

Put a little energy into saving hard-earned cash

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For the Journal-Constitution
Published on: 05/05/06

With the sharp rise in energy prices, we can all stand to save money anywhere possible. To that purpose here is a list of some simple things you can do to save money while staying cool in the summer heat.

- 1 Set your thermostat as high as you can and still be comfortable. When you are not at home, turn the temperature setting on your thermostat up. It takes less energy for your [air conditioner](#) to bring the house temperature down than it does to maintain a low temperature throughout the day.
- 2 To make changing temperatures easier, consider purchasing a programmable thermostat. You can set the programmable thermostat to start cooling your house while you are driving home from work. This way your house will be nice and cool when you arrive.
- 3 Change filters monthly. Dirty filters restrict airflow and can lessen the efficiency of your air-conditioning system.
- 4 Have your air conditioner serviced by a licensed [heating and cooling](#) contractor to ensure that it is working efficiently.
- 5 Don't place lights or electronic appliances near your thermostat. The heat produced by lights or appliances can make your air conditioner run longer.
- 6 Insulate heating and cooling ducts located in unconditioned areas like attics, crawl spaces, garages and basements. Insulation will help the air you have paid to cool maintain its temperature while traveling through the ducts.
- 7 Plant shrubbery to shade your outside air-conditioning unit. A shaded unit can use up to 10 percent less energy than one exposed to the sun. Be sure, however, that whatever you plant does not restrict airflow to the unit.
- 8 Use ceiling fans instead of air conditioners when possible. The air from the fans will make you feel cooler.
- 9 Unplug appliances like TVs, stereos and computers when they are not in use. Not only do these appliances use energy but they also produce heat that can make your air conditioner run longer.
- 10 Increase the insulation in your attic. Current standards in Georgia call for R-30 insulation in attics. Check with a reputable insulation contractor to find out how your insulation measures up.
- 11 If you have a fireplace, make sure the damper is tightly closed. An open damper is a hole in the house that will allow hot air in.
- 12 Close curtains or shades on windows during the day. If possible, use light colors in curtains and shades. The lighter colors will tend to reflect the heat.
- 13 Check the weatherstripping on your doors and windows. A large percentage of the air leakage in homes is around door and window openings.
- 14 Wash only full loads in your clothes washer and dishwasher. Set these appliances to air or cool dry settings.
- 15 When it comes time to replace kitchen appliances or your air conditioner, look for the "Energy Star" label on the appliance. "Energy Star" is a program backed by the federal government to help consumers save

energy. Products carrying the "Energy Star" label have met strict guidelines for efficiency set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy.