

# The Big 4 of Low-cost Energy Savings!

1. Seal Air Leaks
2. If you are not using it, turn it off – or down
3. Switch to Compact Fluorescent Lightbulbs
4. Get the whole household involved



## 1. Seal Air Leaks

Air leaking into and out of your home wastes energy and makes your home less comfortable. Instead of turning up the thermostat or turning on your air conditioner, seal all air leaks in the building, starting with windows and doors. And don't forget your basement windows!

### To test for air leaks:

- ◆ **Daylight Test** – Look for light coming anywhere in your home other than through the glass of a window. If you see light, then air is leaking through. Use this test to look for leaks around doors, window frames, basement walls and to check if the damper is closed in a fireplace.
- ◆ **Wet Hand Test** – Use a washcloth or sponge to wet the palm of your hand. This makes your skin much more sensitive to airflow and turns your hand into a highly effective leak-finding tool! On a cold, windy day, use your wet hand to slowly move around suspected leak areas. For example, you know your bathroom is getting a draft from one wall. Use your wet hand to follow the source of the cold air. Is it coming from the outside edges of the windows? From between two panes of a double-hung window? From the baseboard? The wet hand test will lead you to the source. Then you know where to seal.
- ◆ **Rattle Test** – This one's for older windows. Tap on the glass with your knuckle. If the glass rattles, it's loose in the frame and therefore leaking air.
- ◆ **Incense Test** – Light a stick of incense and watch where the smoke goes. This will help you see the air currents and how they move through your home. This is especially useful for seeing where warm air is leaking out of the home (as opposed to where cold air is entering the home).

- ◆ **To seal air leaks:**

- ◆ Note: most of the items mentioned below can be found or ordered at your neighborhood hardware store and are available for a very low cost.
- ◆ Attach a 'door sweep' to a door to cover the gap at the bottom (or the sides and top) of a leaky door.
- ◆ Use caulk to seal leaks around trim or other small leaks
- ◆ Use 'rope caulk' to seal leaks that require a temporary seal (e.g. around a window that you'll want to open in the spring)
- ◆ Use a foam sealant in a spray can to fill up larger gaps – be sure to read the directions on the can
- ◆ Use all those leftover plastic bags from the store to seal larger gaps. This one's free! With a butter knife, press the bags deep into the gap so that the bag doesn't hang out. The plastic won't let the air through and the knife ensures that it's pressed in deep.





## 2. If you are not using it, turn it off – or down

- ◆ You can save electricity and gas by doing a lot of little things that add up to big savings.
- ◆ Turn off unused lights and electrical appliances when not in use including TVs, stereos, computers and video games
- ◆ Turn down your thermostat at night or when you're away all day for considerable savings during the winter. This is one of the most important and easy ways to save. Every degree you turn down can save lots of money as long as you're turning it down for 5 hours or longer. Turn the thermostat up to give your central air conditioner a break during the summer.
- ◆ Turn down major appliances where appropriate: set water heater and refrigerator temperature dials to the middle at the factory recommended setting.



## 3. Switch to Compact Fluorescent Lightbulbs

- ◆ Starting with the lights that you use the most, switch your regular lightbulb out for compact fluorescent lightbulbs. While these spiral bulbs often cost \$5 / bulb, they will typically save you \$10 - \$20 a year. And they're usually rated to last 10 times as long as a regular bulb, meaning one bulb will often last 4-7 years. Changing one bulb could save you \$70 in the long run.

## 4. Get the whole household involved

- ◆ Unless you live alone, you do not create the utility bills by yourself! All members of the household should be aware of how they are using energy (spending money!) and look for ways to save. Talk about it! Hold a House Meeting. Turn off the TVs, walkmans, etc. and remove any distractions. Show everyone the utility bills and discuss different ways to cut back on your usage. Be sure to praise the kids when they save energy. Better to reward savings than pay for waste. You might even want to offer an incentive such as getting pizza and a movie when the bill is reduced by \$30.



## Other Ideas

- ◆ Don't run a second refrigerator or freezer unless you really need it – they'll run the bill up fast.
- ◆ Buy energy efficient equipment and appliances whenever possible. Look for the Energy Star logo when you purchase new appliances to help ensure energy savings.
- ◆ Dress warmly in the winter – especially consider that cold feet make you feel cold even if the room temperature is comfortable.
- ◆ Let the sunlight in to get free heat and light during a cold day, then close drapes and blinds at night or to keep the sun out during the summer.
- ◆ Unplug hair dryers, irons and curling irons when not in use.
- ◆ Remember that electric heat is always more expensive than heating with natural gas.

Find more ideas on the WARM Training Center website in the Green Launchpad section: [www.warmtraining.org](http://www.warmtraining.org)

The average US home wastes 10-50% of the energy it uses.  
Don't waste money on wasted energy!

