

Saving Dollars by Saving Energy

You don't have to be Einstein to learn about money and how to improve your bottom line. There are things we can all do without getting an accounting degree and working on Wall Street.

The following tips are a continuation of the ones from my previous article entitled **Putting Money In Your Pocket Is as Simple as Knowing Where Your Energy Is Going:**

Consider installing dimmer switches around your house. Short of turning off the lights in some cases you only need some lighting when doing activities such as watching television at night. Dimming a light by 25% increases the light bulb's life by approximately four times and can save you 20% on electricity costs.

Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent lamps. Fluorescent bulbs cost more and conventional bulbs but they use 25% less electricity and they are known to last 8 to 15 times longer. So as those old bulbs burnout consider replacing them with fluorescent ones.

Paint your rooms a lighter color. With lighter colors you can use natural lighting longer and prevents you from having to turn on the lights during the day.

Install a skylight. Skylights brighten a room immensely. As in the point above, the more you can use natural lighting the less you pay the electrical company. To prevent heat from building up when you are away from home or in another room, install blinds to block the sunlight on hot days. This will help you conserve on your cooling costs. To also conserve on cooling costs, consider installing skylights with tinted glass.

Install motion sensors. These are available for indoor and outdoor use. They are a great security feature for your home. Consider then numbers. A 100-watt bulb left on for 24 hours costs 25 cents a day. The motion sensor can save you \$90 a year by coming on only when you need it.

Close doors to rooms not frequently used. These rooms can afford to be hotter in the summer and cooler in the winter. The ones which come to mind are guest bedrooms, laundry rooms, guest bathrooms. Keeping the vents to these rooms is another way to reduce your energy cost. Remember to make sure that the windows are properly caulked to prevent air from leaking in or out.

Close the flue to the fireplace. Dampers do not always fit snugly but keeping them closed with help save on your energy bill. If you rarely use your fireplace, consider installing a removable plywood cover which can be insulated, weather-stripped and sealed with a gasket. Some individuals have been able to save up to 30% o their energy bill by using this tip alone.

Replace damaged, cracked and frayed electrical cords. Brittle insulation on the outside of your home near electrical outlets may indicate a faulty electrical cord. When replacing cords make sure that the new one matches the wattage of the original one. Replacing the cords will help prevent unwanted fires.