

Home Improvements that will Save Money this Summer

Reduce energy consumption and maintenance costs this summer

We tend to focus on winter as the season to watch our energy consumption, but summer cooling and maintenance costs can be just as pricy. There are ways to reduce your fuel and energy consumption and the maintenance costs of your home or condo without a major capital expense.

Garden Smart

Create a little oasis in your backyard that doesn't cost a fortune. From watering and spraying to mowing, your lawn takes up a substantial amount of your gardening budget and Saturday mornings. When you use a two-stroke gas-powered lawn mower for an hour, you're creating the same amount of emissions as driving your car for [320 km](#), not to mention the cost of maintenance and gas.

Consider reducing the size of your lawn with garden beds, pathways and water features or forgoing your lawn altogether. Substitute your patch of green for indigenous ground covers like clover which require little care.

Raised garden beds are a cheap way to grow your own organic vegetables. You can get about [\\$900 worth](#) of veggies from a single bed. Raised beds make gardening easier and require very little effort and water to sustain.

Mind the Gaps

Save up to [30% on your energy bill](#) by caulking gaps in your home envelope. Caulking gaps keeps your energy bills low and prevents moisture and bugs from entering your home. Inspect the walls inside and out for gaps or cracks that need to be filled. Check areas around door and window frames, skylights, plumbing fixtures, light fittings, vents and where siding joins at the corners.

Keep your Cool

If you have a home air conditioner, spring maintenance can really help to save on your summer energy costs. Clean or replace filters according to the manufacturer's recommendations and save [5% to 15% on cooling costs](#).

Clean out your AC evaporator coil and condenser coil and trim back foliage from outside units to allow for air circulation.

Better still, consider using a [ceiling fan](#) for the shoulder seasons. Air conditioners utilize [19 times](#) more energy than ceiling fans. You can use your ceiling fans in the winter too by switching them to a clockwise direction so they can push warm air down into your living space.

Bringing plants into your home can [reduce your indoor air temperature](#). Plants use heat and release

moisture into the room through the process of transpiration. This helps to cool your indoor air.

Another way to use plants to cool your home is to plant deciduous trees and vines outside sun-facing windows. In the summer, your windows will be shaded from the hot sun, but in the winter the plants will lose their leaves, allowing the warm winter sunshine to heat your home naturally.

Spring is a great time to improve the efficiency of your home or condo and increase its value. Be sure to get the most out of every home-improvement dollar by using our [home savings calculator](#) and by consulting your local government for [incentives](#).

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