



# HOW DO I... INCREASE ENERGY EFFICIENCY?

Increasing your energy efficiency at home is an economically and ecologically friendly decision. In Hyattsville, there are many old and new houses and apartments. No matter where you live, there are ways to improve efficiency. This guide familiarizes you with a range of common options that can reduce your ecological footprint while saving you money.

## WHAT YOU NEED

This depends on how you want to increase your energy efficiency. Some ways may require an initial investment but will eventually pay for themselves. For others, it's as simple as adjusting your daily routine!

## BENEFITS



## GETTING STARTED

✓ See our “HOW DO I...BECOME AN ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPION?” guide for other ways to reduce your footprint!



✓ **CONTROL YOUR CLIMATE.** Winter heating and summer cooling together are the biggest single energy cost in the home (see Fig. 2). The optimum energy setting is 68°F for heating and 78°F for cooling (Ref. ①). Getting a programmable thermostat will regulate temperatures over the day for maximum efficiency. If that is not an option, regularly check your thermostat settings and adjust before you leave home. Changing your thermostat 7°–10° from typical for 8 hours a day can save you 10% a year. (Ref. ①). But as Fig. 1 shows, every degree counts!

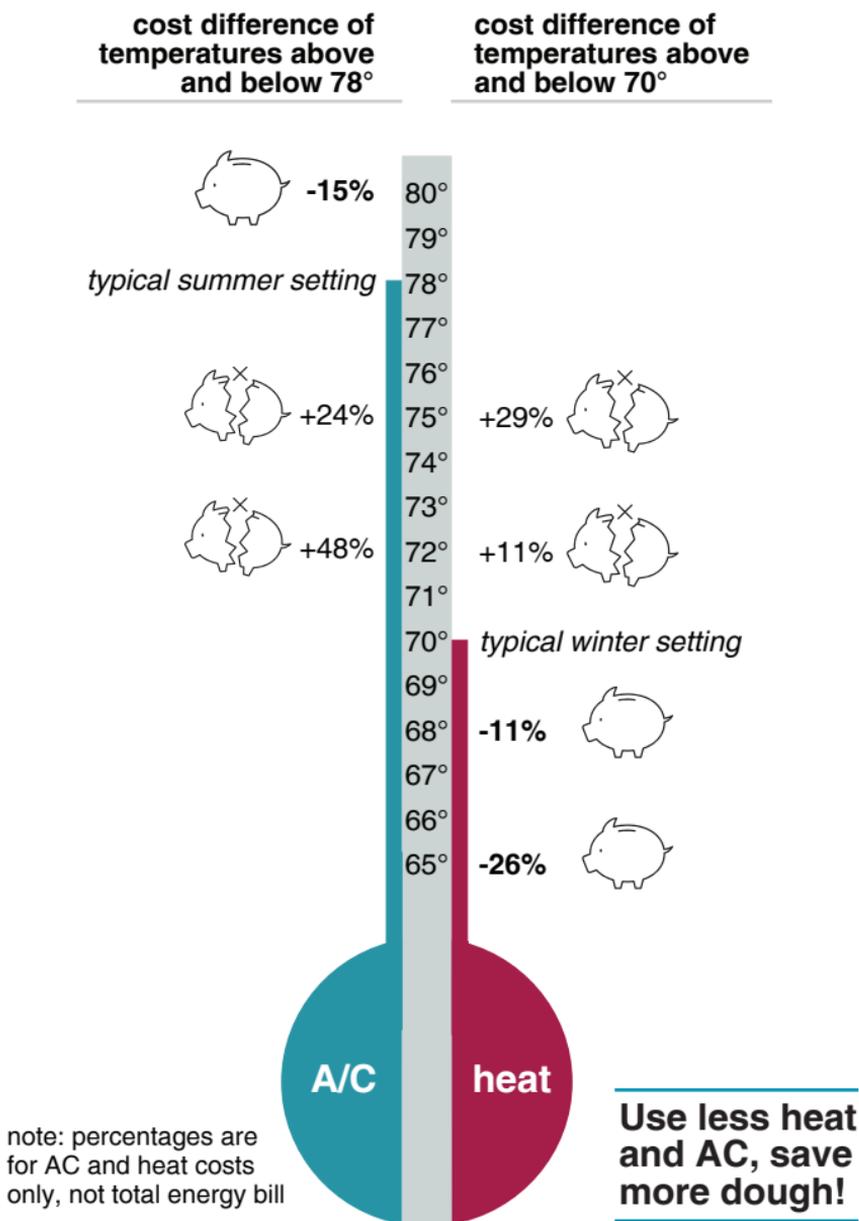


Fig 1. (INFO SOURCE: Ref. 2)

✓ **LIGHTING.** You can turn off lights in empty rooms and switch to LED light bulbs to cut energy consumption and save time replacing old bulbs. LED bulbs may cost more, so prioritize primary or outdoor lights that get replaced more often or are hard to replace. Only change out old bulbs as they burn out—replacing still functional bulbs sends material to the landfill.

✓ **APPLIANCES.** Turn off and unplug unused electronics—phantom energy has a real price! When fully charged devices are left plugged in, energy is still drawn out and wasted. According to Tech Insider, the typical American wastes 283 kilowatt hours of energy a month, which is the same as letting an electric oven run at 350° for 6 days! (Ref. 3)

When purchasing appliances, look for an Energy Star label and compare

energy usage across models. Energy Star is a US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) program that recognizes appliances and other products that are energy- and money-saving.

Heating up water takes a lot of energy. (See Fig. 2, and notice how much water heaters and appliances/electronics use together.) If you have an old water heater and the funds, consider replacing it with a high efficiency model. Showers use less water than baths, so prioritize them and keep it under five minutes!

### Energy usage in the US residential sector in 2015

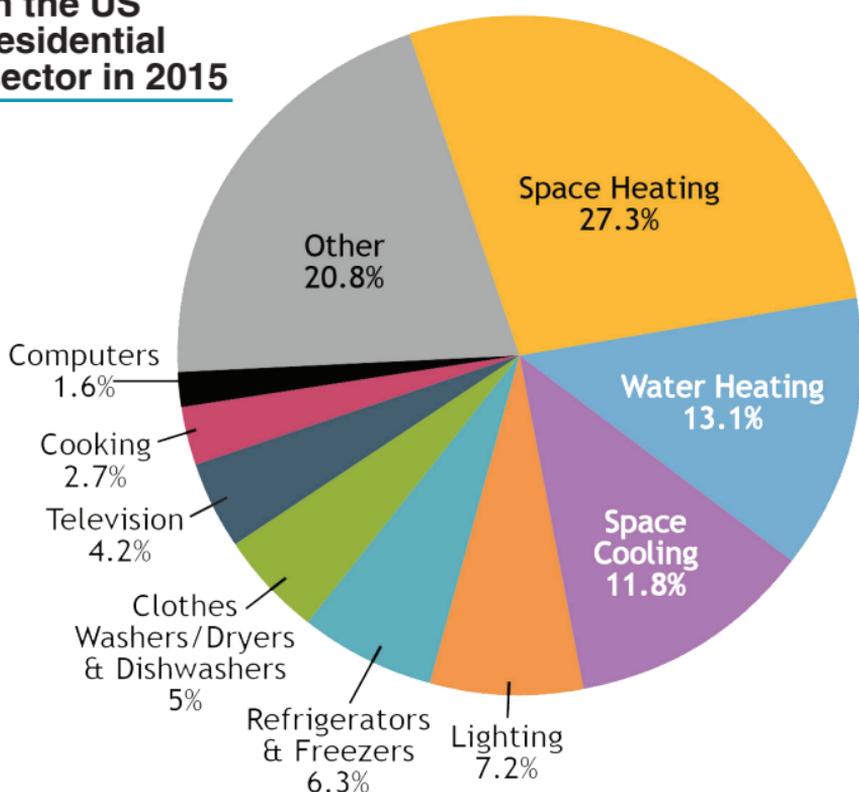


Fig. 2

SOURCE: <http://needtoknow.nas.edu/energy/energy-efficiency/heating-cooling>

✓ **WEATHERIZATION.** Weatherization protects your home from the elements through retrofits that reduce energy waste, like insulation, HVAC upgrades and window replacement. For more details, check out the Action Guide “**HOW DO I... WEATHERIZE MY HOUSE?**”



✓ **THE BOTTOM LINE.** Remember, anything that saves energy makes our world healthier and more sustainable, all while keeping more of your hard-earned money in your pocket!

# RESOURCES

The World Wildlife Fund **defines ecological footprint** as “the impact of human activities measured in terms of the area of biologically productive land and water required to produce the goods consumed and to assimilate the wastes generated.” (Ref. 4)

For a deeper look at these topics and more, see the US Dept of Energy’s **Energy Saver guide**.  
[www.energy.gov/energysaver/downloads/energy-saver-guide](http://www.energy.gov/energysaver/downloads/energy-saver-guide)

Tips on **programmable thermostats**.  
<https://energy.gov/energysaver/articles/program-your-thermostat-fall-and-winter-savings>

Phantoms and **vampires** and waste, oh my!  
[www.ase.org/blog/ward-vampires-halloween-these-energy-saving-tips](http://www.ase.org/blog/ward-vampires-halloween-these-energy-saving-tips)

The EPA’s **Energy Star program** offers tips and resources for saving energy in the home.  
[www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)

**A snuggie for your water heater?** It can save you 7–16% on your annual water heating bill!  
<https://energy.gov/energysaver/projects/savings-project-insulate-your-water-heater-tank>

Find more ideas for your home in the “**HOW DO I... WEATHERIZE MY HOUSE?**” Action Guide. [www.ndc-md.org/get-involved/community-action-guides](http://www.ndc-md.org/get-involved/community-action-guides)



**Hyattsville’s service provider offers rebates,** programs and information on saving energy.  
[www.pepco.com/WaysToSave/ForYourHome](http://www.pepco.com/WaysToSave/ForYourHome)  
<https://energywiserewards.pepco.com/md>

Don’t own? Here are more ideas on how to **increase efficiency for those who rent**.  
[www.apartmenttherapy.com/make-your-rental-more-energy-efficient-167808](http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/make-your-rental-more-energy-efficient-167808)  
[www.virginiaenergysense.org/at-home-tips/tips-for-renters](http://www.virginiaenergysense.org/at-home-tips/tips-for-renters)  
[www.energystar.gov/products/top\\_10\\_tips\\_renters](http://www.energystar.gov/products/top_10_tips_renters)

Check out these **state and local incentives**.  
<http://mdcleanenergy.org/consumer/incentives>

**Help the next generation** learn about the importance of energy efficiency.  
[www.eia.gov/kids](http://www.eia.gov/kids)

## REFERENCES:

- 1 [www.energy.gov/energysaver/thermostats](http://www.energy.gov/energysaver/thermostats)
- 2 [www.npihome.com/category/thermostats](http://www.npihome.com/category/thermostats)
- 3 [www.businessinsider.com/us-wasted-food-water-energy-per-person-2016-3](http://www.businessinsider.com/us-wasted-food-water-energy-per-person-2016-3)
- 4 [wwf.panda.org/about\\_our\\_earth/teacher\\_resources/webfieldtrips/ecological\\_balance/eco\\_footprint](http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/teacher_resources/webfieldtrips/ecological_balance/eco_footprint)