

## Energy Saving Ideas

Using energy wisely can reduce consumption and save money on utility bills, according to the American Gas Association. Here are some tips for conserving energy:

1. Seal leaks around doors, windows and other openings, such as pipes or ducts, with caulking or weather-stripping.
2. Set thermostats between 65 and 70 degrees in the winter, at least 5 degrees lower when sleeping, and at 58 degrees when away from home for more than a few hours. (Warmer temperatures are recommended for homes with ill or elderly persons or infants).
3. Set water heater temperatures at 140 degrees (at 120 degrees in homes with infants or elderly persons to guard against accidental scalding), and install water flow restrictors in showerheads and faucets.
4. Change filters or clean the filters in heating and cooling units twice a year. Close vents and doors in unused rooms. If pipes or ducts run through unheated areas, insulate them.
5. Use drapes, shutters, awnings, shade trees, glass with reflective film or solar screens to keep sunlight out in the summer and let the sunlight in during the winter.
6. Check to see if attic and basement (or crawl space) have the recommended level of insulation.

7. If you have a wood-burning fireplace, consider installing a natural gas fireplace insert, which can save on energy costs compared with wood. A gas fireplace also will dramatically reduce the air pollution created from burning wood.
8. Consider storm or thermal windows and doors or double paned glass. A less expensive alternative is plastic sheeting, which can be temporarily fastened over doors and windows to retain heat or air conditioning
9. Be sure that dishwashers, washing machines and clothes dryers are fully loaded before running.
10. When buying new appliances, compare energy efficiency ratings and annual operating costs. A slightly higher initial cost for a high-efficiency appliance could pay itself back in a very short time through energy savings and lower utility bills.