

8 ENERGY-EFFICIENT TIPS TO GET YOU THROUGH THE CHILLY HOLIDAYS

AS WE BUNDLE UP AND MOVE INDOORS, TAKE SOME STEPS TO KEEP YOUR HOME COMFORTABLE, SAVE MONEY ON YOUR ENERGY BILLS, AND CONSERVE RESOURCES

1. Make a shopping list! Plan your shopping trip. Head towards where you need to go and purchase as many products as possible the first time - instead of going back and forth to the store and wasting the gas because you forgot one thing
2. To maximize holiday energy savings, use timers to limit light displays to the hours you want. These timers are readily available and also save you the hassle of running around at dusk plugging in or turning on lights.
3. Use LED lights, which look the same as traditional incandescent bulbs, last longer, use about 85 percent less energy and stay cool to the touch, which is safer for those families with curious younger children. The lights are fairly inexpensive - a strand of 60 Philips LED dome string multi-color twinkle lights uses up to 88 percent less energy, lasts up to 20 times longer than standard bulbs and is available at most stores for around \$15.
4. Stay cozy by plugging air leaks and insulating. Sealing up air leaks with caulking and weather stripping and installing adequate insulation will not only increase indoor comfort but will also reduce home heating costs by up to 20 percent. Cover whole house fans and evaporative coolers.
5. Don't send precious, costly warmed air up the chimney! When the fireplace is not in use, try to seal the opening.
6. Make a New Year's resolution that's good for your pocketbook and the environment. Get started on those energy-efficient home improvements you've been putting off for too long! Many resources are available to help homeowners make smart, educated decisions. A good place to start is by signing up for a free subscription to Smart Energy Living, a quarterly Colorado magazine. Visit www.smartenergyliving.org more information.
7. Although frost on windows may be charming in holiday movies, it's uncomfortable in your own home. Depending on your financial capabilities, either cover single-pane windows with plastic film to avoid drafts, install storm windows, or upgrade to energy-efficient windows with double panes and low-emissivity coatings to dramatically improve indoor comfort. Even hanging heavy blankets over windows and unused outdoors will make a difference.
8. Americans generate millions of additional trash over the holidays, trash that requires additional energy to process. Try to be creative about wrapping presents-use linens or other reusable items instead. If you need wrapping paper, be sure to use recycled. Rather than using new tissue paper to wrap ornaments and things you don't want to break, reuse the bubble wrap and wrapping paper that your family's gifts arrived in.