

# How to Tame the Energy Hogs in Your Home

Ever wonder where all of your energy dollars go? Knowing where your home's biggest energy sucks are can help you focus your efficiency efforts. Tens of millions of homes have underinsulated attics, leaky ductwork, and other energy problems. Even many newer, more efficient homes have outdated appliances and lighting. Here's a breakdown of energy use and costs in the average residence, along with steps you can take to bring your costs in check. There will be some regional variation—for example, cooling costs, and potential savings, will be much higher in warmer climates.

## 43% HEATING

- If you have a forced-air system, having your ductwork sealed by a pro can save you hundreds each year because 25 to 40 percent of conditioned air (hot and cold) is lost to leaks.
- Plug drafty windows and doors with caulk or weather stripping.
- Adequately insulate the attic. The typical residence needs 11 inches of fiberglass or rock wool or 8 inches of cellulose insulation.

## 16% WATER HEATING

- If your water heater is among the 41 million units in the U.S. that are more than 10 years old, consider an upgrade. This fall Energy Star is working with utilities and retailers that offer rebates to consumers who make the switch. Go to [energystar.gov/waterheaters](http://energystar.gov/waterheaters).
- Wash your clothes in cold water. Our top-rated detergents deliver superb cool-water cleaning in our tests.
- Install low-flow faucets and showerheads throughout the home. They'll save water as well as energy.

## 9% APPLIANCES

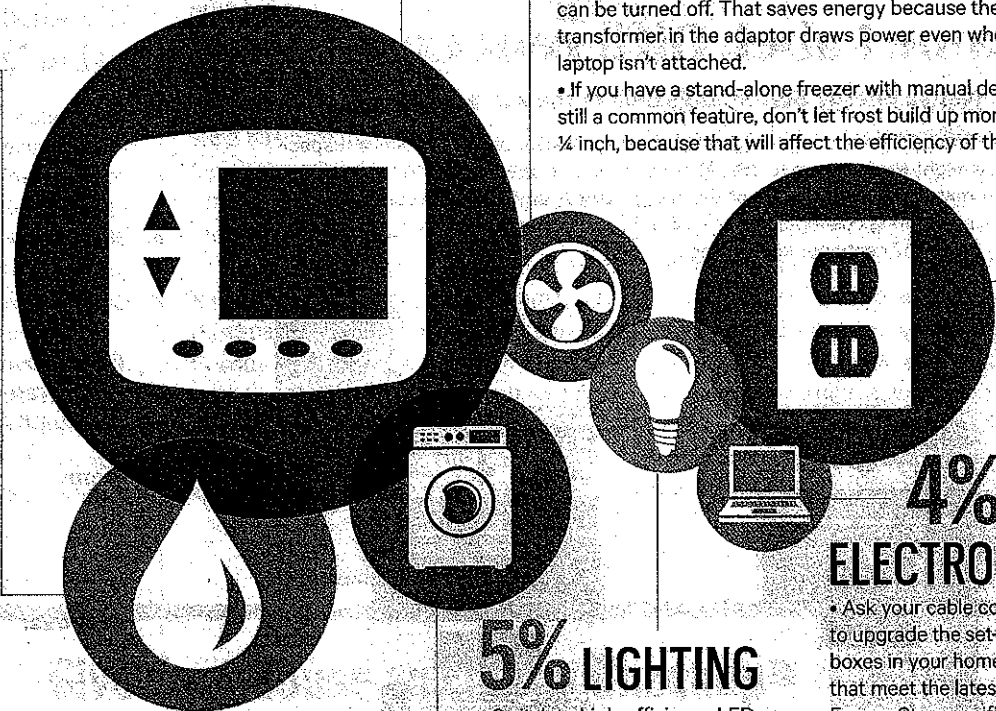
- Consider trading in an older refrigerator. A current Energy Star model uses 50 percent less energy than a refrigerator from 2001. Of course, you should retire the old model rather than keeping it running in the basement or garage.
- Older washing machines are also worth trading in, especially after a tougher new federal standard that took effect in March 2015. If your old unit is more than 10 years old, it's costing you about \$180 more per year than a new one.
- Run the dishwasher only when it has a full load, and use the "rinse hold" feature sparingly because it uses 3 to 7 gallons of hot water each time.

## 7% COOLING

- If your home has central air that's more than a decade old, a new system could be up to 40 percent more efficient. Work with a reputable contractor who will size the system correctly; you might be able to downsize if you've made other efficiency upgrades, such as new attic insulation.
- Install a programmable thermostat, which can automatically adjust the temperature in your home for maximum savings and comfort (in summer and winter).
- Don't replace windows just to save energy. But if your windows are failing, choose new ones with a low-E coating that reflects heat yet lets light in.

## 15% OTHER

- Plug your laptop's AC adaptor into a power strip that can be turned off. That saves energy because the transformer in the adaptor draws power even when the laptop isn't attached.
- If you have a stand-alone freezer with manual defrost, still a common feature, don't let frost build up more than ¼ inch, because that will affect the efficiency of the unit.



## 5% LIGHTING

- Switch to high-efficiency LEDs, which use up to 80 percent less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs. Our lighting guide, on page 45, will lead you to the right bulb.
- Place dimmable fixtures on dimmer switches. They'll enable you to save even more energy by maintaining lower light levels.
- For outdoor fixtures, save energy with a motion sensor or a photocell that turns the lights on at dusk and off at dawn.

## 4% ELECTRONICS

- Ask your cable company to upgrade the set-top boxes in your home to ones that meet the latest 4.1 Energy Star specification, making them 35 percent more efficient on average.
- Unplug computers, stereos, and video game consoles. They draw power even when they're off.
- Trade in that decade-old flat-screen TV. Based on our tests, it costs about \$66 per year to run, compared with \$25 or so for a new high-efficiency model.