Tips to help reduce your energy bills while staying at home

Spending more time at home — whether you're teleworking, homeschooling, or both — can create concerns about finding the balance between keeping energy costs down and using the amount of energy needed to maintain your home.

Here are a few easy ways you can help reduce energy use and costs while spending more time at home.

Beware of vampires.
Did you know vampire loads — or power consumed even when electronics are turned off — can add up to about $200 in yearly costs? Advanced power strips, primarily used for home office and entertainment centers, prevent vampire loads by cutting power to specific outlets until you use your devices again. Several strip options are available, including timers, remote controls and infrared sensor monitoring. Can't get out to find a strip or unable to locate one online? Keep unused, non-essential electronics unplugged until you need to use them again.

Here comes the sun.
On sunny days, open your curtains to allow the sun to naturally warm the rooms of your home without using electricity. Natural sunlight can also lift your mood to help brighten your day. On warm days, close your curtains to help keep your house cool.

Reset your schedule.
Instead of running high-energy-use appliances such as dishwashers and clothes dryers during mid-afternoon or early evening hours, operate them early in the morning or late at night. Some utilities charge less at off-peak times, which will help reduce your costs.

Fill it up.
Wash full loads, whether it's clothes or dishes. Washing multiple small loads means you're using and heating more water, which can increase your expenses. Using cold water for clothes washing can also help lower your costs.

Turn off the tap.
Keep the faucet off while handwashing dishes, washing your hands and brushing your teeth. Letting the water run during these simple activities can waste several gallons of water, which raises your water heating and water-use costs. Turning the faucet off can save up to 6 gallons a day for handwashing, and up to 200 gallons a month when brushing your teeth.

Replace furnace filters.
Help your heating and cooling system run more efficiently by regularly replacing your furnace filters. As a best practice, check your filters regularly and clean or replace them when they're dirty or every six months.

Put it away.
Schedule time into your routine to break away from electronic devices. Whether you take a walk, read, work on your DIY list, or meditate, unplugging is a great no-cost way to restore your personal energy reserves while saving on energy costs.

Contact your local utility for more information on how to save energy and reduce costs while spending more time at home.

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