

10 ways to reduce energy use in your home

1. Reduce heat loss by draftproofing and upgrading attic, main wall and basement insulation. [Keeping the Heat In](#) is an excellent guide to doing this yourself. Better yet, have Baerg's Home Performance Solutions carry out an EcoEnergy assessment and get advice specific to your house from an experienced professional.
2. Computers, TVs and their associated peripherals (printers, scanners, DVD players, gaming systems) use a significant amount of electricity even when they're turned off. Typical households spend anywhere from \$20 to \$100 per year for this standby use. You likely already have these items on a power bar. If you put the power bar in an accessible location, you can turn them off when they're not in use.
3. Install and use a programmable thermostat (set the heating temperature to 20°C while you are at home and 17°C at night and when you are away). For each degree of setback, you can save up to 2 percent on your heating bills.
4. If you use the block heater on your car, use a timer so that you don't leave that 1500 Watt draw on all night. You only need to run the block heater for about 2 hours for it to have its full effect.
5. Do you have an extra fridge in the basement? If it's an old clunker, it could be costing you upwards of \$300 per year to run. Unplug it and leave the door open if you want to have it available when company comes. If you do dispose of it, make sure you hire somebody who is licensed to handle the refrigerants. Hydro often has a "Refrigerator Roundup" to collect and dispose of old refrigerators and freezers.
6. A typical clothes dryer uses about 5000 Watts. If you dry 5 loads per week, that will cost you about \$150 per year. Whenever you can, hang your laundry out to dry. Just don't hang more than one load at a time if you have to hang it indoors. When you do use the dryer, use the auto settings so that the dryer stops when the clothes are dry.
7. Time of use metering allows you to shift your electricity use to times when electricity rates are cheaper. Whenever you can, do your laundry, shower and run your dishwasher during off peak times.
8. Insulate the first six feet of your hot water pipes. Keep the pipe wrap away from the flue pipes on gas and oil water heaters.
9. If you use an air conditioner, close blinds and curtains as much as possible on hot summer days. Close your windows as soon as it starts to get warm outside and open them at night to let in the cool night air.
10. As much as possible, use cold water to do your laundry.