

Saving Energy: Here Are Some Basic Tips

If your heating bill is too high, don't fall for ads selling specialty products to lower your electric bill. All you really needs is a caulk gun and some common sense to save energy this winter.

Here are five examples:

- 1. Change your air filter.** The filter collects dust, pet hair and other particles from your home's air so they can't get into your furnace. But if your filter is covered in particles, air can't get through either, and your furnace needs air to operate properly. If it can't operate properly, it will run too often or too long, and it might leave you feeling cold and tempted to crank up the thermostat. So clean or replace the filter every few months (more often if you live someplace with dusty or dirty outdoor air).
- 2. Turn on your ceiling fans—yes, in the winter!** Set it to the "winter" or "reverse" setting so the blades create a subtle updraft, which pushes the warm air that naturally rises to the ceiling back down into the room. The fan doesn't actually warm up the room, but it makes the air feel warmer so you'll be more comfortable. And that means you won't reach for the thermostat to crank it up.
- 3. Open the blinds.** If it's sunny outside, that natural warmth will radiate into the house through your windows, which means your heating system won't have to work so hard to keep the house comfortable. Close them up when the sun goes down to keep the cold out.



- 4. Get out your caulk gun.** A hole or a crack in a wall, window or door sends your cozy, conditioned air right outside—and invites cold outdoor air indoors. Plug them with caulk or weather-stripping. A tip: Hold a lighted candle or stick of incense near a window or door and notice if it sways. If it does, you've got a draft that needs sealing.
- 5. Turn your thermostat down at bedtime.** If you set it back 10 degrees for eight hours at a time and do it every night (and reverse it in the summer), you can slash around 10 percent of your heating and cooling bills, the Department of Energy estimates. A tip: If you have a programmable thermostat, set it to do this consistently so you won't forget.

It's Your Money, and Every Kilowatt Counts *MyUsage.com*

Have you ever been surprised when your electric bill comes in the mail? You think, "How in the world could I have used that much electricity?" Now there is a way to keep close tabs on how much electricity you use each day.

Myusage.com is a program that will help you become more aware of the energy you consume. Participants report using less electricity by monitoring it daily, rather than waiting to see

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It's so simple. Just as you watch the gas gauge in your car, now you can watch how much electricity you use. When you sign up, you can view your daily use online, receive use alerts by email and customize alerts to let you know when consumption goes over the limits you set.

You can sign up online now with your TSEMC account number and meter number (found on your electric bill) by going to *myusage.com*.

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Tri-State Electric Membership Cooperative is a not-for-profit, member-owned power cooperative providing electricity to the people of Cherokee County, NC; Polk County, TN; and Fannin County, GA.



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