

It's easy to save energy at home

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Reducing energy usage is a good way to help the environment and save money along the way. Saving energy can be done in a variety of ways, many of which do not require significant effort can lead to significant savings.

—Stop using the dishwasher to dry the dishes. A dishwasher is a modern convenience few people feel they can live without. While it's not necessary to give up the dishwasher entirely to save money, it's important to note that many dishwashers use more energy to dry the dishes than to wash them. If the dishwasher does not automatically dry the dishes, turn the knob to the off position once the dishes have been cleaned and open the door to allow the dishes to air dry.

—Go with a more traditional refrigerator-freezer combination. Side-by-side refrigerator and freezer combinations may be more fashionable, but such units can use as much as 20 percent more energy than their traditional counterparts. If homeowners must purchase a side-by-side unit, be sure to buy only those with an Energy Star label.

—Do laundry less frequently. Whether in an apartment or a home, having an in-unit washer and dryer is a great convenience. But frequently doing small loads can be wasteful, as it takes roughly the same amount of energy to clean a small load of laundry as it does a full load. Limit the family to only full loads of laundry as much as possible.

—Do the drying all at once. When using the dryer, try to dry one batch of clothes right after another. Many dryers require a significant amount of energy to heat up, but drying consecutive loads won't require as much energy to get the dryer up to operating temperature as the dryer will need if one allows a significant amount of time to pass between loads.

—Don't go to extreme temperatures. Arriving home to a house that's especially cold or warm inspires many people to turn their thermostats way up or down in an effort to heat or a cool the home more quickly. This forces the unit to work harder and use more energy. Instead of taking such an extreme approach, invest in a heating or cooling system that allows people to set the temperature in advance so the temperature inside the home is pleasant when they walk through the door.

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Holyoke Enterprise March 21, 2013