

Do-It-Yourself: Home Energy Check

A professional home energy audit (like a [Quick Home Energy Checkup](#) or [Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Audit](#)) is the best way to determine where your home is losing energy and where you can save. However, if a professional audit is not available, you can conduct your own simple but diligent walk-through to spot many problems in your home. More information on the projects below can be found at MyGreenMontgomery.org/projects/energy.

Air Leaks/Drafts

The potential energy savings from reducing drafts in a home may range from 10% to 20% per year, and the home is generally much more comfortable afterward.

- Check the gaps along the baseboard or edge of the flooring and at junctures of the walls and ceiling
- Check outside of your home, especially in areas where two different building materials meet.
- Check your windows for leaks
- Check your doors for leaks
- Check your lighting and plumbing fixtures
- Check your switches and electrical outlets
- Open your front door and check the condition of the weather-stripping between the door and the door frame
- Check how many layers of glass (ideal is double pane with reflective glass)

Appliances, Chargers, and Electronics

The energy costs of plugged-in appliances can really add up and unplugging these devices could save you up to \$100 to \$200 a year.

- Have ENERGY STAR Appliances
 - How many_____?
- Refrigerator is set between 35-38 degrees
- Clean the refrigerator coils annually
- Leave a few feet behind the refrigerator – allow air circulation
- Hot water heater is set at 120 degrees
- Unplug small appliances

(Appliances, Chargers, and Electronics continued)

- Use an advanced power strip for the TV and computer
- Unplug chargers when not using them
- Check and change the settings on electronics to use less energy (ex. sleep mode on computer)

Kitchen

You can save energy in your kitchen through more efficient use of your dishwasher, refrigerator and freezer, and other common appliances.

- Fill the dishwasher and run after 8:00 pm
- Cook with the lids on pots and pans
- Use your microwave
- Scrape, don't rinse, off large food pieces and bones. Soaking or pre-washing is generally only recommended in cases of burned- or dried-on food.
- Let dishes air-dry

Heating & Cooling

As much as half of the energy used in your home goes to heating and cooling. So making smart decisions about your home's heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) system can have a big effect on your utility bills — and your comfort.

- Have a Programmable or Smart Thermostat
- In the winter, set the thermostat to 68 degrees
- In the summer, set the thermostat to 78 degrees
- Nothing is blocking the registers, baseboards, or radiators
- Change our filters every 90 days/3 months

Insulation

Heat loss through the ceiling and walls in your home could be very large if the insulation levels are less than the recommended minimum.

- Measure how much insulation is in the attic (if you have one)
- Attic hatch is located above a conditioned space
- Check to see if there is a vapor barrier under the attic insulation
- Make sure that the attic vents are not blocked by insulation
- Check basement or crawlspace, if it is unconditioned and open to the exterior, determine whether there is insulation under the living area flooring

Laundry

Water heating consumes about 90% of the energy it takes to operate a clothes washer.

- Fill up the washer before using it
- Use cold water for washing clothes
- Clean the dryer filter after every use
- Use a drying rack or clothesline
- Leave the door open on the washer when done
- Use the low heat setting on the dryer

Lighting

An average household dedicates about 5% of its energy budget to lighting. Switching to energy-efficient lighting is one of the fastest ways to cut your energy bills.

- How many bulbs do you use? _____
 - How many are LED bulbs? _____
 - How many are Compact Fluorescent (CFL) bulbs? _____
When they burn out, CFLs contain mercury so they should be treated like a hazardous waste (do not throw in trash)
 - How many are incandescent bulbs? _____
Incandescent bulbs should be replaced and thrown out
- Turn off the lights when leaving a room

Water Usage

Did you know that water use and energy use in buildings are linked? In most cases, electricity or gas is used to heat water, so the less hot water you use, the less energy needed. In addition, your water company uses energy to purify and pump water to your facility, as well as in the treatment of sewage, so part of your water and sewage bill is really an energy bill. In other words, saving water reduces your water and energy bills!

- Take a 5-minute shower or less
- Have a high efficiency shower head
- Have faucet aerators
- Have no leaks in the toilet or other areas

For even more ideas on how to make your home comfortable and keep money in your pocket, visit MontgomeryEnergyConnection.org.