



Accessible to You: Tips to Save Energy While Renting

Brought to you by Professor Energy and the Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative

If you're renting an apartment or a house, you may feel that there aren't many things you can do to reduce your home's energy use and save money on your monthly bills. Despite possible limitations from your landlord or building manager, there's still quite a bit that you can do to cut back your energy use. These tips will help transform your home into an energy-efficient space without breaking the rules of your lease.



Make every purchase an energy-smart purchase. When renting, not all locations are able to accommodate a washer or dryer. However, if that is an option for you and the place doesn't come equipped with those appliances, consider using an online tool (<https://choose.enervee.com/>) to compare energy efficiency and performance when purchasing. If you plan to take it with you once you move, you can enjoy that same energy-efficient appliance at your next home. During the lifetime of its use, you'll be confident that you put the least amount of burden on your wallet.



Swap out your lightbulbs with LEDs. LED lightbulbs use at least 75 percent less electricity than traditional lightbulbs. Although they may cost more upfront, they last 10 to 25 times longer than regular incandescent bulbs and up to five times longer than compact fluorescent lightbulbs, meaning they will be big money savers in the long run. Many utilities offer rebates and discounts on LED bulbs or even free Energy Saving Kits that include LEDs bulbs to get you started down the path of saving energy. Like traditional bulbs, LEDs come in multiple colors, tints, brightnesses and with dimming capabilities. Not only will you extend the life span of your bulbs by reducing the stress on the light, you'll also save energy by reducing the flow of electricity to the bulb and allowing lights to operate with lower power outputs.



Unplug your appliances when you aren't using them—or buy some power strips. The most common energy-saving trick is turning off the lights in your house when you leave. But did you know that much of your energy bill comes from appliances that are plugged in, even when they're not in use? Often called "energy vampires," these plugged-in appliances can increase your energy bill by 10 percent. An easy fix? Connect all your devices to a power strip and switch it off as you leave, much like you would a light switch. Even better, a smart power strip or outlet lets you monitor and control each outlet in the strip remotely, empowering you to manage these energy vampires more easily and effectively.



Install a thermostat that adjusts while you're out or sleeping. With the scheduling capabilities of a programmable thermostat, you can set the device to match the weather outside while you are at work or sleeping. This generally means following the recommended 68°F in the winter and 78°F in the summer—or 55°F and 85°F while you're away. **If used correctly, a programmable thermostat can save you up to \$180 a year in energy bills** (based on an average household). If your thermostat isn't programmable, ask your landlord to install one. They may be eager to help, because it makes the location more desirable and saves them money through better-managed utilities if included in rent. A smart thermostat, like those offered by ecobee and Nest, offers all of these benefits plus the ability to adjust settings remotely.



Wash your clothes with cold water and optimize drying. Washers and dryers are big energy users, and small actions can cut back on the energy they use. **Heating water accounts for about 90 percent of the energy** your washer uses in its cycle. Did you know most studies recommend using cold water because it cleans just as well as hot water and is easier on your clothes? If you have a washer-dryer unit in your home, consider washing your clothes in cold water, and make sure you clean the dryer's lint trap after each use. Both of these actions will reduce the amount of energy your laundry cycle uses and can lower your energy bill.



Ask your landlord to complete a "multifamily energy assessment." Many power companies will provide free multifamily energy assessments to your landlord's building and, in some cases, provide free energy-saving products for the entire apartment complex. Multifamily assessments are consultations that help a landlord understand how the energy in their building is being used. Following the assessment, free energy-saving products, like advanced power strips, hot water pipe insulation and programmable thermostats, will be installed by technicians throughout the apartment. And, if you don't want to go through your landlord, you can take advantage of individual assessments and installations offered by some power companies.



Seal up and program your window air conditioning unit. If your home has a window A/C unit, gaps around the unit can waste the cool air it generates. With the permission of your landlord and a small monetary investment, you can seal leaks with caulk, insulating foam or other products to prevent cooled air from escaping outside during warmer months or letting in drafts during the cooler season. And, if your unit has a programmable timer, use it to operate the A/C only when you are home. If not, a mechanical timer on the outlet will also do the trick. Not only will you save money during your lease, you'll be more comfortable too.

With these tips you are equipped to cut back your energy use without breaking the rules of your lease or spending much money. If you would like additional ways to save on your electric bills, your power company may offer tools to help you make more informed decisions about your energy use. These can include reports on where you're using the most energy and information on your home's monthly energy use compared to your neighbors'. Check with your power company to see what might be available to you.

Learn more ways to save at:
whatissmartgrid.org

