How to Reduce Energy Costs During the Holiday Season

For many people, money seems to fly out the window during the holidays, and it’s not all due to presents and parties. Decorations and cold weather hit energy budgets hard. But don’t get all “Grinchy” about it. To bring on happier holidays, take steps to reduce your energy costs.

Lighten Up

You know you love your holiday lights, both indoors and out. The season wouldn’t be the same without the twinkling colors. But seriously, think of trading your traditional incandescent lights for LEDs.

Savings are substantial. Plugging in 125 standard-size decorative bulbs for 480 hours costs over $25. Switch to twice as many smaller lights, and you’ll spend about 50 cents. Yes, *cents!*

Sleep on It

If it gets cold during the holidays in your neck of the woods, it’s tempting to turn up the thermostat. No one likes to be cold. But no one likes high energy costs, either.

Compromise by turning your thermostat down a few degrees at night. Throw on another blanket, and you won’t even notice the difference – except when it comes time to pay your gas or electric bill.

Enfold Your Feet

Speaking of the thermostat…turning it down a few notches during the day lowers energy costs, too. But putting on a

sweater doesn’t always make up for it.

So take care of your other end – put on slippers. The temperature of the room is colder near the floor. And if you’re feet aren’t happy, the rest of you is uncomfortable, too.

Keep It Cool

OK, one more thermostat suggestion: turn it down when you’re entertaining. On the surface this seems counter-intuitive. Who wants to freeze guests?

But consider: the stove is on, the food is warm, and the guests are crowded together. That combination heats things up. Your guests will likely be *more* comfortable if you drop the temp a little.

Cook and Conserve

While you’re slaving over that hot stove during the holidays, conserve energy. Wondering if the turkey is crispy and brown yet? Check the kitchen timer. Don’t peek inside the oven.

Repeatedly opening the oven door lets heat escape. Then the oven has to work harder to get the temperature back up. Plus the cooking time increases.

Another oven tip: cook multiple dishes at once when it’s possible. The turkey pretty much hogs the oven, but bake a few pies or casseroles together.

They don’t mind close quarters. Don’t cram the oven so full, however, that heat doesn’t circulate properly.

Burn Carefully

Gotta love those chestnuts roasting on an open fire. But heat goes up an open-hearth fireplace, and the heating bill goes up with it.

Make sure your fireplace is fronted by tightly fitting glass doors. And though it seems contradictory, leave an adjacent window open just a hair. It helps keep the warmer inside air from escaping up the chimney.

Don't Give It Some Gas

Holidays bring extra travel to buy presents, go to the post office, visit friends and family, and participate in seasonal activities. So your gas gauge is dropping, and you're visiting the pump a lot more often.

To cut costs, do several errands while you are out and about. Consider using public transportation. Carpool when you have the chance. Share holiday cheer while you're sharing travel expenses.

Give the Gift That Saves

Check wish lists for electronics and appliances. Anyone longing for, say, a computer, TV, or air purifier? If so, look for an Energy Star label. It's really two gifts in one. A great present and year-round savings in energy costs.

Save, Save, Save

The holidays are times for peace and joy, not anxiety and frustration. Take some measures to curb your energy costs.

Then focus on more pleasant worries, like finding time to wrap presents, bake cookies, and make eggnog. Don't forget the

nutmeg.

Further reading:

- *The Holy Trinity of Modern Day Housing: Environmentally Friendly, Sustainable, and Energy Efficient Houses*
- *Solar Panels Cheaper than Cars* – Business Insider
- *Roof Colors* – Roofline
- *Stool Made of Sand and Urine* – Dezeen
- *Benefits of Steel Framed Houses* – Wide Span Sheds

Sources:

- *How to Reduce Home Energy Costs*: Bruni & Campisi
- *Tips to Save Energy During the Holidays*: Energy Saver
- *Winter Holiday Time Energy Saving Tips:* Consumer Energy Center
- *Holiday Energy Saving Tips:* Wisconsin Public Service
- *Go Green for the Holidays:* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention