

It is my pleasure as BaP Architectural Services to introduce you to this article written by Dawn Jamison on March 11, 2016 that reflects ways to make your home more Energy Efficient.

16 Ways to Make Your Home More Energy-Efficient

- by [Dawn Jamison](#)
- March 11, 2016



We're fortunate to be living in an era dominated by technology and innovation. Smart technology, transportation efficiencies and useful apps are everywhere, making it easier for all of us to live more efficiently. So, with all of this amazing innovation, I often wonder why so many people still aren't living greener.

If all of us made just one eco-friendly change, we would significantly impact the Earth, our communities and our energy bills. In case some of you are willing to make small changes but don't know what to do to be energy-efficient, here are 16 things you can do to be greener at home. I've included low-cost and big-ticket changes you can make.

Low-Cost Savings

1. Lower Your Thermostat

Adopt the habit of lowering the temperature on your thermostat while away from home. Dropping the temp by just three to five degrees will reduce your monthly utility bill and use less energy. According to [Energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov), lowering your thermostat by 10 to 15 degrees during the work day will save 5% to 15% every year.

2. Start a Compost Pile

You don't need a ton of space in your backyard to start a compost pile. Compost is the result of organic waste that's kept in a pile or container that decomposes over time. Your fruit and vegetable waste not only becomes valuable fertilizer for your lawn or garden, but it reduces the amount of trash you produce on a daily basis.

3. Install Low-Flow Showerheads

Installing low-flow showerheads improves your home's water efficiency. Low-flow showerheads have a flow rate of less than 2.5 gpm (gallons per minute), while most conventional showerheads use 5 gallons per minute. Mother Earth will thank you!

4. Seal All Windows

Go the extra mile by sealing the air leaks in and around the windows in your home. If your windows are drafty, consider adding weatherstripping around the frames. Add a bead of silicone caulk over any cracks in your drywall or apply a sheet of shrink film to your windows. Sealing gaps and cracks is an easy and inexpensive way to lower energy costs.

5. Limit Space Heater Use

Although electric and gas space heaters keep your feet nice and toasty in cooler weather, they aren't the most efficient way to heat your home. Many space heaters use 1,500 watts of energy to run and are considered to be a costly way to drain your energy bill. Be sure the model of your space heater is [energy-efficient](#); consider layering clothing or investing in blankets instead of cranking up your thermostat.

6. Turn Off Unnecessary Water

According to the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](https://www.epa.gov) (EPA), the average homeowner can save about \$170 a year with small changes to their water usage. Be conscious of running water while brushing your teeth or shaving. Also, bathing typically uses 75 gallons of water compared to a shower that uses about 17.2 gallons on average. You also should avoid running half-loads of laundry in your washer. A full load means more clothes get washed at once, which in turn conserves water (and money).

7. Replace Incandescent Bulbs

In 2014, manufacturers stopped producing 60-watt and 40-watt incandescent lightbulbs (100-watt and 75-watt bulbs were already phased out). But we're not doomed to live in the dark. Halogen bulbs, compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) and light-emitting diode (LED) bulbs offer longer lasting light and are more energy-efficient than your old incandescent bulbs. Since the average home uses 40 bulbs, switching over to greener bulbs is a great way to save on your electrical bill.

8. Unplug Unused Chargers

Cell phone and battery chargers that are plugged in but not in use are often referred to as energy vampires. According to Energy.gov, the average charger consumes 0.26 watts of energy when not in use and 2.24 watts when connected to your phone. Alone, one charger won't make much impact, but collectively energy vampires can be responsible for 10% of your energy bill. So, unplug your chargers when not in use.

9. Don't Wash with Hot Water

Avoid running your washer with hot water and opt for cold or warm water when possible. According to Treehugger.com, 90% of the energy used by your washer is used to heat the water, and the other 10% is used to run the machine. This means using cooler water for every load can potentially save a significant amount of energy.

Big-Ticket Ideas

10. Add Insulation to Your Attic

[Adding insulation](#) to your attic can help seal air leaks and improve your home's heating and cooling costs. The amount of insulation needed to cover your attic depends on your home's size and the climate in your region, but according to HomeAdvisor.com, the average cost to blow in additional insulation into your attic is \$1,356.

11. Install Solar Panels

Although solar panels aren't exactly cheap, they're becoming a popular way to heat hot water and generate electricity for homes. Solar panels have many benefits! They help you save money on energy bills in the long run, promote lower fossil fuel usage and may help you qualify for annual tax incentives. Typically, they are installed on your roof and cut your electricity costs by generating energy independently of your utility company. Consider the do's and don'ts of [home solar panel systems](#).

12. Install a Storm Door

Even if you have an energy-efficient front or side door, adding a storm door gives you an extra layer of protection from the weather year-round. Storm doors typically have low-emissivity glass or a protective coating that can help reduce energy loss by up to 50%, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Most storm doors last between 25 and 50 years and can cost as little as \$75.

13. Perform an Energy Audit

Consider hiring a professional energy auditor to your home and evaluate the inefficiencies and wasted energy in your home. A certified and trained auditor will inspect in and around your home to pinpoint savings opportunities and identify areas that need improvements. Auditors typically charge by the square footage of your house or by the hour.

14. Buy Energy Star Products

[Energy Star products](#), such as refrigerators, televisions, stoves, washers and air conditioners, meet energy-efficient specifications set by the EPA. Energy Star-qualified appliances use 10-50% less energy than standard appliances and help reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. If you plan to replace an appliance soon, consider getting an Energy Star-certified product.

15. Tune Up Your HVAC System

An annual tune-up on your heating and cooling system will ensure that your furnace and A/C are running at peak efficiency, which will save you money every month. A home heating and cooling check-up improves efficiency by ensuring connections are tightened, parts are properly lubricated and coils are cleaned. Tuning up your HVAC system can also help you avoid replacing your furnace, which can cost between \$2,000 and \$8,000.

16. Replace Your Desktop Computer

Most tech experts estimate that you should replace your computer every four years. When the time comes for your desktop computer, consider replacing it with a laptop. According to [SmallBusinessChron.com](#), laptops use up to 80% less electricity and run on less energy. Laptop computers typically peak at a maximum energy draw of only 60 watts, whereas most desktops peak around 175 watts. Laptops don't come with a cheap price tag, but they are greener.

Seriously, everyone should be able to find at least one or two things on this list to do to green-ify their home. Below, share other ways to create an energy-efficient home.

“We hope that this article will inspire you to help take care of our Earth and its surroundings, and start thinking of ways that we all can help the environment. After all, until proven different there is only ‘one earth’!

Sincerely, Bernie Perkosky

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