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Spring 2011

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David Showalter's...

Pleasantly Practical

Healthful, Successful & Fun Living...

How To Quickly And Easily Slash Your Energy Costs

Everyone wants to feel comfortable in their own home. After all, it's not too much to ask to be warm in the winter and cool in the summer. But if the reality of skyrocketing energy costs has you reeling, here's a little helpful advice.

First, think about adjusting your "comfort zone." The typical household keeps the thermostat set at 72 degrees in the summertime, yet every degree you raise the temperature saves you about 3 percent on the cooling portion of your energy bill. Setting your thermostat to 78 degrees, for example, will save you 18 percent. For a family spending \$150 a month on cooling bills, that's a monthly savings of \$27 in that area alone.

Keeping your winter thermostat between 68 and 72 degrees won't save you quite as much as cutting back on air conditioning in the summer, but it may save you from seeing a huge boost in your monthly heating bill.

Aside from compromising on your "comfort zone," there are other effective, yet inexpensive measures you can take to minimize your energy costs. One simple and inexpensive way to conserve energy is to make sure your windows are adequately caulked and "draft" ways, such as your attic, are properly insulated. You'd be amazed at how much energy your home loses through those areas.

Operating your washing machine and dishwasher adds up too. Running a dishwasher every day costs you about \$11 per month, and doing 20 loads of laundry per month costs between \$10 and \$16, depending on whether you use gas or electric appliances. Using your gas oven or range only one hour per day costs about \$3 per month, and leaving your computer and monitor on 10 hours a day costs about \$5 a month. Running your 27-inch TV four hours a day will cost about \$2 a month.

Watching the energy efficiency of your kitchen appliances is a good idea. It takes twice as much energy to operate a pre-1992 frost-free refrigerator than a post-1992 model. In fact, anyone who knows about "SEERs" (seasonal energy-

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Word For This Issue...

Experts say a strong vocabulary is a sign of higher intellect and advanced culture. Here's a word to equip you for those redoubtable contingencies...

Intransigent \in-tran-'si-jent\ (adj.)

Meaning: Refusing to compromise or abandon an extreme attitude or opinion; uncompromising

Sample Sentence: Robert's **intransigent** beliefs made him a formidable negotiator.

More Uses For Eye Drops

Eye drops used to relieve sore, tired, and red eyes should be discarded after one month according to the manufacturers. This is to prevent the spread of bacteria, which can cause eye inflammation and infection. But with the price of eye drops, you may be reluctant to throw them away. Well, DON'T! There are other safe uses for them instead. For example...

- ✓ Apply a few drops to a blemish that is red. It will remove the red and reduce the inflammation.
- ✓ Apply eye drops to insect bites, including mosquito bites, for instant relief.
- ✓ If you have minor skin abrasions, eye drops will take the sting out of the abrasion. Amazing!

THE LADDER OF SUCCESS

- 100%..... I did.
- 90% I will.
- 80% I can.
- 70% I think I can.
- 60% I might.
- 50% I think I might.
- 40% What is it?
- 30% I wish I could.
- 20% I don't know how.
- 10% I can't.
- 0% I won't.

“She was the kind of listener that storytellers love. She nodded her head at the right times.”

Drake- adapted.

efficiency ratios) knows you can save money buying cheap appliances, but you pay much more when operating them.

Working with your energy companies can help too. Many electric companies offer a fixed monthly plan, so you can even out the highs and lows throughout seasons. You also can sign-up for a “time of use” program, which varies your electric rate based on what time of day you use power.

Here's a quick review of **Eight Simple Steps** you can take to save a bundle on your energy bills.

1. Raise your thermostat setting in the summer to 78 degrees; lower it to 68 in the winter.
2. In hot weather, close curtains that face the sun, to keep it from raising the indoor temperature. On cold but sunny days, throw those drapes open.
3. Make sure your fireplace flue is closed, the windows are adequately caulked, and the weather stripping around doors is in good condition.
4. Turn off your furnace pilot light during non-heating season.
5. Don't scrimp on the SEER rating of your appliances. Make sure you buy energy-efficient appliances with high SEER ratings.
6. Set your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees, or 140 if you have a dishwasher.
7. Replace incandescent lights with energy-efficient compact fluorescent bulbs.
8. If you have a pool, shorten the operating time of the filter and auto-cleaner, lower the heat, and keep the pool covered when not in use.

In many areas, you can contact your local electric, gas and/or oil companies to get a “home audit” where they'll evaluate your home's energy efficiency and give specific recommendations on how to minimize your energy costs.



Photography tip-

Experience is a reliable teacher, so photograph something daily.

Mind Teaser

If nine thousand, nine hundred and nine dollars is written as \$9,909, how should twelve thousand, twelve hundred and twelve dollars be written?

(answer at bottom of last page)

Wordplay

You look at your Scrabble rack with only one tile left: *T*. You glance at the board and the word dream sits there beckoning. Can you use that *T*?

Absolutely. Dreamt, the past tense of dream, is the only English word that ends in *mt*.

Also, despite the assertions of an oft-misquoted riddle, there are only two (not three) modern English words that end in *gry*: angry and hungry.

"New Friend Sincerity"

Last summer my wife and I met a couple at a restaurant. After lunch, the women decided to go shopping, and I invited the man to go sailing. While we were out on the water, a storm blew up. The tide had gone out, and we were down wind trying to work our way back through a narrow channel. At one point the boat grounded and we had to climb overboard and shove with all our might to get it back in deeper water.

As my new friend stood there, ankle deep in muck, the wind blowing his hair wildly, rain streaming down his face, he grinned at me, and with unmistakable sincerity said, "Sure beats shopping!"

Pastor Tim

"One of the best ways to persuade others is with your ears – by listening to them."

Dean Rusk

"The family meal is an excellent forum to learn about listening to others and taking turns."

Lawrence Hatterer

WARNING: A Silent Killer Lurks...

The danger is liver disease caused by Hepatitis C (HCV). HCV damages the liver, which is one of the body's most important organs. Today, there are an estimated 4 million Americans infected...and 70 percent have no symptoms!

Symptoms such as appetite loss, fatigue, nausea, fever, dark-yellow urine, and jaundice can be confused with less serious and shorter-term illnesses. If you received blood for any reason – surgery, a car accident, cesarean birth, etc. – before July 1992, when accurate blood screening began, you could be at risk and you could be infected for 30 years before you notice symptoms.

Hepatitis C can be diagnosed with a simple blood test, and treatment is effective in up to 40 percent of cases. Untreated, it can lead to cirrhosis, liver failure, and liver cancer.

If you'd like more information about HCV and its other risk factors, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/c/>, call the Hepatitis Foundation International at 1-800-891-0707, or call the American Liver Foundation hotline at 1-800-GO LIVER. (1-800-465-4837).

Landscaping Tips

The task of creating a landscape that complements your home and meets your needs may seem daunting. However, following basic landscaping principles can start you moving in the right direction.

1. Begin your landscaping with a plan for the entire area including fixed features such as your house, fence, deck and walkways.
2. Keep the long-term plan in mind. In developing your plan, consider the final look you want to achieve. Formal landscapes place plants in geometric patterns or straight lines balanced around fixed features, while natural landscapes use curved lines or ragged edges.
3. Balance plants on either side of a focal point using symmetry and repetition in formal designs. For informal designs, balance can be achieved with groupings of similar color or texture.
4. Select plants that offer variations in color and texture throughout the year, so that the landscaped areas always have visual interest. You can choose flowering plants for warm weather color and bushes with leaves that change color seasonally or have colored berries in winter. Formal landscapes need evergreen plants for the major elements, with spots of color added by border plants.
5. Purchase plants locally to ensure that they are correct for your geographic area and choose plants that require the amount of care, such as pruning, watering and soil preparation you are willing to provide.

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Did You Know That...?

1. The muscle under the skin that contracts making your hair stand up, or giving you "goosebumps" is called "erector pilli".
2. Sir Winston Churchill rationed himself to only 15 cigars a day!
3. Pound for pound, hamburgers cost more than new cars.
4. Many sailors used to wear gold earrings so they could afford a proper burial when they died.
5. The Eiffel Tower grows six inches every year. In the summer, the metal expands causing the tower to grow taller, but in the winter, the metal contracts, shrinking the tower back down.

High-Hopes Dashed!

An acquaintance of mine, who is a physician, told this story of her then four-year-old daughter: On the way to preschool, the doctor had left her stethoscope on the car seat, and her little girl picked it up and began playing with it. "*Be still, my heart,*" thought my friend. "*My daughter wants to follow in my footsteps!*"

Just then the child took the stethoscope and spoke into the instrument, "*Welcome to McDonald's; may I take your order?*"

Solution To Mind Teaser: It should be written as \$13,212

THANK YOU for reading my Pleasantly Practical newsletter. I intend to produce newsletters that have great content and are fun and valuable to you. Your constructive feedback is always welcome.

David W. Showalter

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Hanging-Up On Telemarketers

Do you *still* feel you get more phone calls from solicitors than from family and friends? Here are two steps you can take:

- ◆ Get "Caller ID," which can block calls from anonymous numbers. The caller must be told to identify his or her number or call back from a different phone. Many anonymous calls are from telemarketers.
- ◆ Enter your name and phone number on the National Do Not Call List Registry by simply going to the Federal Trade Commission's web site at www.ftc.gov.



David's Twilight Photograph for This Issue

More Helpful Tips For Around The Home...

Hiccups: A spoonful of sugar can help the hiccups go away. Quickly swallow one teaspoon of granulated white sugar for fast relief.

Address Books: Make a copy of your address book. Photocopy the up to date pages, then store the duplicate in a safe place; it will save hours of frustration if the original is lost.

Fresh Carpets: Keep your carpet smelling fresh and clean with baking soda. Simply sprinkle the soda liberally over the entire carpet and let it sit for an hour. Then vacuum it up.

Safe Children: Dress kids in bright clothes when you are taking them to crowded places such as national parks, amusement parks, or zoos. A colorful shirt or hat will make it easier for you to spot your child.

Wills: A videotape of you reading and signing your will should put to rest any suspicions that you were not of sound mind when you created the document.

Coffee With A Heart-Healthy Punch

Here's great news for coffee lovers who feel guilty about their daily indulgence. Applied Food Sciences in Austin, Texas, has obtained a Self-affirmed GRAS (Generally Recognized As Safe) status for its all natural green coffee extract to be used in food and beverage applications. This process increases the level of polyphenols (the antioxidant compounds that protect against heart disease and cancer) by up to 50 percent. For more information visit <http://www.appliedfoods.com>.