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Turn Your House Green!

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Does Your Thermostat Measure Up

Paying the utility bills can be such a headache. They take up a big portion of the budget for any household. It is always a good idea to keep at hand some tips on how to lower your utility bills. There are various options that you can do to achieve that goal. One of the quickest ways to do this is to install a programmable thermostat in the house.

Installing Programmable Thermostats

Deciding to install a programmable thermostat in your household will definitely prove to be good decision. All you need is to get a programmable thermostat for every unit you have inside the house. This is one effective way to learn effectively how to lower utility bills.

Purchasing a decent programmable thermostat can be made more practical. The price will usually range from \$55 to \$100. This may seem pricey for some people, especially for those who have more than one heating or cooling unit in their household. However, you can be sure that you can make more savings from lower utility bills. The purchase price is merely a small outlay when you look at the long-term savings.

Today, the energy costs of an average household are comprised largely of the heating and cooling system. This can range from 50% to 70%. The thermostat works by lowering the use of electricity or gas by 1% for every eight hours of use of the cooling or heating unit. Considering this significance, you can't ignore the importance of deciding properly on the type of thermostat that you will install.

Different Types of Thermostats

There are different types of thermostats that you can find on the market. They are generally classified as electromechanical and electronic. Each has their own features for your own use and convenience. They also have certain complexities that you should consider for your own circumstances.

Electromechanical Thermostats

These devices are sensitive to the changes in temperature in the environment to properly adjust the energy needed to be supplied by the thermostat. Most of these are made of mercury bulbs. Mercury is used to properly connect to the environment and trigger the heating or cooling action. As such, this kind has to be handled with care because mercury is toxic and hazardous to people. There are also electromechanical types that make use of sensing devices, either a strip or a bi-metal coil, rather than the mercury. This equipment requires special skills and tools. Thus, make sure you leave the task of installation to the professionals.

Electronic or Programmable Thermostats

Electronic thermostats operate by using electronic elements that can sense heat. The circuits in the system will then turn on the heating or cooling component of the equipment depending on the temperature changes. These are commonly known as the programmable types. Choosing the programmable thermostat will definitely be a better choice. People tend to forget things. Even the most organized person will do so when distractions get in the way. Setting the thermostat could be one of those important things that you might just forget. This won't help the effort to lower utility bills.

The programmable thermostat can do the task for you at all times. You don't need to worry about setting the right temperature when you aren't at home if you have this kind installed in your household. It solves the problem by setting the program to conform with the time or temperature in the environment. You can easily schedule the temperature to change depending on the activities that you will do throughout the week. It saves you energy, as well your time and effort.

Non-Programmable Digital Thermostats

This type is known for utilizing temperature sensing-devices that are solid-state. The device is known as the thermistor. They are easier to install. Any person with basic knowledge on control wiring can hook this up. However, it is always best to hire a professional to avoid any mistakes and undesirable consequences.

There are many different kinds of thermostats that you can choose from on the market. All it takes is for you to choose the right kind for your household and have it installed. This is something you should do to effectively lower your utility bills.

Water Heater Woes

Lower Utility Bills with the Right Water Heater

Households today face the difficult task of managing on a limited budget. This can be a big headache. Just imagine all your hard earned money spent largely on bills alone. This is why it is very important to learn how to effectively lower your utility bills. One good way to achieve this is to check and replace your water heater properly.

Having your water heater regularly checked will help you lower your utility bills. Basically, through wear and tear, the water heater will get old and when it does, the water heater build up lime inside the tank. This makes the process of heating water a harder task. More electricity will be consumed just to produce heat thereby making the utility bill increase.

This is why checking your water heater is a must. It allows you to know when the time is right for you to replace the water heater system. This is the only way to ensure that you will lower your utility bills and save more money. Be sure to research on the right type of water heater that will give you the most efficient use of energy available.

Types of Water Heaters

There are many kinds of water heaters on the market today. You need to know these types so you can choose one that will best suit your needs. The list includes storage water heaters, heat pumps, indirect water heaters, demand or instantaneous water heaters or the solar types.

Storage Water Heater

This is the most common type on the list. It operates by heating up water stored in an

insulated tank. It serves as a reservoir for the water that you can access when needed. This water heater can store up to 80 gallons of water depending on what size you have. It can be fueled either by electricity, propane, natural gas or oil. This can be a convenient choice for the household.

On Demand Water Heater

This is the tankless type and is a relatively new addition to the market. The water is directly heated without the use of any storage space and is sometimes referred to as insta-hot.

Solar Water Heater

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A solar water heater can reduce your electricity bill by up to 33%



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It is also a very practical idea to utilize the solar water heating system. It is the heat coming from the sun that is utilized to provide the means for a warm bath. The Solar Energy Factor or SEF and the Solar Fraction or SF are crucial in determining the efficiency of the use of energy. These are aspects you can check out when purchasing your solar water heater system.

Tankless Coil and Indirect Water Heaters

This kind of water heater utilizes the space heating system in the house to produce your desired outcome. A heating coil is installed in the boiler of the structure. When the faucet is turned on to the hot switch, the water supply will then flow to the heating coil. Thus, even without a tank, you can easily use hot water in your baths. Furthermore, this is very efficient in households that endure colder climates for longer periods of time. It will save you all the time, space and energy that will be typically required in other heating systems.

The indirect water heater is also an efficient choice for majority of the households. This requires a storage tank for water. It then uses a boiler to heat the water stored. The storage tank can store most of the energy that will help in your goal to save.

There are many kinds of water heaters that you can find on the market to replace your old one at home. Know your options so you can pick the best choice that will answer your needs for hot water without sacrificing the need to save energy and money. This is the most effective way to lower your utility bills.

Have You Been Audited?

Lower Utility Bills by Ordering an Energy Audit

Every household feels the need to save more money to answer for other necessities and prepare for plans in the future. However, budgeting the money can be a headache when expenses and bills get too high. No one likes to be left with meager amount of money at the end of the month.

Find other ways to avoid the break-even situation in your earnings and expenses. At the end of the day, it pays to have money to keep for your savings. You definitely want to go shopping or spend your hard-earned money for other leisurely endeavors. Take measures to lower your utility bills. There are ways to do so and these will definitely help you.

Energy Audit

There are many steps you can take to effectively lower your monthly utility bills. One option you can take is to get a home energy audit. The home energy audit is a step to evaluate the energy consumption in your household and determine the measures that you can take given the structures and materials you have in the house.

This will involve a comprehensive inventory of the household appliances that utilize electricity and water supply. Then each of these energy-consuming sources will be checked out. The audit will reveal any problems that could possibly be in your system. This can also reveal the efficiency of the heating and cooling system installed in the house.

There should also be measures recommended to counter the problems and conserve the energy. Some problems can be repaired. Some will need immediate replacement. Others will even require professional services to bring about your desired results.

You can do the energy auditing yourself, however, there may be aspects that are beyond your basic knowledge. Expertise may even be required in other crucial areas. In this regard, it is best to get a professional energy auditor.

The professional energy auditor has extensive knowledge when it comes to mechanical or electrical aspects and energy consumption. They are also more capable of performing a thorough auditing of the household. They have in hand the crucial equipment like blower doors and infrared cameras to manage the hard-to-detect problems.

Order an Energy Audit from Your Local Utility Company

There are many auditing companies who will be willing to give their services to those who need it. You can canvass the market for such services and find a deal that will be within your budget. They can pore into every detail of your home to help you lower your utility bill.

However, you can also order an energy audit from your local utility company. Most of these companies will have a department to provide such services. It is best to seek their services. Ordering an energy audit from your local company will, of course, entail the usual check-up of your house. As such, it will be helpful if you know the things they

check so you can prepare for the day of actual auditing.

They can first check for air leaks. They call these drafts. Energy can be saved by up to 30% every year if you are able to keep energy from leaking. The walls and ceiling junctures, floorings, baseboard and edges are normally inspected for such leaks. They can then proceed to other details in the house. The electrical outlets and switch plates are critical points. The auditor can also check on the window frames and possible stripping in your door. They must be in good condition and must have no cracks or gaps. The fireplace, attic and basement will also play a big role in determining some problems.

You can also make your own list for the problems you are currently encountering and let the auditor check the causes of your difficulty. Prepare also your energy bills for the past two years. This will help in evaluating the consumption. The auditor will also take into account the size of your house and the appliances you use. They will need to evaluate these factors in the way you use your appliances. Just be sure that someone is at home when the day designated for auditing comes.

One of the best benefits of scheduling an energy audit from your utility company is that it is often done at no charge! That's an even better incentive to schedule yours today.

Ordering an energy audit from a professional auditor or from your local utility company will help you a great deal. With lower utility bills, life will definitely be easier for you.

Drip-Drip-Drip

Get Lower Utility Bills with the Right Faucet

Paying utility bills is one of the biggest headaches that can confront the household. This is a reality because these bills often take the bulk of the budget. It isn't easy to say goodbye to your hard-earned money. Since utility services aren't going to cheapen anytime soon, it is best to seek strategies that will lower your bills. One effective way is to get your faucets checked. Make sure that your money isn't dripping down the drain.

The Problem with a Dripping Faucet

A dripping faucet is a big threat encountered by most households. People tend to look on the electricity or system aspect. They forget that the most used part of their kitchens and baths can also contribute to their big expenses. Through regular use, faucets tend to wear and tear. You may notice that after closing the faucet properly, water may still drip. This is a sign that you need to repair or replace your faucet soon.

When faucets drip, water continues to be released even if you aren't using it. The tiny drips that may seem inconsiderable at one glance can actually mean gallons of water if you let days pass without addressing the problem. That means extra bucks out of your budget. Thus, you have to make sure that your faucets aren't dripping.

It is easy to figure out this problem. Dripping water makes a sound when it hits the sink. You can also check your faucet when not in use. When there is water in the spout of the faucet, then some water can be leaking out even if there is no dripping action. These signs should prompt you to take action soon. You can even hire services to have your faucets properly checked if you want to be sure.

Types of Faucets for Replacement

Faucets that aren't in good condition require replacement. It is best to choose your purchase properly. Get a replacement that will be more efficient for your household use. Make sure it is the type that won't be dripping anytime soon. Of course, it should also go along with the rest of the kitchen or bath design. Know the different faucet types to get the best pick and effectively lower your utility bills.

Ball Faucets

This is a very common type. It can be found in most households. It has a single handle that is placed over a round cap, just above the spout. The ball faucet is the type that you have to be cautious with as it tends to leak more easily compared to others but they are very affordable. Thus you can easily replace them. If you think your household companions tend to be careless, then it isn't a good idea to use the ball faucet.

Compression Faucets

These are quite old when it comes to faucet types. There is a different handle for the hot and cold water. Both handles have to be tightened to ensure that water is secured. It requires additional effort to seal the water flow by compressing the washer. This is a good choice if you are keen in adjusting properly the temperature according to your needs. You might want to think twice about the added compression needed to secure the water from dripping. They can leak eventually but they are easy to repair.

Disc Faucets

The disc faucets can be identified by the single handle attached to a cylindrical body. It operates through the two ceramic discs that control the water flow. It can also control the temperature of the water released. They tend to be a good choice against leak and dripping problems. This type requires very low maintenance but can be quite pricey.

Cartridge Faucets

You can identify cartridge faucets by trying to operate it. If the lever has to be moved up and down to let the water flow and right and left for temperature adjustments, then it is this type. This is very convenient for operation. You can easily move the lever for opening and sealing. This tends to last longer although it can be an expensive purchase.

Dripping problems shouldn't be ignored. Make sure your faucets are regularly checked so you can immediately effect a replacement if needed. Choose also the right type of faucet that you will install for replacement. Through these steps, you are ensured of paying lower utility bills.

Do You Need a Blanket?

Audit Insulation to Lower Utility Bills

Every household faces a big headache every month. This is when the mail comes and they get to see the bills from various utility companies. Utility bills are no joke. They tend to sum up to a hefty amount of money and it can consume a big bulk of the monthly

budget. This is why considering strategies to know how to lower the utility bills is an important matter.

There are many ways to lower your monthly utility bills and save more money. All you need is to take some time to inspect the whole house and see the options that you have. Audit your household, particularly the insulation. See the various changes that you can do to make energy use more efficient. This will be of big significance to your family in the years to come.

Audit Insulation

Auditing your insulation requires proper evaluation of the different factors in the household that contribute to energy use. This focuses on areas that don't need the use of energy. Windows and doors are examples of spots where use of insulation isn't that urgent. Knowing what these elements are will help you effectively determine how to maximize their use with the least amount of energy needed. This means being more efficient in your energy consumption so that money won't be wasted. Thus, never underestimate the task of auditing your insulation system.

Windows and Doors

The windows and doors are areas that you have to double check on for leaks. Your heating or cooling system will exhaust more energy if these areas are problematic. Be sure that your doors and windows are energy efficient. You can have these checked by feeling the temperature in the areas outside. You can also get a contractor to conduct tests for other possible leaks. You can also take into account other areas like the basement and crawlspaces. More on this in a later chapter.

Attics

The attic is the one single factor that can make or break your heating and cooling bills.

Attics are normally seen as another storage room for old things. Still, don't underestimate their role. Attics should have vents to maintain good circulation. You don't need to add insulation here if the circulation is good enough. Be sure that there are no holes in the ceiling where air can escape from the attic. Sealing the possible holes can save you a big bulk of your energy consumption.

Adding an additional layer of insulation can greatly increase the R factor in the home. Fiberglass or foam? Either may be a good investment for your home, but these are questions best left to the professional.

Fireplaces

The fireplace is a typical element for some houses. However, they can pose problems, especially when not in use. The fireplace can continue to direct out the heat even if you don't plan that. If it does, then your heating system will require more energy in order to sustain the requirements of the household. To secure your endeavors to lower the utility bill, just take the proper measures. Be sure that your flue is closed when not in use. When this is left open, the heat in your house will leak out.

Audit Insulation Needs

See to it that you get to properly audit the insulation system in your household. This is your key to saving money by lowering your monthly utility bills. This way you won't waste the heating or cooling system that you've installed in your house. This is also very crucial in maintaining the comfort level of everyone in the family.

You have the option to purchase insulation products. These are things that you can use to make sure that the crucial areas in your house won't be subject to heat or air loss. These products can be purchased on the market to seal areas where the air or heat is likely to escape.

There is also the option of calling a professional insulation contractor to do the checking. The contractor can help solve the problems that might threaten your house. They can also give advice on how much insulation you still need to lower your energy bills.

Audit the insulation in your household. Make sure you have taken care of this task. You might discover that you need to do more. Securing the proper insulation of the areas in the house is one effective way to lower your utility bills and save more for the family.

How's Your Head. . .er Throne

Lower Utility Bills with the Energy Efficient Toilet Model

Are you frustrated with your monthly utility bills? Utility services don't come cheap, thus making bill payments quite a headache. Rather than complaining over this matter, it is best to take positive action. There are options that you can do so you will lower your utility bills and maximize the resources that you have in your hands.

One effective way to achieve the goal of lowering your monthly utility bills is to check your toilet. Your toilet might be wasting your water supply. Thus, this calls for a serious replacement. It is best to get a new model that is more energy efficient. This way you won't be wasting water with your money going down the drain.

It is important to stay away from the bad recommendations that other people will give you. There is a practice that people believed to be energy-saving when in fact it can be bad for the plumbing.

The toilet tank collects water for use when you flush. Some households have taken on this option. However, it can store and release more water than what is needed to push the waste down the drain. As such, bricks had been recommended to lessen the water stored in the tank.

This practice actually results in problems with the plumbing system. The material of the bricks will eventually corrode because of the water and the movement inside the tank. The parcels can go where they aren't supposed to be and cause more damage than what you can handle. Thus, if you want to save more money you must resort in other options to lower your utility bills rather than rely on this unreliable practice.

Installing an Energy Efficient Toilet

The best way to save energy with your toilet is to find an energy efficient model. Rather than use bricks that can be bad for your plumbing system, it is better to purchase a new toilet that will efficiently use the water supply. Thus, it is best to know the options you have.

There are many toilet models on the market. There are some that will please your aesthetic goals. Some can even get really expensive as they border on luxurious details for the bathroom. However, efficiency isn't always with the most expensive model. You have to look for certain features that will help you achieve your goal of lowering the utility bill.

Today, it is best to inquire on the product that you are considering. Determine if the manufacturer is among those who are recommended for the energy-saving endeavor. You can also simply take the task of looking on the specifications that will indicate efficiency in the use of the water supply. You can ask the salesperson for assistance to show you these features.

There are energy-efficiency specifications provided for your purchasing endeavors. In the USA, there is a federal law that requires the vendors to sell such fixtures and materials that will meet the specifications. You can use the specifications to make sure that you are properly guided in picking the right toilet model.

Today, to save water and be more cost-effective with your toilet model, it is best to get one that uses 1.6 gallons of water for every flush. It is even better if you get to pick one that will use less. This can be easily achieved if the toilet model has a smaller storage tank. This is a more efficient way of saving water and lowering your utility bills rather than using the brick.

There are also toilet models that provide two options for flushing. This is another good choice for your toilet needs. This type of model lets you use minimal water for the one flush. This is typical for flushing liquid materials that easily go down the drain. The other option uses more water but is still energy-efficient. This is for your use when you need to flush heavier waste.

Be wise in your decisions. Replace your current toilet models with the energy-efficient ones. This way you can save more water and effectively lower your monthly utility bills.

Some communities are finding that local governments are allowing tax breaks for introducing energy saving elements in their homes. That's an idea worth checking out!

Keeping Your Cool

Cooling Your Air Effectively: Why You Should be a Fan of Fans

Heat is uncomfortable for anyone, whether it comes in the form of a hot, confined room, or a bursting summer sun beating down upon your bare, suntan lotion-soaked back. If it comes in the form of dry heat, it can make breathing so much more difficult, as you strive to pull air into your tired lungs. If the heat comes in the form of humidity, it can dehydrate you quickly and make you sweat.

In either case, heat can keep you from thinking straight and fulfilling everyday duties that would have otherwise been easier in cooler, crisper weather. Summer heat can be especially oppressive, and can make you want to sleep all day in an air-conditioned room, with only cold air for company.

Air conditioning, however, can be expensive. Air conditioning units cost money to purchase, maintain, and clean, as air conditioning filters are often clogged with dust and debris. If you buy an air conditioning unit and use it regularly, prepare to drain your savings as you pay higher electric bills. If the heat doesn't give you a headache, the electric bills can certainly do you in.

An alternative exists, however, in electric fans. Unlike air conditioning units, fans can be less expensive to purchase and maintain. They can also be easier to clean and repair, and cost less to replace. If you are dealing with extreme heat, then you can arrange your electric fans and home in such a way that you can bring in cold air and keep the warm air out. There are many different kinds of electric fans, but the four most popular ones can be effective in cooling your home.

A stand fan can be adjusted to various strengths and speeds; its height can also be controlled, so you can receive air whether you are working on the floor, sitting at your desk, or hanging up drapes and standing on a high table.

A box fan is a smaller electric fan with a rotating face, designed to push air and circulate it in different parts of a room.

A ceiling fan, true to its name, hangs from a ceiling and pushes cool air downwards.

Lastly, an exhaust fan is built into a wall, and can help air circulate, especially in closed surroundings such as warehouses, attics or garages.

All of these electric fans can allow you to spend less on your electric bills. Because an air conditioning unit makes use of cooling fluids, it can take up more energy in converting outside air to cool air, and in removing water vapor from outside air. Fans, however, allow air to move around and circulate, and in doing so use much less energy.

If you are shopping around for electric fans, choose brands that are inexpensive, but stamped with the energy star. This will assure you that you will get the most power from the fans with the least energy output. When you use your fans, make sure that they are positioned strategically, so that you don't waste energy or end up bringing warm air to where you least want it. In particular, take note of the following tips as you cool your home using your fans.

Practice cross ventilation. Not every room in your house needs an electric fan to be cool. You can place a powerful standing fan in one room, open any adjoining doors, and direct the fan to blow air to the next rooms. You can also place an exhaust fan high up in one room so that the air is constantly circulating. To cross ventilate your house, open any windows that aren't facing the sun. This can allow cool air to come in.

Close windows that are facing the sun, and shield them with curtains, so that you can lower the temperature of your room faster. You can position electric fans perpendicular to the open window, so that any incoming air is circulated immediately. If it isn't a windy day, then position the fan at the other end of the room, facing the window.

If it is very humid and hot, then an electric fan may do you little good on its own. If you have an air conditioning unit, turn it on low cool or fan mode, then use the electric fan to circulate the hot air. On its own, the air conditioning unit will take up more energy as the humid air will be difficult to cool. The electric fan, on its own, will also take up more energy, as it will have to be operated at higher, faster settings, and for a longer time, before it can finally cool the air.

If you use the electric fan and air conditioning unit together, you can actually save

energy.

Appliance Know-How

Energy Saving Ratings for Appliances

Home appliances are necessities at home. It would be hard to imagine living inside your house without any electric equipment. When the weather is hot or cold, there should be air conditioners and heaters. Refrigerators help preserve food naturally, while dishwashers and washing machines help clean dishes and clothes.

Thus, it is inevitable that you find it hard to deal with your monthly electricity bills. You might be wondering why your electric consumption is still high when you don't use your appliances that much. When you are at work the whole day and you come home and use your appliances at night, why does your electric bill keep on rising?

For you to properly address this electricity consumption problem, you have to know more about appliances and the amount of energy these items consume. Your home might be full of different appliances, so how can you make sure your energy consumption will be controllable?

Experts say that if you have the appliances in your home, all you can do is to live by the way those equipment consume energy. But if you are yet to purchase those appliances, there is something you can do to help avoid excessive consumption of energy in your home.

Shopping for energy efficient appliances

Shop for energy efficient appliances. While it is true that you can't do anything if you already have your appliances, you can significantly adopt energy saving schemes when replacing your appliances and devices.

Did you know that home appliances consume more than 20% of your home's overall

energy consumption on a monthly average? Whether you are regularly or heavily using your appliances, these appliances will still contribute to your high monthly electric bill. Refrigerators, clothes dryers, clothes washers, dishwashers and electric stoves are just some of the appliances included in the top energy consumption list for appliances.

Therefore, when buying appliances for your home, you should consider two price tags. Of course, the first price tag will be the purchase price for the appliances. You might be surprised at how several appliances can be really costly, depending on the brand. You should consider this tag price as a form of down payment.

The more important and yet to be discovered price tag will be the overall cost of using or operating the appliances during the entire course of its operating life time. In fact, the second price tag will be much costlier because you will be required to pay for it monthly when you shoulder your electricity consumption bills.

For the entire lifetime of each of your various appliances, you will have to endure and shoulder the operating costs. And this is where the trouble sets in. Some appliances just consume too much electricity to be functional.

To shop for appliances, you should first make a short list of which equipment to buy and how useful they can be. Go to your reliable appliance retailer and make your purchases. You could shop for appliances by initially considering and assessing the brands. Good brands usually offer energy efficient versions of different appliances.

You should also ask the sales personnel about the energy consumption capacity of the appliances you are considering. Salesmen should inform you outright about the projected energy consumption of each and every brand of appliances their store is selling.

New energy saving ratings

To help you assess the energy consumption capacity of appliances, there are developed systems for computing such energy use. There are home energy and appliances audits to help you determine how much electricity is consumed by an appliance.

You can use these new energy saving ratings schemes in two ways. First, you can ask

firms that offer such services to come over and assess your home appliances. Their personnel will come and compute the monthly energy consumption of your appliances, helping you assess how much your appliances contribute to your bills.

Second, when you are buying appliances at retailers, you can ask about their new energy saving ratings. Every home equipment shop should have this helpful feature. Asking for such assistance could help you know more about appliances sold and decide which energy efficient ones you can practically purchase.

During these times when there is a pronounced energy crisis, you should contribute to electricity conservation. Get appliances that are energy efficient and dependable.

Water, Water Every Where

How to Conserve Water and Keep Out of Financial Drought

This scene is familiar to anyone who has witnessed a particularly oppressive summer. The soil cracks in a thousand places, looking like the skin of a very dry lizard. Plants wither slowly, as they go from green, to yellow, to brown, from lack of water. The air seems to be smoky or watery, and heat seems to rise from the ground in snaking, slithering currents. Everyone seems to be in a foul mood, no matter how bright their day is, and how much progress they have made at school or work.

A drought-stricken area is a poor one, but it isn't a hopeless one. Even with very little water, you can deal with the scarcity and still emerge triumphant, with a wallet filled with enough money to pay the rest of your bills. Even with very little water, a cooperative community can pull through a drought and enjoy the rains when they come.

If you live in a drought-stricken area, you will need to conserve water using every method of water conservation that there is. Here are a few tips that you might want to follow as you work on keeping what water you have.

Instead of soaking in a tub, or using a pail and dipper to take a bath, take a brief shower. Soaking in a tub will only force you to fill up a tub with gallons of water that you might not end up using.

A shower, on the other hand, can force you to regulate the use of water. Confine your shower to no more than a few minutes. Turn off the shower while you shampoo, or while you soap your body. To save more water, wet your entire body, turn off the shower, then apply your shampoo and start soaping yourself. Rinse your entire body all at once.

To save even more water, have a bucket standing by as you shower. Collect your shower water in the bucket, and use it to flush your toilet. By relying on your toilet's flushing machinery, you also use a total of five gallons of water each time you flush! Save this water for more useful purposes, such as washing the dishes and your body. You can use your bath water to flush your toilet, and a bucket will usually be enough.

An old wives tale of water conservation revolves around the use of soapy, collected water to water plants. Although this may seem like a good water conservation mechanism, you also need to remember that the detergents in soap can damage plants and destroy nutrients in the soil. Instead of recycling water to water plants, control the amount of water you use to water your garden. Instead of using a hose or a sprinkler, take a small bucket of water with you and water plants with moderation. If you use too much water, you can kill plants by weakening their roots and stems.

Your health comes first, so analyze each move that you make before conserving water. When rinsing dishes, don't soak them in a basin of water along with the rest of the things that you need to rinse. This unclean practice can lead to bacteria and fungi accumulating in your utensils.

Don't reuse bath water for any other purpose, except to flush your toilet. The dirt, dust, and grime from your body can do more damage to your plants if you water them with your bath water. And whatever you do, don't conserve your drinking water! You need at least eight glasses of water a day to function properly; in fact, your body can go longer without food than it can without water! If you are in a drought-stricken area, you are more prone to dehydration, so scrimp on everything except drinking water.

If you don't finish the water in your glass, don't throw it down the drain. Put the water into a bucket, where it can be used to flush your toilet later. If the drinking water you have left is relatively clean, you can use it to water your plants. Don't give your half-consumed glass of water to your pet: your mouth can house certain bacteria and viruses that can be deadly to your pet, or can cause them to have certain diseases.

Save on washing water by using paper plates that you can throw away after their first use. If you find paper plates expensive, you can also use paper plate safe wax covers, which are cheaper, and which can be discarded after every use, leaving the paper plate clean. You can also use cheap paper cups: they not only allow you to save money, but they are recyclable too!

Is Your Water Gray

New Water Routes: Where Gray Can Still Be Good

In this day of energy conservation and listening to the pleas of our dying, very much damaged environment, we are all in need of tips on how we can live better without depleting our natural resources.

One such tip involves planting more trees and living in a greener world, where plants can use their natural ability to turn carbon dioxide in the air into oxygen. Another tip involves conserving water and making sure that one of our most precious commodities is abundant enough to sustain life for all animals, plants, and humans.

Thus exists a paradox: how can plants live on very little water if we must conserve it; and conversely, how can we conserve water well enough so that we can still allow plants to grow? Scientists are now hard at work trying to genetically engineer plants to grow with very little water, while still others are engineering important food crops to survive with no irrigation.

While scientists are working in their laboratories, however, we can still do our part in conserving water while helping the environment through making our plants grow. We can undertake this through gray water rerouting.

Gray water is the waste water that we generate from our baths, after we wash the dishes, or after we do the laundry. Black water, on the other hand, is the waste water that we generate from our use of the toilet. The average family with a father, mother, and two children can use up to three thousand liters of gray water a week, water that is wasted and allowed to run down the drain, even though it can still be used.

Most of today's gray water will contain small amounts of soap, detergents, and bleach. Soaps and detergents will contain minerals that are important for plant life, although these minerals can be mixed in with industrial chemicals that can do more damage to plants and the soil. Bleaches are even more dangerous: they can damage plant root and shoot tissues, and can persist in the soil for long periods of time.

Gray water, however, can be treated by being rerouted from your home and into your garden, all through the use of special filtration and treatment tubes. Once gray water is filtered and treated, it can be used to irrigate your home garden. Not only do you help save the environment by allowing more plants to grow, you also conserve water and use what would otherwise go to waste.

If you are planning to use gray water to water your garden, then take note of the following tips before you start. Remember that if you can't afford the apparatus to directly lead gray water to your garden, you can still do your part in recycling gray water by placing a bucket nearby whenever you do your laundry, wash your plates and utensils, or take a bath. If you use the right soaps and detergents, then you can still use the water in this bucket to water your plants.

Inquire at your local plumbing and house repair shops on what mechanisms or machines are available to reroute gray water. Some companies will offer surface or sub-surface drip irrigation, which will direct gray water to the roots of plants. These irrigation mechanisms are highly efficient, as they direct water to where plants need it most, and where they are at the best position to absorb it.

Although most gray water won't need treatment, you might still need to filter it out for debris or dust that might harm more delicate plants. Inquire at your local plumbing facility on how you can treat the water. For more information, talk to your local florist, horticulturist, landscape artist, or gardening expert on the feasibility of using gray water for your plants, and the safety of gray water for your garden or lawn.

In general, gray water will contain potassium, phosphorous, and nitrogen, all of which can benefit plants. These minerals are in high abundance in organic soaps and shampoos, so look for the natural or organic label when you buy your detergents. Stay away from industrial chemicals and bleaches.

If your plants seem to be getting damaged, stop using gray water and have a horticulturist or gardener look at them first.

Do as much research as you can on the use of gray water. You might be growing vegetables in your garden that might not grow as well, or with the nutrients that you want, if you use gray water. You might also be a professional florist who needs a specific kind of water to irrigate your special flowers. Despite its promise, gray water has its exceptions, so be sure that your plants and lawn can benefit from your use of gray water.

In and Out

Getting the Best Windows and Doors to Cool and Heat Your House

You might not know it, but your windows and doors aren't mere decorations in your house. Aside from keeping the burglars out, and everyone snugly in, your windows and doors are the best way to cool and heat your house naturally. With the right windows and doors, you can save on your heating and cooling bills. If the doors and windows fit well and are positioned strategically, you can even save on your electric bill.

In this age of energy conservation and better budget management, we all need to take measures in saving energy and keeping our bills to a minimum. Here are a few tips that you might want to follow as you monitor your heating and cooling usage.

If your glass windows have cracks in them, or if you have windows that can't be shut and fastened, replace them with new and better ones. Closing your windows during the winter can help seal the heat in, and can help you save on your heating bills. If you have an air conditioning unit, you also need to close your windows to seal the air in, and keep your air conditioning unit from being overworked.

If your doors are cracked or damaged, or if their hinges are loose, then you will need to replace them. As with windows, doors that close properly seal in heat or cold air, and can help you save electricity.

Shield your windows with curtains so that you can keep the sun from coming into your house on summer days. Take the curtains down when winter comes along: you will need natural sunlight to help your house warm up. However, if the world outside is gray and dreary, keep your heat in by closing the curtains and turning up the lights. Electric lights can raise the temperature of a room, and you may not need to turn on your heater at all.

If you have an air conditioning unit, place plants outside your window, or put an awning over the air conditioning unit. If heat strikes an air conditioning unit, it will take up more electricity to do its job. You will need to protect the unit from heat, and keep it in a relatively cool place. Not only will the plants cool the immediate environment of the air conditioning unit, it will also make your house appear cleaner and cool. Nothing looks better than green, healthy plants right outside your window!

There are many different kinds of windows available to suit your needs and budget. In fact, these windows are built in certain ways, so that they can help you save on heating and cooling costs. Although the following list is by no means comprehensive, it can give you an idea as to what kinds of windows are available. For more information, contact your local furniture or building store, so that you can be aware of all the options you have when you consider what windows you would like to place in your home.

In general, you can consider three different kinds of materials to fit into the frame of your window: glass, hard plastic, and thin metal screens. Glass windows can keep heat and cold in very well, so they can help you save on heating bills, but they can make your house hotter in the summer. If you must run the air conditioning unit during this time, switch it to fan mode first, so that your room cools down, and the unit won't have a hard time cooling your air later. Make sure that the windows are completely closed so that you can keep the cool air in.

Hard plastic is often used for colored windows to make them appear like stained glass. They can quickly heat up or cool down a room, depending on their color. Darker, rosier colors such as red, orange, and yellow can add heat to a room; deeper colors such as blue or violet can cool it down.

Screens are good for letting the air in during the summer. If you have window screens, don't run your air conditioning unit. Instead, switch on an electric fan to keep the air circulating. Refrain, however, from placing plants next to screen windows: plants can sometimes accumulate dust, and the air that comes into your screen window might not be filtered well enough to keep the debris out.

Bay windows and windows with window seats can also be a charming addition to your home. However, they can also be expensive to maintain. If you have such windows, supplement them with plants and flowers, so that they appear cooler. When winter comes along, drape them with dark curtains to keep the heat in.

These are a few tips that you might want to follow as you redesign your house and keep it energy conservation-compliant. Do as much research as you can on the best windows for your house, and make sure that all openings into your house are well sealed. You can cut down on your bills by building your house well, without scrimping on any charming details.

Let the Sun Shine

Letting Sun Power into Your Water and House



[Click Here for Do it Yourself Solar Systems ->](#)

Solar energy is a great resource that scientists have long explored as a means of providing energy to meet human needs. Thanks to advances in technology, there are now prototypes of various machines that run on solar power. These include solar powered cars, solar-heated homes, and solar-powered water heaters. In fact, many of these machines have gone beyond the prototype stage and are being used in many green homes throughout the world, where their owners are determined to help save the environment by decreasing their reliance on fossil fuels.

There are many ways to harness the power of the sun to allow our turbines to run, our water to be heated, and our homes to be conditioned at just the right temperature. One such method is the use of the solar panel, which you can often glimpse as a black platform filled with shining grids that glisten in the sun. This array of thermal collectors is connected to an appliance that can run on solar power.

The ability of appliances to run on solar power rests in the power of the individual grids on a solar panel. Each grid, called a photovoltaic cell or photovoltaic module, is arranged in a strategic array that is meant to collect the most sunlight and use the consequent energy most efficiently. Such photovoltaic arrays are in wide use nowadays, and have enjoyed an upsurge in production as their manufacturing costs have since diminished.

Photovoltaic cells use semiconductors to utilize sunlight and turn it into electricity. You can see such cells in your solar-powered calculator, emergency telephones on the roadside, and even in some large industrial complexes. With the lower cost of maintaining and manufacturing solar panels, you can use solar energy to heat your water and provide insulation for your home.

If you are interested in using solar energy to heat your water and your home, then you might want to take note of the following tips. Remember, that even if using solar energy has decreased in price, it is still relatively expensive compared with other energy providing and utilizing technologies.

Always inquire in as many solar energy panels providers as you can. Look for a solar panel and heating package that can fit your needs and budget. Look for machinery that can allow you to heat water, your home, and even power your cooking apparatus. If you can use solar energy widely in your home, then you can save on your gas and electric bills.

Solar hot water systems can use sunlight in various ways to heat different sources of water in your home. You can have hot water through your faucet, or even route lines to heat your swimming pool. Inquire at your solar energy panels providers on what packages they have for water heating, and if their apparatus can heat swimming pools. Swimming pool water contains different minerals, so it may require various modifications in conventional heating apparatus in order to keep the minerals from precipitating out of the water.

There are many advantages of using solar energy to heat your house and water. Using solar power to power your heating apparatus also emits less pollution compared with the use of other energy-generating methods. Because electric grids and gallons of fuel are difficult to transport to remote areas, such as deserts and islands, solar panels can be economical and practical, especially since deserts and islands will often have sun all year round. Solar panels are also more practical for transports such as boats or airline carriers,

which need energy without having to transport gallons of fuel or carry heavy electronic grids.

Despite these advantages, solar power is still expensive compared with grid-based electricity. Current technology for photovoltaic cells is also limited: you will need a greater number of photovoltaic cells in order to gather enough solar energy to drive larger applications. This can entail higher purchases and maintenance costs. More photovoltaic cells also require a greater land area, which can be difficult if you live in a suburban area, where land and lots are limited. Solar cells, moreover, produce a direct electric current, which must first be converted to alternate current, or AC, a change that results in an energy loss of about four to twelve percent.

Solar energy can still help save the environment, so if you are thinking about using it for your home and water heating, do as much research as you can. Make inquiries and compare prices. If you find a package that fits your needs and budget, then you can go right ahead and help save Mother Earth.

How is Your Candle Power?

Tips On How To Lower Your Utility Bills

The price of utility bills has risen astronomically over the past few years. Cost of electricity and gas are expected to increase even more in the future as our sources of energy, such as oil and coal, are slowly being depleted. All of us should start to lower our energy consumption not only to help lower our utility bills, but it is also our social responsibility to help conserve the earth's resources for the future generation.

Since almost fifteen to twenty per cent of the electricity consumption of an average household is used on lights, adopting changes in our lighting system and attitude will drastically lower our utility bills. If you want to lower your utility bills, then you have to do something about your lighting system.

Here are some tips how could start saving electricity.

Turn off lights when not in use.

The first rule in saving electricity is by turning off the lights that aren't in use. You should teach your children at an early age to have a habit of turning off the light as they go. This simple conscious effort is crucial in helping you save energy.

Change to energy efficient Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFL).

Another important way to save on electricity is by replacing incandescent bulbs with energy-saving fluorescent lights. Energy consumption of incandescent lights is much higher than regular fluorescent lights because they need to heat up a filament inside the bulb in order to produce light. In fact, 90% of energy consumed by incandescent lights is geared into heating up this filament. Just by merely replacing your incandescent bulbs with energy-saving fluorescent bulbs, you are saving about 66%.

Energy-saving fluorescent bulbs, particularly the compact fluorescent lights, aside from using only 25% of the energy consumption of traditional incandescent light bulbs, are also longer lasting. In fact, they are estimated to last as much as ten times more than traditional bulbs. Although they are much more expensive than traditional light bulbs, you will end up saving more in the future.

You can still keep incandescent light bulbs for ambient lighting, but be sure to use fluorescent bulbs in areas where lights are used at least two hours a day.

Aside from replacing incandescent light bulbs with CFLs, you should also be mindful of the wattage of your bulbs. Make sure that your overhead fixtures use lights with a lower wattage. Since there are many energy lamps available, it would also be more energy efficient to use desk or floor lamps if you are reading or doing close-up jobs.

Be mindful of light fixtures.

Unclean light fixtures increase their energy consumption by 25%. Thus, even if you use energy-saving lights, but don't clean the fixtures regularly, you will end up consuming more energy.

Aside from replacing traditional light bulbs with new energy-saving lights, you should also replace outdated or old light fixtures because the effectiveness of your light bulbs are greatly affected by your lighting fixtures. When you buy new lighting fixtures, be sure to look for the ones that have the highest ratings in energy efficiency. Retail shop personnel will be able to help you with this, if you aren't familiar with such ratings. Manufacturers of the fixtures always publish their fixtures' efficiency rating so you won't find it difficult to get this data from retail shops.

Install lighting controls

You can maximize savings by installing light controls that will turn off the lights when not in use. Many light controls work by turning lights on and off automatically, thereby, conserving a lot of electricity.

Some of the popular types of lighting controls are dimmers, timers, motion sensors, photo sensors and occupancy sensors. However, before you install such lighting controls, you need to have some knowledge of basic lighting terms and principles. If you are unsure, it may be wise to consult experts to help you decide and install such devices.

Solar lights can help as well.

Another way to save on electricity is by replacing your outdoor lighting with solar lighting. Since solar lights aren't as bright as regular electric lights, you need to shop around for solar lights that will satisfy your lighting requirements. There are many manufacturers of solar lights already so you wouldn't have any problems in finding one that will suit your needs.

Follow these tips and you will not only lower utility bills, but help conserve energy as well.

Dishwasher Drudgery

More Tips to Save Energy When Using Appliances

Appliances account for the bulk of your electricity consumption. You know that appliances won't work without electricity. And you know that there are appliances that simply consume too much energy, while some are naturally energy efficient.

But do you know whether your appliances are manufactured to be energy efficient or not, its overall energy consumption will heavily depend on how you use them? Yes, there are some ways you use appliances that make those items use more electricity.

You should therefore know about recommended practices that will help you lower your electricity bills by reducing the electricity consumption of appliances. It is imperative that you bear in mind several useful and simple guidelines that will help you generate energy savings when using your appliances.

However, be assured that you won't be spoiling the helpfulness and convenience brought about by these appliances. With proper and advisable usage of appliances, you can save on electric consumption. Overall, you'll be surprised at how much savings you can generate just by being a wise user and responsible owner of appliances.

Here are some useful tips that will help you avoid higher electric bills when you use your home appliances, particularly refrigerators and dishwashers, which are the top appliances in terms of electric consumption.

Refrigerators

Refrigerators are the topmost consumer of electricity among all home appliances. That is because refrigerators use complex energy systems that generate and absorb heat to freeze or make cold its contents.

Refrigerators are also the most basic among all home appliances. It is principally used to store food and beverages to keep them cold. These appliances also naturally preserve food items stored within.

When buying refrigerators, you should look for the energy efficient ones. Reliable and popular appliance brands usually offer refrigerators that aren't just sophisticated and highly functional, but also energy efficient.

Take note that size matters when you are assessing energy consumption of refrigerators. The bigger the refrigerator, the more energy it uses. Two-door and single door refrigerators also differ in the amount of energy consumption. Two-door refrigerators are deemed to be more economical and energy efficient because freezer temperatures won't be disrupted when you open the door to get and store food.

There are still simple tips you should consider if you aim to save on costs while using the refrigerator.

Don't store hot food or beverages in the fridge. Refrigerators work by absorbing heat in stored food and conducting such heat to its compressor. This temperature conduction process makes up for energy consumption.

Clean the condenser coils of your refrigerator regularly. Such condenser coils are usually located behind or underneath the fridge.

Always make sure that refrigerator seals and freezer doors are fitting tightly. This will ensure that there won't be unnecessary leakage of air from inside the fridge.

Don't use a separate freezer for food. Doing so would be wasteful unless that separate freezer is constantly kept full. Remember that it will take less power to run a full freezer than when it is half empty.

Dishwashers

Dishwashers are one of the most expensive appliances to maintain because it uses not just electricity but also ample amounts of water. Did you know that dishwashers use about 60% to 80% of its energy consumption just to heat the water? That water-heating process inside dishwashers make up for most of the appliance's power consumption.

There are also many brands and versions of dishwashers that are specifically made to be energy efficient. You can buy such dishwashers. If you already have one at home, there are several measures that can help you lower your dishwasher's energy consumption.

Never run a dishwasher unless it is entirely full. Doing so will help conserve electricity.

You can turn on any energy-saver switch whenever you air dry clean dishes. The practice will help you cut energy consumption of the appliance by about 10% to 20%.

Saving on energy consumption is imperative nowadays. As a responsible individual, you should make sure you are doing your share in energy conservation, especially during these times when energy sources are becoming more expensive and are slowly depleting.

How to Be a Stripper – uh, Weather Stripper That Is

Energy-saving Weather stripping and Window Coverings

You probably have temperature controlling appliances within your home. Such equipment are like investments that ensure that you will be comfortable within your home whether the temperature is scorching outside during summer or extremely freezing during winter.

But you must also have an idea of how much electricity is being consumed by such temperature controlling appliances. Homeowners who have and use them at home will readily attest that their monthly electric bills are way too high because of the usage of such appliances.

While it is true that you can live at home without a cooling and heating system, it would make your stay inside your own home extremely miserable. Homes are built to serve as your place of refuge where you can rest and relax after a long day's work. How can you do so if the temperature inside is unbearable?

It is estimated that your cooling and heating system used at home can take up a bulk of your monthly electricity bill. While it is true that using such appliances naturally makes electricity consumption much higher, there are still several factors that further cause

higher electric bills as you use such temperature controlling equipments.

Of course, in using almost all appliances, there are several activities that will help ensure conservation of energy, and ultimately help you lower your monthly electricity bills. When using your heating and cooling systems at home, there are some ways that can help you maximize the appliances' uses and functions.

There are home accessories that will help heating and cooling systems function better and uninterrupted. Take note that if the airflow within your home is regulated, your temperature controlling appliances will function better and more efficiently.

Thus, you should make sure your windows and doors are tightly sealed and closed every time to make sure the conditioned air inside your house due to the use of heating and cooling systems won't leak out. Ensuring this will make sure the temperature inside your home is just how you want it to be. Electricity consumption will also be significantly lowered.

Weather stripping

There might be small crevices and cracks around your windows and your doors. There are small spaces and holes where air can flow in and flow out. Did you know that you could regulate airflow and the temperature inside your house by filling in those cracks, crevices and small holes in your doors and windows?

That is the exact function of weather stripping. Weather stripping closes gaps produced by spaces in windows and doors. Thus, there won't be much air and temperature leakage. If you are planning to install weather stripping at your doors and windows, contact professionals who can do so more effectively and point out other ways to conserve energy.

If you prefer you can do it yourself. Replacing and installing weather stripping is made easier nowadays with the ready made and easy to install weather stripping for doors and windows. There are those that just have to be pasted or attached so it won't be a big hassle for you.

Window coverings

You can also install window coverings to help maximize the functions of your cooling systems. Windows are effective mediums of heat transfer from the outside of your house to the inside. Thus, during hot summer days, you may notice that warm air gets inside your house through the window.

Even if your windows are closed and your air conditioner is working during summers, hot air can get through the window in the form of radiation. And that would very well affect the function of your cooling system. As warm air continuously flows inside the house, the air conditioner will strive to work harder, using more electricity in the process.

You can buy or make window coverings that are energy efficient. Curtains and blinds can function very well as efficient window coverings. Through using such home accessories, radiation flow is minimized and airflow within your house is becoming more regulated.

Buying curtains and blinds won't be a problem. All you have to do is to visit your trusted home furnishing shop. Such products are now made easier to install so it won't take long before you have your energy efficient window coverings in place.

Do it Yourself Solar



[Click Here for Do it Yourself Solar Systems ->](#)

The present economic scenario and the ever-shrinking state of the global oil reserves is not good news for everyone. But on a positive note it makes us investigate for alternative energy sources that is become the solution of cutting down present and the future energy consumption, particularly in terms of fossil fuel usage like oil. For example, it has become more and more economical to build home made solar energy system. Building the home made solar panels that utilize deep cell storage batteries produce the electricity upon consumer demand and reduce the their individual dependence on the country's energy grid.

Who is there in the world who does not wish to have the energy bills get reduced by 80% or more? Many of us shall want to take advantage of such a great deal. If such is the demand then follow the guide Earth4Energy that offers lot of fantastic home made solar solutions on their site, which can be built easily, for the low cost of less than \$200.

The Features of the guide are -

- Full and detailed instructions given which can be easily understood by a layman or the unskilled for building a home made solar panel.
- Other details on how to obtain the components available in the neighborhood material store for preparing the home made solar system.
- Few Tips on how to construct the alternative energy generators that is not readily available anywhere else.
- One time investment - and life long updates to the manual and video series, at no additional cost.
- Full cash back if you are not saving hundreds of dollars per month on your energy bill after using the system for eight months.
- Detailed instructions explained by videos

Think about it! Here you are with a home made solar system, generating power that will be stored in deep cell batteries for future consumption. And all of this costs just pennies on the dollar! At www.Earth4Energy.com, you will have subscribe to the home made solar DIY kit and then begin to experience of making the energy generating kit at home. The DIY instructional manual and videos are easy to understand so that even a beginner will be able to understand.

They have a history of excited customers mentioning positive reviews about the many money saving quotes. Most of them who have built the devices can't believe how easy it was. Additionally, these testimonials or feedbacks state that they have actually gained and also saved 100% of their electric bill and that they could use the extra money to pay gasoline to their car!

[Make power at home](#) with solar and wind energy to eliminate your power bill. Get our complete guide [Here ->](#)