

Are your growing hydro bills giving you the chills?

Cut your energy bill in half this winter

Are your ever-growing hydro bills giving you the chills? Before Jack Frost really settles in, there are a few changes you can make to your home or condo to help significantly reduce your energy bills. Get a little more in your bank account for holiday cheer with these energy saving tips from our eco-living experts.

Ditch the Switch

Openings for outlets and switches are basically holes in your walls through which conditioned indoor air can escape. Replace switch and outlet plates with insulated ones, especially on outside walls.

See the Light

Replacing all your lights can be a costly investment, so pick just your five most frequently utilized lights. Replacing these with LEDs or bulbs that have an ENERGY STAR rating will save [\\$70 each year](#) on your hydro bill.

Beat the Heat

Heating and cooling typically accounts for [54% of your energy bill](#). Working to reduce your winter heating costs will significantly improve your efficiency. Start with regular furnace maintenance—an efficient furnace can reduce your heating costs by [up to 5%](#).

Vacuum or rinse your filters once a month and ensure that vents are not covered by furniture or clutter. Check ducting for leaks and get these professionally repaired. Ironically, duct tape is great for fixing everything but leaking ducts.

Install an air source heat pump which recovers heat and delivers 1.5 to 3 times more heat than the energy it consumes.

Studies show that you reduce your heating bill by [1% for every 1°F](#) you turn your thermostat down. It makes sense to turn down your heat when you are sleeping or away at work. Don't turn it right down, because your pipes may freeze and it takes a substantial amount of energy to reheat your home. Install a smart thermostat that turns down the heat when necessary and save 10%-30% on heating if used according to the manufacturer's instructions.

If you don't have a smart thermostat, aim for an indoor temperature of 20°C (68°F) when you are home and lower when you are away or asleep.

Laundry

90% of the energy your washing machine uses goes to heating water. Use the cold wash cycle and augment cleaning with natural detergents. Wash full loads or select a reduced water level for smaller loads.

Slay those Vampires

Appliances on standby draw 'vampire' energy and can account for up to 10% of your energy bill. Turn off appliances when not in use or invest in a smart power bar with a timer which will turn itself off when it's not in use.

Seal the Deal

Drafts under doors account [for 5% to 30%](#) of heating loss so replace door seals to reduce energy costs. You can also make a door snake by stuffing an old sock and placing it at the bottom of drafty doors.

Caulk gaps and holes, plumbing openings, light fixtures and ducting to prevent warm air from leaking out.

Don't wait, Insulate!

Top up or retrofit new insulation for a tighter building envelope. Insulation is the fastest way to improve your energy efficiency and make your home quieter and more comfortable. Learn about different types of insulation and how to get the most for your insulating buck [here](#).

Check with your local government for a list of the grants and incentives offered to help you save energy. These incentives can help offset costs so you save sooner. Get a complete list of incentives for Canada [here](#).

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