

Tips to Save Money at Home this Summer

When the temperature goes up, so do energy bills, water bills, and a host of other home-related costs. Here are a few tips on how to stretch your household budget this summer and still stay cool.



- **Use ceiling fans.** Overhead fans get air circulating, which means you might be able to delay turning on the air conditioning—especially if you can also leave windows open on cool summer evenings. Make sure you have the blades spinning in the right direction, though! In the summer, the preferred direction for a ceiling fan to spin in is counterclockwise as you look up at the fan blades. You will feel a cool downward airflow as you stand directly under the fan. In the winter, the preferred direction for a ceiling fan to spin in is a clockwise direction. Check your owner's manual for how to switch the direction on your fans.
- **Invest in a programmable thermostat.** Programming your thermostat is one of the easiest, lowest cost ways you can cut your energy bills. Installing a programmable thermostat prevents your home from going through large temperature swings and can save you up to 10 percent on your cooling bills. A homeowner can save as much as \$150 - or even more - on air conditioning bills by setting a thermostat.
- **Upgrade your old air conditioner.** Another air conditioning adjustment that can save you money is upgrading your old window unit air conditioners. If you have old air conditioners with an EER energy efficiency of 5, you can cut costs in half by replacing it with a new one with an EER of 10. So do a simple calculation: If your average annual bill is \$260, your bill would become \$130. Depending on the size of the unit and room (window units range from \$100 to \$500), your annual savings will pay for the unit in just a few years. Air conditioners also function more efficiently and cheaply (and last longer) when you replace or clean their filters on a regular basis. Read your owners' manual to find out how often you should replace or clean filters.
- **Finally, unplug electronics when they're not in use.** Even when electronics such as television sets, DVD players, computers and phone chargers are turned off, they can suck power out of outlets. Either unplug them when you're done using them or use a Smart Strip (which cuts power when it's not needed). One exception to this tip: overhead fans, especially at night, will cool air more cheaply than turning down the thermostat.