



# Try This at Home



## Energy Conservation

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There are lots of simple things that you can do in your home to conserve energy, and save yourself money! Here are some examples:

### Light Bulbs

Switch out your old light bulbs. Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs) provide a great alternative to traditional incandescent light bulbs in the home. They use up to 75% less electricity and last up to 10 times longer than typical incandescent bulbs. According to the EPA, "If every American home replaced just one light bulb with an ENERGY STAR qualified bulb, we would save enough energy to light more than 3 million homes for a year, more than \$600 million in annual energy costs, and prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of more than 800,000 cars."

Concern has been raised about the mercury in CFLs. CFLs do contain a *small* amount of mercury inside. (As an aside, the small amount of mercury in each bulb is less than the mercury emitted for powering on incandescent bulb...so it is still a better choice environmentally!) You should handle the broken bulb carefully to avoid being exposed to mercury. Visit the EPA website (<http://www.epa.gov/mercury/>) for a fact sheet on how to handle and dispose of a broken CFL.

Light emitting diode (LED) lights are gaining in popularity as well. They use even less electricity than CFLs, and contain no mercury. Costs are quite a bit higher at the current time for LEDs, however.

For more detailed information on choosing energy efficient lighting for your home, visit [http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/factsheet/Fact\\_Sheet\\_5.pdf](http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/factsheet/Fact_Sheet_5.pdf).

Also, if you are performing a renovation, this is the perfect time to consider using the sun's light instead of electricity! Come visit the Utah House to see how these work. Also, check out <http://www.sun-dome.com/> for ideas.



## Appliances

We all need home appliances, but we can choose ones that use less energy and save us money in the long term. The initial cost of an appliance is not always the best gauge of how much it will cost over the years. Energy Star appliances can save you money over the life of that product. Look for the Energy Star symbol on kitchen appliances, household appliances, computers, and clothes washers. When replacing a clothes washer, look for front-loading models. They have the double benefit of using less water **AND** less electricity.

Watch out for “phantom loads”. Many appliances such as computers and televisions use small amounts of electricity even when turned off. Over the course of a year, this consumption can really add up. Use a power strip to turn off these appliances completely when not in use.

For more detailed information on choosing energy efficient appliances for your home, visit [http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/factsheet/Fact\\_Sheet\\_1.pdf](http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/factsheet/Fact_Sheet_1.pdf).

## Heating and Cooling

Nearly half of home energy usage is for heating and cooling. You don't need to replace your entire system if it is working properly; there are simple things that you can do to stay comfortable and reduce costs:

- Install a programmable thermostat. There is no point in heating or cooling space when nobody is home.
- Examine furnace air filters every month and replace or clean as necessary.
- Have your furnace and air conditioning equipment tuned up yearly.

Increasing the insulation in your home is a fairly simple and inexpensive way to reduce your energy costs (especially with the rebates from Questar? Visit [www.thermwise.com](http://www.thermwise.com) for details). Although fiberglass insulation is the most common, other options exist that have a lower embodied energy. For example, if you are putting insulation in your attic, a nice option is recycled cellulose insulation. It is treated for fire and pest resistance, is cost competitive with fiberglass insulation, and requires much less energy (up to ten times less!) to produce. The product is carried at stores such as Home Depot, and the machine to blow it in is free with a minimum purchase.

## Windows

Old windows can be a big loss of warm air in the winter, and cool air in the summer, leading to less money in your pocket. An energy audit will help you determine if it would be worthwhile to replace your windows. Energy audits can be ordered through Questar Gas at [www.thermwise.com](http://www.thermwise.com). For more detailed information on choosing energy efficient windows for your home, visit [http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/factsheet/Fact\\_Sheet\\_2.pdf](http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/factsheet/Fact_Sheet_2.pdf).

## Solar Energy



Although electricity costs are still reasonable cheap in Utah, most of our electricity comes from coal-fired power plants. If you are willing to make a larger investment by installing a solar photovoltaic system (PV) you can save on your utility bills in the long run, and know that you are generating CLEAN electricity! A solar PV system can take a long time to return on the financial investment. Solar hot water heating can reduce your natural gas consumption and offer a quicker payoff! These systems are typically cheaper to install than solar PV systems; and rebates are available through federal and state credits, and through Questar Gas ([www.thermwise.com](http://www.thermwise.com)). Utah Clean Energy (<http://www.solar-estimate.org/>) has lots of great resources for solar installations, including cost savings calculators, and sources of federal, state and local rebates.

Although costs for solar PV are still fairly high, numerous rebates and credits are available. Visit <http://theutahhouse.org/files/uploads/Rebates&Credits.pdf> for more information. Also, costs are substantially lower for solar water heating. For more information, visit <http://theutahhouse.org/files/uploads/Solar%20water%20heating.pdf>.

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