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Save Money on Your Utilities

PIERRE MOUCHETTE

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Cheaper Energy

An easy way to save money on your utilities is to shop for cheaper energy. Unfortunately, most homeowners and renters waste money by not shopping for a new electric or natural gas supplier.

If you live in a deregulated state that allows energy choice, you can reduce your electric or natural gas bill, by shopping for better rates. You may be able to save as much as 30 to 40-percent!



For Your Yard

Do not Over-Water Your Lawn

According to AARP, your lawn only needs one inch of water a week, and that includes rain. Sprinklers often deliver much more than what is needed resulting in wasted water and money.

Roof

Replace Your Existing Roof with an Energy Star Roof

Replacing your roof not only adds curb appeal to your home, but it also improves your home's energy efficiency, and it will bring a return on investment when you decide to sell your home.

An Energy Star-rated roof will reflect the sun's rays. That means during the summer and warmer seasons, the roof temperature is cooler, and less heat is transferred into the home. In turn, this will reduce energy costs when the demand on your AC is reduced, and it does not have to cycle on as frequently.

Speak to your tax professional because there may be tax incentives that are given to homeowners in your state who make energy-efficient upgrades to their home.

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HVAC Systems



Program Your Thermostat According to Your Schedule

To keep your electrical costs down in the summer, set the thermostat on the HVAC system to a higher temperature before you leave the house. In the winter, set the thermostat to a lower temperature during times that you are out of the house or asleep. Purchasing a programmable thermostat makes it even easier.

FYI: thermostats can be operated through an app on a smartphone, letting you adjust the temperature even when you are away from home.

Clean Your Air Ducts

Keep your air ducts clean, not just for health reasons but also for efficiency. Dust, debris, and other blockages can build up over time, restricting the airflow through the HVAC system ducts. This causes the unit to work harder to achieve the desired temperature. You should clean your air ducts at least every three years.

Replace Your AC Filters Regularly to Save Money

Regardless how new or old your AC unit is, if air has to be pushed through a clogged or dirty filter, it will require additional electricity for the unit to run. This can also stress the unit over time and contribute to premature breakdown. An inexpensive and simple thing to do is, buy extra filters and keep on hand, so that you can change the filters every couple of months, especially during peak cooling season!

FYI: Buying filters in bulk can save money and makes changing them a quick solution in avoiding trips to the store. An additional side benefit is that you improve indoor air quality with **'clean filters.'**



Upgrade to a High-Efficiency HVAC System

Homeowners should consider replacing their standard HVAC system with a high-efficiency system. While HVAC upgrades can come with a large cost, there are HVAC systems that can qualify for tax incentives and rebates. Monthly savings begin immediately upon installation and can help cut your bills by up to 40 percent.



FYI: AC systems are rated by a Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER); the minimum SEER rating is 13, and the higher the number, the greater the energy efficiency of the system, which in turn translates to monthly savings in your energy bill.

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Use Ceiling Fans to Cool or Warm Yourself

Ceiling fans create a wind chill effect, allowing you to adjust thermostat settings by 4 to 7 degrees F (up to 30 percent savings) and still remain comfortable. Ensure savings by verifying a counterclockwise motion during the summer months and reverse to a clockwise motion for autumn and winter. Also, make sure to turn off your fans when you leave the room to save more on cost.



Home-Equipment

Wrap Your Water Heater with Insulated Blankets

Wrap your water heater with an insulated blanket and save around \$20 on gas and \$50 for electric heaters annually. A water heater blanket is a layer of insulation that wraps around the water heater. This extra layer of insulation helps reduce standby heat losses by 25 to 45 percent. It also lowers the energy required to maintain your water's temperature. It can help to save energy and money.



Lighting

Replace Your Light Bulbs with LED Bulbs

Swap out your current light bulbs with halogen incandescent bulbs, LED bulbs, or compact fluorescent lights. These types of light bulbs use 20 to 80 percent less electricity compared to standard light bulbs. Also, they will usually last up to 25 times longer than standard incandescent light bulbs, which consume the most energy.



General

Limit the Number of Times You Open the Refrigerator Door

Limit the number of times you open the doors of your refrigerator. Every time you open your refrigerator, the temperature inside decreases by several degrees. This makes the compressor work harder to maintain the inside temperature. Save energy by leaving one to two inches around the exterior of your fridge. Keep your door gaskets clean so they seal properly. A buildup of sticky foods on the gasket can require you to pull harder to open the door and

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eventually tear the gasket. A little warm water and a sponge will clean it right up, which can help save on repair bills and electricity.

Reduce Your Water Waste

Overusing water in your home means that you are wasting the energy-intensive process of filtration. You can be eco-friendly and cut down your utility bill by reducing water waste through your daily routine. You can do this by taking shorter showers, installing a low-flow shower head, turning off the water while you brush your teeth, waiting until you have a full load before you run your dishwasher, and being careful not to over-water your lawn and garden.

Consider Installing a Solar Panel

Finding ways to conserve energy or make your home more efficient is a great way to save on



your energy bills. One way to do this is by installing solar panels, which are effective for saving energy since they harness the **free energy** of the sun, turning it into electricity or power for your home. If you live in an area that is sunny all the time, they can be a great solution, and a free way to get environmentally friendly, sustainable energy.

Unplug Your Electronics When Not in Use

Have you heard of **vampire energy**? Also known as standby power, which is the electricity consumed by most consumer electronic devices when they are switched off but still plugged in. That wasted electricity is costing you money! When you are not using your electronics devices, be sure to unplug them for big savings.

Do Your Laundry and Dishes When Electric Is Cheaper

Cut your electric bill by running major appliances like laundry and dishwashers when electric plans are cheaper. This often occurs on weekends, and after 9 P.M. on weekdays. Check with your electric company's website to be certain. With the cheapest rates so late at night, you can run pool and spa cleaning machines from midnight to 7 a.m. while you are sleeping.

Add a Solar Blanket to Your Pool

For those who have a swimming pool, add a solar blanket! This blanket not only warms up your pool with the sun's natural rays, but it also requires less water to constantly fill your pool. The blanket reduces the use of gas to heat up your pool, and it also reduces your water bill since there is less water evaporating.



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Minimize the Use of Garbage Disposals

Minimize your use of the garbage disposal. An in-sink garburator, which is a machine that is primarily used to shred food waste into small pieces that will not clog pipes and requires plenty of water to operate properly. Instead, you can start a compost pile as an alternate method of disposing food waste.



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