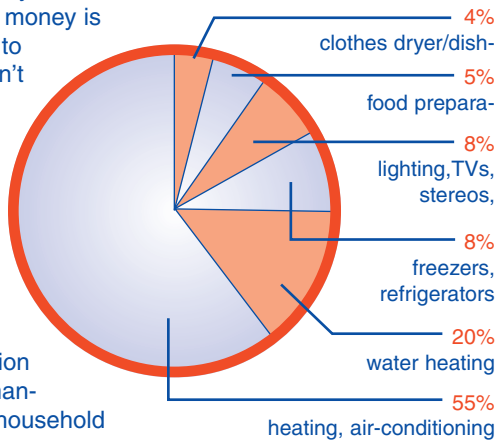








So this is where my money goes...

Ever wonder how much it costs to keep your house warm in winter or cool in summer or how much money it takes to take a hot shower or watch TV? Your money is important to you so don't throw it away on high energy costs. Start managing your energy consumption like you manage your household budget.



Why are electric bills higher during the winter months?

If you are wondering why your electric energy use is up in the winter, consider these often overlooked reasons:

-  People decorate, cook and bake more during the holidays.
-  Lights are on longer because of shorter daylight hours.
-  Electric blankets are used more.
-  Clothes dryers run more often.
-  Kids are inside more playing electronic games, opening and closing the refrigerator, etc.
-  Thermostats are set too high.

Dial back when heating your home

Regardless of how you heat your home, your thermostat can be the key for you to save money. In winter, the lowest comfortable settings mean the greatest dollar savings.



Take a look at the relationship between the temperature setting on your thermostat and the cost of operation in the chart below. Based on 70 degrees Fahrenheit, it would cost 6.2 percent more to raise the room temperature to 72 degrees.

TEMPERATURE - COST RELATIONSHIP

Room temperature	Based on 70 degrees
68 degrees	costs 6.2 % less
69 degrees	3.1% less
70 degrees	0
71 degrees	3.1% more
72 degrees	6.2% more
73 degrees	9.4% more
74 degrees	12.5% more
75 degrees	15.6% more
76 degrees	18.7% more
77 degrees	21.9% more
78 degrees	25.0% more
79 degrees	28.0% more
80 degrees	31.0% more

High settings waste energy in addition to money. Example: if your electric heating costs for the month were approximately \$49 and your room temperature was 80 degrees, you could save more than \$10 a month by reducing your thermostat setting to 70 degrees.

The lower your thermostat setting the more you save. The recommended thermostat setting for winter use is 68 degrees. Some consumers like it warmer and some like it cooler. But for the same house and same size family, they will have different energy bills. Senior citizens and those with circulation problems should be careful not to set their thermostats much below 65 degrees.

Take CHARGE of Your Heating Bill



Be more aware of your energy use and ways to manage it during the winter



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Ideas to Stay Warm and Save Money

There are dozens of do-it-yourself home improvements that will help keep your home warm this winter and save your family money. Take a look at these 10 easy things you can do to get control of your heating bills:

- 1 Seal electrical outlets** - Cold drafts can seep through electrical outlets if they are not properly insulated. Seal all electrical outlets with draft blockers or insulating gaskets that fit behind the cover plates.
- 2 Close the flue damper when you're not using the fireplace** - Heat rises and chimneys can suck warm air right out of the house.
- 3 Put the sun to work for you** - Open draperies on sunny days but close them at night. And wash your windows. Having clean windows can increase the amount of warm sunlight that comes into your home by as much as 30 percent.
- 4 Don't heat unused rooms** - Close heating vents in spare bedrooms and other little used areas. And keep doors to unused rooms closed.
- 5 Turn the thermostat down** - Keep the setting at 68 degrees or lower when you're home and turn it down to 55 at night or while you're at work. You cut costs by 3 percent for every degree you lower it.
- 6 Bundle up** - If you wear sweaters and heavy fabrics indoors, you won't notice that the air is cooler when you turn down the thermostat.
- 7 Reverse the direction of your ceiling fan blades** - Reversing the blades will push warm air down into the room.
- 8 Insulate windows** - Windows leak up to 25 percent of the cost of a home's heating.
- 9 Don't overlook filters** - Heating systems run much more efficiently if filters are cleaned and replaced regularly.
- 10 Seal small leaks** - Use weather stripping around outside doors and windows.

Lighten up!

Winter's shorter days mean more time spent indoors and more hours of lighting your home. Simple measures can help in cutting lighting costs, like turning lights off when they're not in use.

But if you are looking for an easy alternative in lighting, think about using fluorescent light bulbs. Watt for watt, they offer more light and a much longer life than ordinary incandescent bulbs.

Fluorescents have come a long way from those long, skinny tubes in the office. They're now available in a compact version that screws into ordinary lamps and ceiling fixtures. And, while they are more expensive to purchase than regular light bulbs, they are far cheaper to operate because they use less electricity than incandescent bulbs and they last for years. Using fluorescent bulbs can save you up to 77 percent on your lighting costs this winter.

