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How to Lower Your Energy Bills

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Beginning in 2008 is when elements of green building became mainstream and increased interest in green technologies. But for those who are not building a new house or who don't keep up with all the new technologies, there are many simple, inexpensive (or free) ways to green your life that you can do right now. The result will be a more energy efficient, healthier and more sustainable environment for you and your children.

Take your recent energy bills and spend the next 30 days tweaking your habits to lower your energy bills. Compare the February bills to the January bills. There are several ways to buy your way into lower electric bills, like replacing old refrigerators or getting a tankless water heater, but if the point is to save money now, here are some instant energy and money saving ideas:

- Close doors and vents in rooms you don't use
- Turn off electronics when not in use and unplug appliances with phantom loads
- Replace incandescent lights with CFLs - and keep lights off when you don't need them
- Make sure furnace filters are clean - and keep dryer filters clean
- Program the thermostat to run cooler at night when you are snug in your bed
- When possible, wash clothes in cold water
- Shorten showers
- Check for drafts around doors and windows
- Wash only full loads of laundry and dishes
- Replace old shower head with an inexpensive low-flow fixture
- Install an aerator (less than \$15) in bathroom faucets to lower water usage

Find out if your energy company will perform a free energy audit in your house. It will help isolate which areas of the house are losing the most energy and help you with strategies to conserve energy.