

Energy Saving Tips

In the Kitchen & Cooking

When thinking of energy efficiency in the kitchen most people first think of appliances. But while that's a great place to start, energy savings can also come from how you use your kitchen. These tips can save you time and money.

REFRIDGERATORS

- **Make sure your refrigerator door seals are clean and tight.** Your refrigerator accounts for up to 11 percent of your household's total energy use, which can have a major impact on your energy bill.
- **Check temperature settings.** Recommended temperatures are 37°-40°F for the fresh food compartment and 5° F for the freezer section. If you have a separate freezer for long-term storage, it should be kept at 0° F.
- **Keep the door closed.** Arrange items in your refrigerator for quick removal and return. The longer the door is open, the longer the refrigerator compressor runs.
- **Clean condenser coils.** Dust and pet hair can build up on your refrigerator condenser coils, causing the motor to work harder and use more electricity. Make sure the coils are cleaned so that air can circulate freely.
- **Defrost regularly.** Manual-defrost freezers and refrigerators need to be checked on a regular basis; frost buildup decreases the energy efficiency of the unit. Don't allow frost to build up more than one quarter of an inch.

DISHWASHERS

- **Run a full load.** Run the dishwasher only when enough dirty dishes have accumulated for a full load. Running a half-filled dishwasher twice uses twice as much energy as running a full load once.
- **Scrape dirty dishes, don't rinse.** Rinsing dirty dishes before loading your dishwasher uses a lot of water and energy. Most dishwashers today can thoroughly clean dishes that have had food scraped, rather than rinsed, off – the wash cycle and detergent take care of the rest.
- **Air dry your dishes.** Utilize your dishwasher's energy-saving settings such as the no heat drying cycle.
- **Lower the water temperature.** Check your dishwasher's manufacturer's recommendations on water temperature; many have internal heating elements that allow you to set the water heater in your home to a lower temperature (120° F).

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COOKING BEST PRACTICES

- **Don't peek!** Keep the oven door closed while cooking – the temperature can drop by as much as 25 degrees each time you open the oven door.
- **Turn it down or turn it off.** It might not be necessary to have your oven on as long - or the temperature set as high – as a recipe suggests. Turn off your oven or burners when food is almost ready and let the residual heat finish the cooking.
- **A day of rest.** Use small electric pans, toaster ovens, or convection ovens for small meals rather than your large stove or oven. Putting them to work more often instead of the oven or stovetop can mean significant energy savings. A toaster or convection oven uses one-third to one-half as much energy as a full-sized oven.
- **Make contact.** We've all seem to have one in our kitchen—a warped and rounded pan that wobbles when you set it on the stovetop. Electric stovetops can only transmit heat to pans they are in direct contact with; the less contact your pan has with the burner, the more energy the stovetop will have to use to heat the pan.
- **Use correct pot size.** Match your pot size to the burner on your stove. Heat is lost when small pots are used on large burners. ENERGY STAR products meet strict efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy.

