



Hot Solar Tips

Building a Green Community of Solar Users is our goal, what we build together stays together and supports us all.

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There are countless ways for you to save energy, to protect the environment and do your part as a true Green Citizen. Cutting back unnecessary energy use is an easy way to reduce energy consumption while saving money. We offer the following suggestions for things you can do at home, at absolutely no cost to you.

Dry laundry outside: Consider, taking a few minutes to lay your laundry out on the line in the sun. Whether you have a patio or sun lit yard, the simple exercise of laying laundry out to finish drying in the sun results in breezy aromatic laundry with less wear and tear and minimal use of electricity.

Eliminate wasted energy: Turn off appliances, lights and equipment when not in use. (Save: 2%)

- Unplug electronic devices and chargers when they aren't in use. Most new electronics use electricity even when switched "off." Turn computers and printers off at the power strip. (Save: 1-2%)
- Unplug or recycle that spare refrigerator in the garage if you don't really need it. This can save you up to \$150 per year! (Save: 10-20%)

Pre-plan your air conditioner installation: A little pre-planning can save you energy and money.

- The unit should be level when installed, so that the inside drainage system and other mechanisms operate efficiently. If possible, install the unit in a shaded spot on your home's north or east side. Direct sunshine on the unit's outdoor heat exchanger decreases efficiency by as much as 10%. You can plant trees and shrubs to shade the air conditioner, but do not block the airflow.
- Don't place lamps or televisions near your air conditioner's thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the air conditioner to run longer than necessary.
- Set your air conditioner's thermostat as high as is comfortably possible in the summer. The less difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your overall cooling bill will be. Don't set your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner; it will not cool your home any faster and could result in excessive cooling and unnecessary expense.
- Set the fan speed on high, except on very humid days. When humidity is high, set the fan speed on low for more comfort. The low speed on humid days will cool your



home better and will remove more moisture from the air because of slower air movement through the cooling equipment.

- Use an interior fan in conjunction with your window air conditioner to spread the cooled air more effectively through your home without greatly increasing electricity use.

Turn up your thermostat, really? During the summer, set your thermostat to 78 degrees when you are home, and 85 degrees or off when you are away. Using ceiling or room fans allows you to set the thermostat higher because the air movement will cool the room. Always take into account health considerations and be sure to drink plenty of fluids in warm weather. (Save: 1-3% per degree, for each degree the thermostat is set above 72 degrees)

Use your appliances wisely: To help prevent electricity outages, avoid running your appliances during peak hours—4 PM to 6 PM—or anytime an electricity emergency is declared.

- Do your laundry efficiently by using the warm or cold water setting for washing your clothes. Always use cold water to rinse clothes. (Save: 4%)
- When you need to use the clothes dryer, run full loads, use the moisture-sensing setting, and clean the clothes dryer lint trap after each use. (save: 0.5%)
- Conserve energy by running your dishwasher only when it is fully loaded, and turn off the dry cycle and air dry dishes instead. (save: 1%)

Operate swimming pool filters and cleaning sweeps efficiently: Reduce the operating time of your pool filter and automatic cleaning sweep to 4 to 5 hours, and only during off-peak time. (Save: 1-2% per hour of reduction)

Install window shading

- Install patio covers, awnings, and solar window screens to shade your home from the sun. For additional future savings, use strategically planted trees, shrubs and vines to shade your home. (Save: 5%)
- Solar control window films applied to existing glass in windows and doors is an effective method to reduce peak demand during hot months and conserve energy anytime air conditioning might be required. In addition to the energy management benefits, the use of these films can also reduce exposure to ultraviolet radiation and reduce glare. (save 5-10%)

For more information about solar energy and energy savings, we invite you to visit the following sites:

Northern California Solar Energy Association
<http://www.norcarsolar.org>



Flex Your Power

<http://www.fypower.org>

American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy

Resource on energy efficient appliances & information on energy efficiency throughout Northern California

<http://www.aceee.org/consumerguide/>

For Families & Kids:

Dr. E's Energy Lab for Kids

<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/kids/>

Check back for our next installation of Hot Solar Tips. And send us your questions and recommendations. Our goal is to offer a community of support and education for you, your family and your business.