



Home Remedy

At-Home Guide for Energy & Water Savings

We make choices every day.

Did you know that the typical household wastes 40% of its water and energy with inefficient technology, neglected household maintenance and bad habits?

With just a little effort, 10% of the waste can be eliminated with good choices. These include choices like shutting the faucet off while brushing your teeth or turning lights off in unoccupied rooms. With a little investment in products like faucet aerators or programmable thermostats, another 15% can drop from your utility bill. Water and energy conservation is important for you and your household budget. It can also help relieve some of the strain on your local resources.

This guide is a resource to get you started in conservation efforts at home. It walks through your home giving ideas about how to use resources most effectively. It is a great start to home water and energy conservation that will keep hundreds of dollars in your pocket every year.

Our choices matter.

Making an effort to become more conscious about the choices we make around the home is key to sustainability. A healthy home is part of a healthy community.

We strive to do the best we can when paying bills and taking care of the places we live. It can be as easy as creating healthy habits that will help get the most out of the devices that power our lives. Controlling your resource consumption is key to a strong; household by managing budgets, community by demonstrating responsibility and environment by reducing your demand on its resources. It is good for your budget and it is good for the environment!



WHAT'S INSIDE

- Tips for Saving Energy
- Tips for Saving Water
- Low-cost and No-cost Solutions
- BONUS: Easy Non-Toxic Cleaning Alternatives

Energy-Saving Choices at Home

Kitchen

No-Cost Solutions

- When full, turn the temperature of fridge or freezer up
- Put 2-liter bottles of water in freezer when less full
- Get all supplies out of fridge in one trip
- Keep drip pans clean
- Cut food into smaller pieces before cooking
- Use the right size pot or pan for the job
- **In winter**, don't turn stove fan on. Let oven heat supplement heating needs

Did you know? Temperature control is the most effective way to bring down your utility bill.

Making Smart Choices in Your Home

Being smart about the choices you make in your home is easy and more affordable than ever.

More than half of your utility bill goes to heating, cooling your home. By knowing how to manage these systems you can reduce your bill without risking comfort or convenience.

Heating and Cooling

No-Cost Solutions

- Vacuum/wipe down vents and registers
- Keep curtains and furniture away from vents and registers
- Close doors to unoccupied rooms.
- Control solar heating. In summer, close curtains during day; in winter, open curtains during day.
- Use ceiling fans to optimize heating and cooling. In summer, turn fan on counter-clockwise; winter clockwise.
- Adjust the thermostat for moderate heating and cooling. In summer, set to 72-74 degrees; in winter, set to 65- 67 degrees.
- While on extended leave, dial the thermostat up to 85 degrees in summer; in winter, dial down to 55 degrees.

Low-Cost Fixes

- In winter, cover windows with plastic sheet or bubble-wrap
- Rope caulk unused doors and drafts around windows
- Change air filters once a month
- Install a programmable thermostat to control temperature needs

Moderate to High Cost Investments

- Replace inefficient windows and seal any cracks in frames
- Clean out ventilation ducts and seal any leaks
- Replace furnace/boilers more than 15 years old with Energy Star models



Energy Matters

Energy efficiency is different from energy conservation.

When we conserve energy we are making an effort to reduce our consumption. We can conserve energy by reducing wasteful use. This is the effort of habit to change the way we use energy. By turning off lights or turning down the thermometer we are conserving energy.

Energy efficiency is updating systems to more efficient devices. We can use energy more efficiently by using CFL bulbs or upgrading devices to be Energy Star rated.

This doesn't have to take effort beyond purchasing choices but will improve the way we use energy and decrease our consumption.

Using conservation techniques and efficiency technology is the most effective way to control our energy consumption. This means lower utility bills and less strain on our resources.

You would be surprised about how easy it is to change the way we use our resources and the difference it can make.

Lighting & Electronics

No-Cost Solutions

- Turn lights off when not needed
- Install bulbs in only as many sockets as needed
- Unplug electronics and devices when not in use
- Turn off computer monitor when not in use
- Put computer to sleep when not in use
- Set water temperature to 120 degrees
- Wash clothes in cold water
- Clean dryer filter after every load and don't over-dry

Low-Cost Fixes

- When replacing bulbs, switch to CFL or LED bulbs
- Bundle electronics and devices on a power-strip and switch off when not in use
- Change air filters once a month



Moderate to High Cost Investments

- **Purchase Energy Star** products
- **Use a laptop** computer instead of a desktop
- **Use LED or better** screens instead of CRT (TV or computer screen)



Water Matters

Water is important for all life. The way we use it in our homes affects the quality of water for others and the amount of water available.

Water sources are threatened by drought and pollution and it is a growing concern for all of us.

The way we use water in our homes makes a difference. If every American used one gallon less a day we would save 85 billion gallons of water a year.

Becoming mindful of how we are using water in our homes and ensuring that **we aren't wasting** makes a difference in preserving our resources.

Water-Saving Choices at Home

Kitchen

No-Cost Solutions

- Only run full loads in the dishwasher
- Scrape food into the trash (or compost) instead of rinsing dishware
- Do not use pre-rinse cycle on dishwasher
- If hand washing dishes, do not change the dishwasher
- Only use as much water as necessary for cooking
- Rinse dishes a load at a time; Or, fill the second sink with a few inches of water for rinsing
- Use nutrient rich water from cooking to drink, for houseplants, or in the garden
- Rinse vegetables in a bowl of water
- Reuse cups for drinking water to cut back on dishes
- Keep a pitcher of water in fridge instead of running tap for cooler water
- Whenever the tap is running, capture the water in a bucket and use it to drink, for indoor plants, for pets, or for the garden or lawn



necessary for cooking

Bathroom

No-Cost Solutions

- Take showers instead of baths
- Limit showers to 10 minutes or less
- If bathing is necessary, fill tub an 2 inches less
- Plug the tub when bathing right away and adjust water temperature to comfort
- Fill 20oz bottles with sand or water and place in the back of the toilet

Low-Cost Fixes

- Install 1.5 or 1.75 gpm (low-flow) showerheads
- Install aerators on faucets 1.5 gallons/minute or less
- Install retrofit kit on toilet
- Use hand sanitizer instead of soap and water



Yard & Plants

No-Cost Solutions

- Let nature take care of watering the lawn
- Raise the mower blades 1-2 inches. Longer grass needs less water.



- Use leftover or unused water in houseplants
- Collect rain water to water garden or indoor plants



*Eight glasses of water per day from a tap cost about \$0.49 a year.
The same amount of water from a bottle costs about \$1,400 a year.*

All Around the House

No-Cost Solutions

- Check for and maintain leaky faucets regularly
- Turn faucets off in the shower or sink when lathering up or when shaving
- Wash full loads of laundry only or if possible set it to a lower water level for smaller loads

Low-Cost Fixes

- Install low-flow aerators on all faucets and showers
- Insulate water pipes

Moderate to High Cost Investments

- Purchase Energy Star rated appliances and recycle old appliances
- Replace furnaces and hot water tanks that are more than 15 years old



Health Starts at Home

Keeping a home healthy and safe is important. It saves money and resources, promotes healthy child growth and development, and prevents injury and contamination.

One way to promote health in your home is to replace overly harsh and toxic cleaners with easy, inexpensive, and healthier cleaners. Some examples are shown here.

These alternative cleaners and other small steps can help you maintain a healthy home and avoid serious home-based health hazards in the future. The benefits will have a positive impact on your physical and financial well-being.

Prevention is the key to good health and it starts at home.



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Easy Cleaning Alternatives

ALL PURPOSE CLEANER:

Mix equal parts white vinegar and water in a spray bottle and shake. For scented cleaners add a little essential oil and shake well.

SOFT SCRUB:

Put ½ cup baking soda into a bowl and add enough liquid detergent to soften and moisten the baking soda.

WINDOW CLEANER:

Put ½ teaspoon liquid detergent, 3 tablespoons white vinegar and 2 cups of water into a spray bottle, shake well.

OVEN CLEANER:

Sprinkle water generously inside oven over grime. Cover the area with baking soda and then use water to moisten any dry baking soda. Set overnight and grime will wipe off easily the next morning. Use liquid detergent to clean any left-over mess.

FURNITURE POLISH:

Mix ½ teaspoon olive oil and ¼ cup white vinegar or lemon juice in a jar.

DEODORIZER:

Strait white vinegar in a spray bottle takes care of any unwanted odors. The smell of vinegar dissipates within hours and it is great for sanitization. You can also use baking soda for carpets, sprinkle over surface and vacuum.

MOLD CLEANER:

Mix 2 teaspoons vinegar and 2 cups of water in a spray bottle and shake.

BLEACH SPOT REMOVER (hard and soft surfaces):

Soak stain in lemon juice overnight. Spot test small area before using on large surface.



About Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership

The Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership (SWMHP) was created in 1992 to address housing concerns in Southwest Minnesota and uphold the mission to “create thriving places to live, grow, and work through partnerships with communities.” Over the last 20 years, the organization’s programming, services and service area has evolved and expanded to meet local and regional needs in over 30 counties in Southwestern Minnesota. The agency’s primary services include: community planning and technical assistance, homeownership education and finance, single family and multi-family housing development and rehabilitation, and downtown revitalization. Beneficiaries of SWMHP’s efforts are low-to-moderate income residents and minority households from primarily rural communities.

