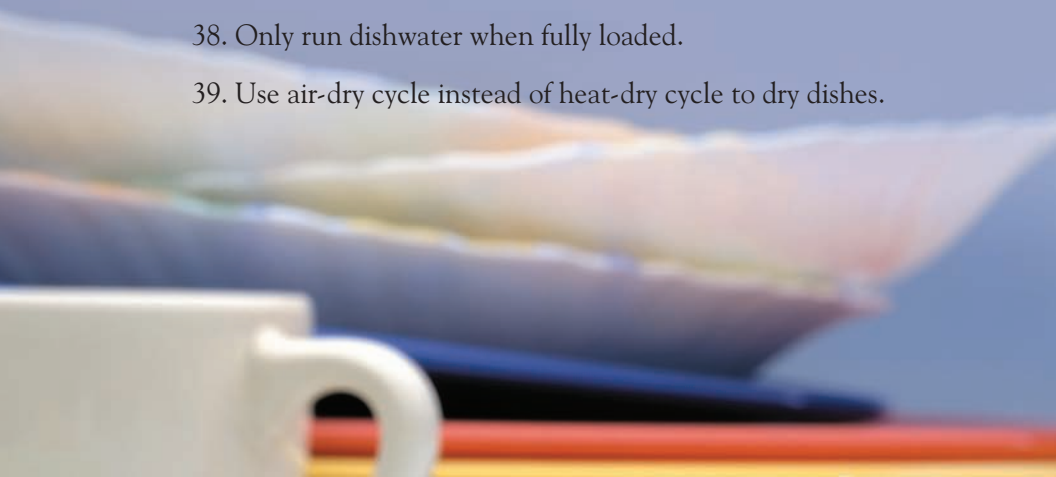
1. Set water heater temperature no higher than 120° F.
2. For households with 1 or 2 members, a 115°F setting may work fine.
3. Install water-heater wrap per manufacturer's instructions.
4. Drain 1–2 gallons from bottom of water heater each year to reduce sediment build-up.
5. Install heat traps on hot and cold water lines when it's time to replace your water heater.
6. Insulate exposed hot water lines.
7. Limit shower length to 5–7 minutes.
8. Install low-flow shower heads.
9. Fix dripping faucets.
10. Don't let water run while you are shaving.
11. Don't let water run while brushing your teeth.

Laundry

12. Wash clothes in cold water. Use hot water only for very dirty loads.
13. Do only full laundry loads.
14. If you must do smaller loads, adjust the water level in the washing machine to match the load size, especially when using hot water.
15. Always use cold-water rinse.
16. Use bath towels at least twice before washing them.
17. Clean your dryer's lint trap before each load.
18. Make sure that the outdoor dryer exhaust door closes when dryer is off.
19. Verify dryer vent hose is tightly connected to inside wall fitting.
20. Check that the dryer vent hose is tightly connected to dryer.
21. Make sure dryer vent hose is not kinked or clogged.
22. Minimize clothes drying time; use moisture sensor on dryer if available.
23. Dry consecutive loads to harvest heat remaining in dryer from last load.
24. Consider using a "solar-powered" clothes dryer, an old-fashioned clothes line.

Kitchen

25. Use your refrigerator's anti-sweat feature only if necessary.
26. Switch your refrigerator's power-saver to "ON," if available.
27. Clean refrigerator coils annually.
28. Set the refrigerator temperature to 34°–37°F and freezer temperature to 0°– 5°F.
29. Ensure gaskets around door seal tightly.
30. Unplug unused refrigerators or freezers.
31. Use microwave for cooking when possible.
32. When cooking on the range, use pot lids to help food cook faster.
33. If you are heating water, use hot tap water instead of cold.
34. Remember to use the kitchen exhaust fan when cooking and turn it off after cooking.
35. Let hot food cool before storing it in the refrigerator.
36. Rinse dirty dishes with cold water before putting them into the dishwasher.
37. Use cold water for garbage disposal.
38. Only run dishwater when fully loaded.
39. Use air-dry cycle instead of heat-dry cycle to dry dishes.



Lighting

40. Replace any light bulb that burns more than one hour per day with its equivalent compact fluorescent bulb.
41. Turn off unnecessary lighting.
42. Replace outdoor lighting with its outdoor-rated equivalent compact fluorescent bulb.
43. Use fixtures with electronic ballasts and T-8, 32-Watt fluorescent lamps.
44. Use outdoor security lights with a photocell and/or a motion sensor.

Miscellaneous

45. Turn computers and monitors off when not in use.
46. Make sure electric blankets are turned off in the morning.
47. Turn waterbed heater off when not needed.
48. Turn large-screen TV's off completely when not in use.
49. Turn off stereos and radios when not in use.
50. Remember to turn off hair curling irons and hot rollers.
51. Turn off coffee makers when not in use.
52. Turn off pool pump and/or heater when not needed.
53. Verify livestock water tank heaters are off when not needed.
54. Make sure heat tape is off when not needed.
55. Unplug battery chargers when not needed.
56. Ensure all new appliances you purchase are Energy Star-approved.

Heating & Air Conditioning

57. Set thermostats to 78°F in summer, 68°F in winter.
58. Run ceiling paddle fans on medium, blowing down in summer.
59. Run ceiling paddle fans on low, blowing up in winter.
60. Change HVAC filters monthly.
61. When installing new air filters, make sure they are facing in the correct direction. (Look for arrow on side of filter.)
62. When heating or cooling, keep windows locked.
63. Insulate electric wall plugs and wall switches with foam pads.
64. Caulk along baseboards with a clear sealant.
65. Close fireplace dampers when not burning a fire.
66. Caulk around plumbing penetrations that come through walls beneath bathroom and kitchen sinks.
67. Caulk electrical wire penetrations at the top of the interior walls.

68. Close shades and drapes at night to keep heat in during the winter.

69. Make sure drapes and shades are open to catch free solar heat in the winter.

70. Close shades and drapes during the day to help keep heat out during summer.

71. Ensure attic access door closes tightly.

72. Insulate attic access door.

73. Make sure insulation in your attic does not block soffit vents.

74. Do not close off unused rooms that are conditioned by forced-air systems.

75. Do not close supply air registers.

76. Ensure return air grilles are not blocked by furniture or bookcases.

77. Ensure windows and doors are properly weather-stripped.

78. Make sure outside soffit vents are not blocked.

79. Do not use roof-top power ventilators for attic exhaust as they may evacuate conditioned air from your home.

80. Have your HVAC system serviced once per year by a NATE-certified technician.

81. Monitor your home's relative humidity in the summer. If it consistently stays in the 60-percent range or higher, ask your HVAC technician about lowering your central air conditioning unit's indoor fan speed.

82. Ensure window A/C units are weather-stripped.

83. Ensure windows with window mounted A/C units have weather-stripping between the middle of the top and bottom pane.

84. Remove and clean window A/C filter monthly.

85. Keep "fresh-air" vents on window A/C units closed.

86. Minimize use of electric space heaters.

87. When using the fireplace, reduce heat loss by opening damper in the bottom of the firebox (if provided) or open the nearest window slightly.

88. Caulk around basement windows.

89. In a basement, seal the sill and band joist with durable caulking or foam sealant.

90. Ensure floor registers are not blocked with rugs, drapes or furniture.

91. Ensure your outdoor heat pump / air conditioning unit is kept clean and free of debris.

92. Outside your home, caulk around all penetrations including telephone, electrical, cable, gas, water spigots, dryer vents, etc.

93. Caulk around storm windows.

94. Use heavy-duty, clear sheets of plastic on the inside of windows to reduce the amount of cold air entering your home.

95. Verify your supply air duct “boots” (behind supply air registers) are caulked to your ceiling or wall sheetrock or flooring.

96. If in unconditioned space, verify your ducts are tightly connected to your HVAC equipment.

97. Verify all outdoor doors (including storm doors) close and seal tightly.

98. In two-story homes serviced by one HVAC system, a paddle fan at the top of the stairs can push down hot, second-floor air.

99. Install 15 minute, spring-wound timers on bathroom ventilator fans.

100. Always run your HVAC system fan on “AUTO.” Running it on “ON” uses more electricity and can decrease your air conditioner’s ability to remove moisture.

101. Keep your garage door down. A warmer garage in the winter and cooler garage in the summer will save energy.

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