

From media-cn.com – August 9, 2010

Lower Heating Bills With Energy Saving Devices

By: Kristine Bell

Energy saving tools can range from energy efficient lights and Energy Star appliances to energy monitors and insulation. In this article, you'll learn about different types of monitor that will show you how much energy you're using. You'll also learn about devices that will save you money on your electric bill — like programmable thermostats — and devices that indirectly save your electricity — like dimmer switches. While there are some tricks and gimmicks out there, you will find many ways to cut down on your bills each month.

The first step toward energy saving comes with a realistic assessment of your home energy use. Plug-in electricity monitors like “Watt’s Up” and “Kill-A-Watt” will show you which appliances or electronics need to be upgraded. You can save hundreds, if not thousands of dollars, by investing in a \$30 energy monitor like this. Similarly, a full-house electricity meter like the “PowerCost Monitor” or “The Energy Detective” will reveal the power usage of electric stoves, air conditioners or other appliances whose cords are hard to reach. This can also be an indication of how much “phantom power” your house uses from electronics or appliances that are left plugged in when not being used.

The next step in your quest to save energy is to invest in some direct power conserving devices for the home. Programmable thermostats can save up to 1% of your energy costs for every degree you turn down the heat or turn up the air conditioning for an eight hour period each day, states the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy agency of the US government. For instance, if you dropped the thermostat from 68 to 61 from 9 am – 5 pm while you're at work, you can cut your heating costs by 7%. Your thermostat will let you automatically time when these temperature changes take place, so you won't even have to think about it.

Smart Power Strips are another one of the great ways to save electricity. For \$35, you could divide your electricity uses into three sections: the control outlet, one or more hot outlets and one or more switched outlets. For example, you can plug your desktop computer into the control outlet, the cable modem and router into the constant hot outlet and all the other devices (printers, speakers, etc) into an easy on/off switch outlet.

When you're looking for energy saving components, be wary of advertisers who promise too much. It's very unlikely that anything that's simply hooked up to your electric meter or plugged into a wall socket will “save 25-50% off your energy payments.” Often times, advertisers figure that even if half the people who purchase the product return it, they'll still make money. Many consumers will be happy with their 2-10% energy savings and not bother to return the device to get the advertised 25-50% savings. There are also devices designed for refrigerators that claim to save you 20% off your bills. Twenty years

ago, a “Savaplug” device would have been a good idea, but newer refrigerators come with built-in features designed to save on electricity, hence the Energy Star rating. As a consumer, you must look for the tested, tried and true methods, first and foremost.

A great way to reduce home energy costs is by using your fireplace to supply heat to your home. However, you’ll need to make sure you have the right equipment in place for this to work. Visit the [Fireplace Tools and Accessories](#) site for information on a [fireplace heat exchanger](#) that will do the job.