

## How to Save Electricity

My guide is different. I explain exactly what a kilowatt hour is and how much you pay for one. And I show you how to calculate exactly how much electricity your household appliances use, so you know which items are guzzling the most juice (and which ones are the best targets for savings). You'll also learn exactly how to read your electric meter, if you like. (Find that on any other website.) And I not only give you meaningful tips for slashing your electricity consumption, I give you the tools to figure out exactly how much you're saving as well. Finally, I've answered countless questions from readers about saving electricity. If you have a question, it's probably answered here already. Saving electricity doesn't just save money, it also saves the environment. This is news to a lot of people. After all, when you plug something into the wall, it seems clean enough -- you don't see or smell any pollution, like you do with your car. But the pollution is there -- it just happens at the power plant. Most electricity is generated by burning coal and other fossil fuels. Every time you turn on the lights, you create a little pollution. (See the sidebar.) In fact, the average home pollutes more than the average car! (See my Carbon Footprint Calculator for the numbers.) So saving electricity doesn't just put money in your pocket, it helps keep the air and water clean, too. But don't just take my word for it. The legendary James Hansen, one of the first scientists to sound the alarm about global warming way back in the 80's, recently said that the real key to preventing climate change is reducing home energy use. That's because, as he says, we can't stop the oil from being burned for transport, since if we don't use it, another country will. But we can certainly stop burning our own country's coal. And the quickest way to reduce coal emissions by 50%, is to reduce our electricity consumption by 50%. (more on climate change) Note also that as the age of oil is coming to a close (we've already used more than half of the oil that exists on the planet), our energy appetite puts more pressure for utilities to build dangerous nuclear power plants. Thinking about going solar? Solar is indeed now affordable in many cases. My concern about this is that, just like with cars, people are looking for an alternative fuel source so they can continue blissfully using ridiculous amounts of energy. A better approach is for us to just stop using such a ridiculous amount of energy in the first place! In reality, conservation is pretty easy; the problem is that most people don't want to do it. That's why people bought SUV's in droves. (Yes, the price of gas used to be lower, but the point is, even then, people were still buying the most wasteful vehicles available to them. The fact that they used to be more affordable to drive is fairly irrelevant.) When I go to the gym, I see that everyone has turned on the little TV attached to the treadmill or exercise bike. I always go and turn them all off, but probably 90% of the people who use those machines again will turn the TV back on and leave it on when they leave. That's an easy way to see why we've got a problem. If most people won't do an easy thing, like turning off a TV when they're not using it, how can we expect them to do things that actually require a tiny amount of effort? But you're here, you're reading this, so you're the kind of person willing to make some modest changes. So good for you! If you're serious about saving energy, then there's no better place to find out about it than here. And the time is right, too. U.S. taxpayers can now get a whopping 30% tax credit for installing things like attic insulation, a metal roofs, and EnergyStar rated HVAC (air

conditioning systems). And if you really want to lessen your carbon footprint, you'll also want to look into eating less meat and driving less. I hope you find this website useful. Happy savings!

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