

Gobble Up These 5 Holiday Energy Saving Tips

Don't let your energy bill over the holiday season put you in a fowl mood!

1. Lower the Thermostat. If you're leaving the house to travel, no need to crank the heat in an empty home. If you have a programmable thermostat, set it to heat up just before you arrive back home. If you're hosting guests, the presence of extra occupants and the oven being on whilst cooking will provide extra warmth for the home and can provide the thermostat some relief. Keep your draperies and shades open to let the sun in to provide natural warmth.
2. Put your cookware to efficient use. A glass or ceramic pan is excellent at retaining heat, and so is using the lid on pots when cooking. It also helps to use the correct pot or pan size on burners; a small pan on a large burner allows heat to escape.
3. Utilize the Dishwasher. About 18 percent of all the energy we consume in our homes is used to heat water. Put all dishwasher-safe items in the dishwasher and make sure it's full before running. This is especially helpful with larger casserole dishes as it will use less energy and water to clean than by hand washing. Use cold water when running the garbage disposal and rinsing dishes before they go into the dishwasher.
4. Keep Doors Closed. Try to limit the hustle and bustle of guests opening and closing doors too frequently. When this happens, air from outside is exchanged with air inside. Some fresh air might be okay every so often, but if the temperature outside is much different than that of the inside, it can cause your thermostat and HVAC system to work harder than necessary. Everyone also wants to open the lids of slow cookers and check what's cookin' in the oven because they enjoy the smells. Avoid this as much as possible, as removing the lids and opening the oven delays the cooking time and costs you more in energy use, allowing much-needed heat to escape. Prep dishes ahead of time to help prevent excessive opening and closing of the refrigerator and freezer doors.
5. Maximize! Whenever possible, use a toaster oven or microwave instead of a regular oven. These smaller appliances take less time to cook food and save energy because they are quicker to heat up. Avoid pre-heating the oven for too long, if at all. It's also good practice to cook several dishes in the oven at once to maximize the concentrated heat source.

Want to share these tips with your students in a fun way? Check out NEED's [This Week in Energy Conservation](#), an activity designed as a television show with student-correspondents reporting on a variety of energy conservation topics. This fun activity introduces students to energy saving tips, both in the home and on the road!