

Change lighting to cut energy bills

It's easy to use more light than you need.

More than 16 percent of the electricity we use in our homes goes into lighting. Most Americans overlook their homes, we're told, so lowering lighting levels is an easy conservation measure.

During the summer, one of the best ways to conserve is to use "solar energy." Get out in your yard, meet the neighbors, sit on the porch or patio, work outside.

It's silly to sleep late so you can stay up late and use lights unnecessarily. At the risk of paraphrasing Ben Franklin, early to bed and early to rise is economically wise.

Indoors, you can do a lot of things to reduce your electric bill.

• Light-zone your home and save electricity. Concentrate lighting in reading and working areas and where it's needed for safety (stairwells, for example). Reduce lighting in other areas, but avoid very sharp contrasts.

• To reduce overall lighting in non-working spaces, remove one bulb out of three in multiple light fixtures. Replace it with a burned-out bulb so someone doesn't stick his finger into a "hot" socket. Replace other bulbs throughout the house with bulbs of the next lower wattage.

• Consider installing solid state dimmers or hi-low switches. They make it easy to reduce lighting intensity in a room and thus save energy.



energy
Barry Jensen

• Use one large bulb instead of several small ones in areas where bright light is needed. A higher wattage bulb always gives more light than several smaller bulbs that total the same wattage.

• Use long-life incandescent lamps only in hard-to-reach places. They are less energy efficient than ordinary bulbs.

• Need new lamps? Consider the advantages of those with three-way switches. They make it easy to keep lighting levels low when intense light is not necessary, and that saves electricity. Use the high switch only for reading or other activities that require brighter light.

• Always turn three-way bulbs down to the lowest lighting level when watching television. You'll reduce the glare and use less energy.

• Use low-wattage night-light bulbs. These now come in four-watt as well as seven-watt sizes. The four-watt bulb with a clear finish is almost as bright

as the seven-watt bulb but uses about half as much energy.

• Try 50-watt reflector floodlight in direction lamps (such as pole or spot lamps). These flood lights provide about the same amount of light as the standard 160-watt bulbs but at half the wattage.

• Try 25-watt reflector flood bulbs in high-intensity portable lamps. They provide about the same amount of light but use less energy than the 40-watt bulbs that normally come with these lamps.

• Use fluorescent lights whenever you can. They give light per watt. For example, a 40-watt fluorescent lamp gives off 80 lumens per watt and a 60-watt incandescent gives off only 14.7 lumens per watt. The 40-watt fluorescent lamp would save 140 watts over a seven-hour period. These savings,

over a period of time, could more than pay for the fixtures you would need to use fluorescent lighting.

• Consider fluorescent lighting for the kitchen sink and countertop areas. These lights, set under kitchen cabinets or over counter tops, are pleasant and energy efficient.

• Fluorescent lighting also is effective for makeup and grooming areas. Use 20-watt deluxe warm white lamps for these areas.

• Keep all lamps and lighting fixtures clean. Dirt absorbs light.

• You can save on lighting energy through decorating. Because light colors for walls, rugs, draperies and upholstery reflect light, they reduce the amount of artificial light required.

Outdoors, these ideas will help reduce your utility bill.

• Have decorative outdoor gas lamps turned off unless they are essential for safety or convert them to electricity. Eight gas lamps burning year-round use as much natural gas as an average-size home in a winter heating season.

• Use outdoor lights only when they are needed. One way to make sure they're off during the day is to use a photoelectric unit or timer that will turn them off automatically.

Don't put off home-care duties

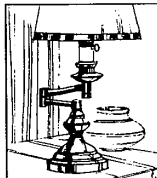
Learning how to shut off the water in your house is something best done before water shoots out of your faucet some star-crossed day.

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