

Best for Energy Savings

IDEAS + PRODUCTS + RESOURCES + MORE

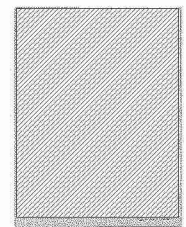
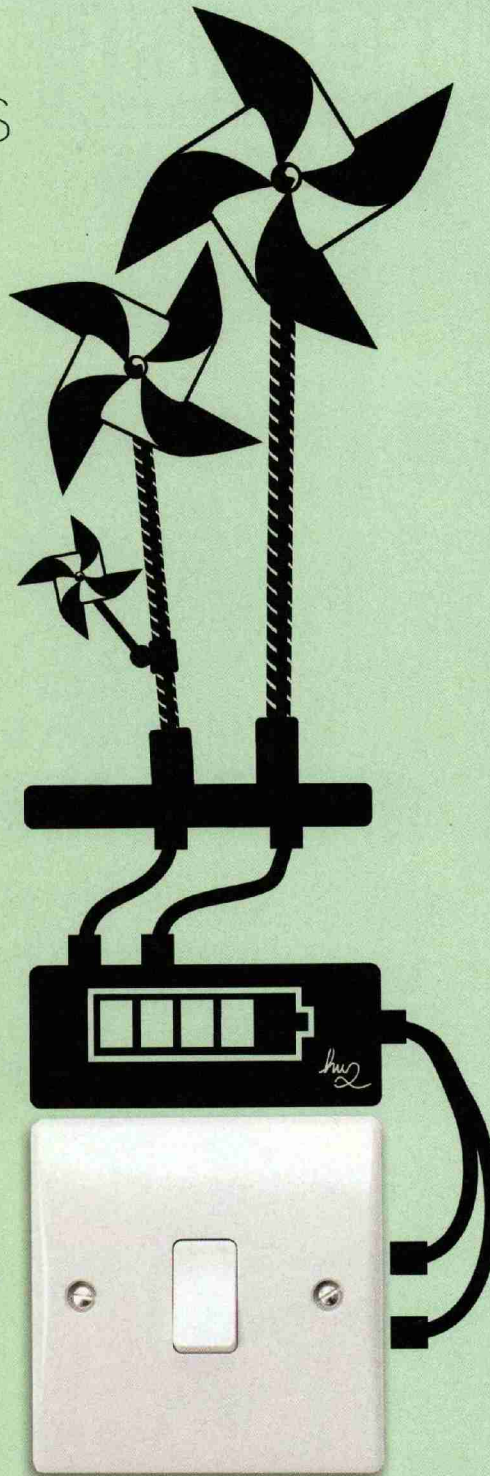
Make the Switch

This is an exciting time in the world of energy. With major advancements in wind, solar and hydro power, it is becoming easier than ever to find ways to power our homes and communities with clean, renewable energy. According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), at least 50 percent of U.S. customers currently have the option to purchase renewable electricity directly from their power supplier. And as residential solar energy becomes cheaper and more efficient, more homeowners are choosing to create their own clean electricity. Even if you can't buy renewables from your utility company or install solar panels, you might be able to buy into renewable energy via a solar farm or community solar share program in your area. Read more about solar energy and solar sharing options on page 62.

Of course, you can enhance your home's efficiency and reduce your energy bills even if you can't move to renewable energy sources. Get started with our roundup of energy-saving tips and products on the following pages, then learn how energy-efficiency upgrades cut one historic home's heating bill in half on page 20. And when you're ready to roll up your sleeves and get to work, check out our guide to sealing air leaks on page 68.

One of the easiest ways to save energy is as simple as flipping a switch. Help break the habit of leaving lights on in unoccupied rooms with Hu2 Design's Eco Reminder wall stickers. They're PVC-free, recyclable and packaged in FSC-certified paper printed with vegetable ink.

Three Windmills for Single Unit Light Switch,
 \$23; dailygrommet.com





Sheepish Grin

Cuddle up with a cozy throw or blanket from Pendleton's Eco-Wise Wool collection, made with Cradle-to-Cradle-certified wool. Along with this adorable print, the line also includes iconic plaids and classic solids in rich colors. Counting Sheep Eco-Wise Wool Muchacho, 32 by 44 inches, \$72; pendleton.com

\$180

the amount you could save each year on heating and cooling bills with a properly set programmable thermostat

For optimum savings on your utility bills, program your thermostat to automatically turn down during the hours when you're sleeping or at the office. In winter, the DOE recommends lowering the temperature by 8 degrees at night and during the workday. In summer, it recommends increasing the temperature by 7 degrees during the day and by 4 degrees while you sleep.

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Shed New Light

Now widely available online and at home stores, LED light bulbs are far more efficient and offer better light quality than compact fluorescents (CFLs), plus they don't contain potentially dangerous mercury. Philips' AmbientLED bulb is fully dimmable and has an average lifespan of 25,000 hours, or roughly 22 years. When turned off, it has a unique yellow appearance; when turned on, the yellow becomes a warm white light similar to a 60-watt incandescent. The Energy Star-qualified bulb retails for \$25, but in some states with utility rebates, it sells for as low as \$15.



Nice & Toasty

Efficient space heaters allow you to warm specific spaces while keeping your home's thermostat low. You can find two types of electric space heaters:

- Convection models rely on air circulation to distribute heat.
- Radiant units use infrared radiation to heat objects and people.

The DOE says radiant heaters are more efficient for heating spaces for a short time period, while convection units filled with oil or water—which retain heat and emit warmth even after they're turned off—are better for heating rooms for extended periods. Whatever type you choose, look for models with the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) seal, which indicates it has been tested for safety, and opt for models equipped to automatically shut off if overheated or tipped over.

Consumer Search developed this chart to help you weigh your space heater options. For an in-depth analysis of space heater types and specific product reviews, check out consumersearch.com/space-heaters/review.

| TYPE | ADVANTAGES | DISADVANTAGES |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| RADIANT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Good for spot heating ■ Quick heating ■ Most efficient for short periods ■ Quiet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Not good at heating rooms ■ Heat dissipates quickly ■ Orange glow is distracting and/or annoying to some |
| CONVECTION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Best for heating whole rooms ■ Variety of shapes and price ranges ■ Some have fans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Models without fans are slow to heat ■ Models with fans can be noisy ■ Can be expensive |

Serve Up Savings

Little habits can add up to big energy savings. As you spend time in the kitchen this winter, keep these no-cost tips from sustainablebabysteps.com in mind.

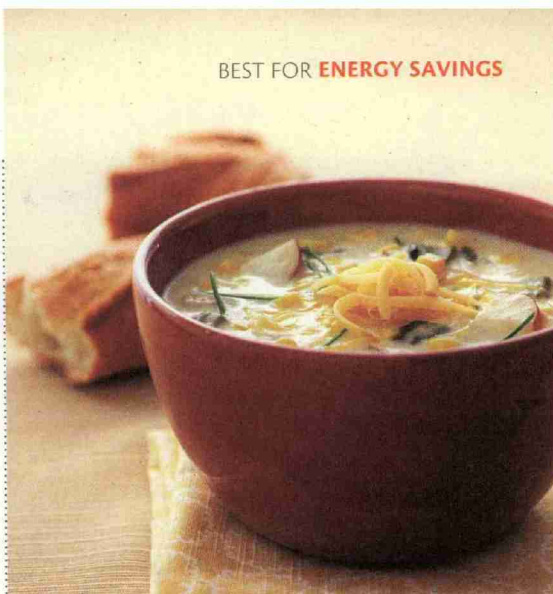
- **DON'T PLACE HOT FOODS IN A FRIDGE.** Allowing foods to cool to room temperature ensures your unit won't have to work as hard.
- **THAW IN THE FRIDGE.** Frozen items throw off cold air into the fridge, helping to keep things cool.
- **MAKE YOUR OWN ICE.** Automatic ice makers use unnecessary energy and are prone to breakdown. Likewise, cold air can be lost through in-door dispensers with poor seals.
- **SKIP THE DRY CYCLE.** Open the dishwasher door and allow dishes to air-dry.
- **USE THE OVEN LIGHT.** Instead of opening the door to check if foods are done, switch on the oven light to see inside without losing heat.
- **USE THE CORRECT-SIZED BURNER.** Large burners under small pots or pans waste heat.
- **USE AN ELECTRIC KETTLE.** Electric kettles boil water faster and more efficiently than stovetop kettles. Use them for making tea or boiling water for small meals.
- **COOK ON THE TOP RACK OF THE OVEN.** Keep your food closer to the heating element and cut cooking time by up to 20 percent.

DIY Draft Stopper

Keep cold air out and warm air in with an old-fashioned homemade door draft stopper. With basic sewing skills, you can make one out of just about anything—old socks, felt or fabric remnants. Check out a web tutorial on making a stopper out of fabric from our friends at community-based crafting website Craftster.org. Or register with Lion Brand Yarn (go to lionbrand.com and search "draft stopper") for a free pattern for the cute crocheted version below—while you're there, take a look at their yarn made from recycled and organic cotton. Visit naturalhomeandgarden.com/DIY-draft-stopper for a direct link to these projects—and a DIY draft stopper project of our own.



BEST FOR ENERGY SAVINGS



Soup's On

Warm the winter chill with a hearty meal made in a slow cooker, which saves time and energy. This chowder uses smoked cheese instead of bacon. Opt for organic potatoes and leave the skins on for extra nutrition.

CORN CHOWDER WITH POTATOES, POBLANOS AND SMOKED GOUDA

- 4 tablespoons butter or ghee (clarified butter)
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 pound small potatoes, sliced
- 1 bay leaf
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 6 cups water
- 4 cups fresh or frozen corn
- 2 poblanos chiles, roasted, peeled and diced, or
1 (4-ounce) can diced roasted chiles
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 1 cup grated smoked cheddar or Gouda cheese, divided
- Salt (preferably smoked)
- Chopped chives for garnish

1. In a large sauté pan, melt butter over medium heat and sauté onion for 10 minutes or until lightly browned.
2. Transfer onion to a 7-quart slow cooker and add potatoes, bay, thyme and water. Cover and cook on low for about 4 hours or until potatoes are tender.
3. Mash some of the potatoes to thicken soup slightly.
4. Add corn, chiles, half-and-half and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of cheese. Add salt to taste and cook 20 to 30 minutes or until hot.
5. Ladle soup into bowls and garnish with remaining cheese and chives. Serves 4 to 6

Recipe reprinted from *50 Simple Soups for the Slow Cooker* by Lynn Alley, available at naturalhomeandgarden.com/shopping