

How To Deal With The Dark Months Of Winter

Lighting and appliances account for about 25% of home energy bills.

1. Turn off lights when they are not being used.
2. Replace light bulbs that are on for longer than one hour a day with the new CFL (compact fluorescent lights) bulbs that use 25% of the electricity for the same amount of light and last 10 times longer. CFLs are most efficient and effective in areas where they remain on for longer periods rather than in closets or rooms where they are turned off and on often.
3. Put lower wattage bulbs where less light is needed and keeps bulbs dusted to receive the full illumination available.
4. For indoor accent and seasonal lighting, look for LED lights. Although not quite as efficient as CFLs, they don't have a filament and so they're more durable and more efficient than incandescent bulbs.
5. Again, turn off lights when they are not being used. If it is difficult to remember, consider replacing your wall switch with a motion sensor that will turn lights on when it detects motion or body heat and off when motion or body heat is gone. There are several inexpensive varieties that you can install yourself.
6. Turn off outdoor lights that are unneeded. Decorative yard lights may use up to 70 kilowatt hours/month, equal to \$4.40 of your bill.
7. When considering the purchase of new electronic appliances, always look for an Energy Star certification.
8. Use temperature settings wisely. A hair dryer on cool uses 600 watts vs. 1200 watts when set on hot. Clothes washed in cold water can save the same amount of energy used for 34 hours of TV viewing.
9. Install low-flow faucets and showerheads to reduce the amount of water that must be heated for a comfortable shower.
10. Your water heater is your biggest energy using appliance. Turn the temperature down to 120 from 140 and make sure the heater and its hot water pipes in unheated rooms are insulated.