Energy Tips: Conserve and Save

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As energy costs increase, you will be glad to know that simple projects that can be done with a minimum of time and equipment will reduce the amount of energy you use. Even if you are on a limited budget, these low-cost energy conservation techniques can add up to big savings.

**Cost to you — Free**
- Turn down the thermostat. For every degree you turn your home’s thermostat down, you take about 2 percent off your energy bill. Lowering the thermostat 5 degrees at night and 10 degrees during the day when you are out can cut as much as 20 percent off your heating costs.
- Keep radiators and vents clear of furniture and drapes.
- Turn off the lights when leaving the room.
- Turn down the thermostat on the water heater to 120°F.
- Keep the refrigerator door closed.
- Clean the gasket on the refrigerator and freezer doors so they shut securely. Vacuum the coils underneath the refrigerator for efficient operation. A clean refrigerator or freezer works more efficiently.
- Check the temperature inside both refrigerator and freezer. If your (accurate!) thermometer says the refrigerator is colder than 36°F or hotter than 40°F, adjust the controls. If the freezer falls between zero and 5°F, you’re fine. Otherwise, adjust the controls. If you go 10 degrees less than the minimum suggested levels, you can increase your energy use by up to 25 percent.
- Run your dishwasher on normal setting. Don’t use special features such as pot scrubber.
- Use the shortest washing time possible, depending on how dirty the clothes. Washing longer than necessary wastes energy and wears out clothes.
- Set washer loads for “warm” or “cold” wash instead of hot. Extra dirty loads might need a cold water presoak. The only time a washer really needs hot water is for oily/greasy stains. The rinse water should always be cold since the temperature does not affect cleaning. Using cooler water gives you the added bonus of longer-lasting clothes.
- Clean the lint trap (and possibly even the vent pipe) on your clothes dryer.

**Cost to you — Less than $5**
- Install foam gaskets under switch plates and outlets on exterior walls.
- Use plastic transparent window film on drafty windows.
- Use power strips for appliances and entertainment centers that have an instant-on feature or clock. Turn off when not in use.
- Stop leaks by replacing washers in sink faucet.
- Make a draft dodger by filling an old sock or fabric tube with sand and place against the bottom of exterior doors.

**Cost to you — Less than $10**
- Use spray foam insulation around windows and door frames to seal leaks.
- Replace weather stripping around exterior doors.
- Replace door sweep on the bottom of door.

**Cost to you — Less than $25**
- Install insulating blanket on water heater.
- Install new threshold under exterior doors.
- Install low-flow shower head.

**Resources for additional information:**
UAF Cooperative Extension Service, 474-2420
Rich Seifert, Extension Community Sustainability Coordinator, 474-7201
Interior Weatherization, 452-5323
Golden Valley Electric Association, 452-1151