

Source: <https://www.directenergy.com/learning-center/what-uses-most-electricity-in-my-home>

# What Uses the Most Electricity in My Home?

When temperatures rise, our energy bills can be at their highest. To prevent high electric bills, we need to keep our homes as energy efficient as possible. Finding ways to save energy and reduce our costs can be a challenge, so where do we start? With the help of [energystar.gov](https://www.energystar.gov) and [energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov), we explore the energy consumed by typical home systems, appliances and electronics, find out what uses the most energy and share tips on how to make your home more energy-efficient to curb your electricity costs.



Here's a breakdown of the biggest energy use categories in the typical home:

1. **Air conditioning and heating:** 46 percent
2. **Water heating:** 14 percent
3. **Appliances:** 13 percent
4. **Lighting:** 9 percent
5. **TV and Media Equipment:** 4 percent

Your electricity usage is measured in kilowatt-hours, or kWh. When calculating an appliance or system's energy use, we calculate daily kilowatt-hours by multiplying the hours used per day by its wattage, and get the kWh by multiplying that by 0.001. Learn more about [calculating your appliances and systems' usage](#).

# 1. Air Conditioning and Heating

As your main source of comfort from extreme outdoor temperatures, your HVAC system uses the most energy of any single appliance or system at 46 percent of the average U.S. home's energy consumption. An average central HVAC unit uses about 3500 watts and runs [two to three times an hour for 10-15 minutes](#). In a 24-hour period, your HVAC would use around 28-63 kWh, resulting in about 850-1,950 kWh in a month, depending on the efficiency of your unit. Try to reduce the workload of your HVAC system with these tips:

- Use ceiling fans -- counterclockwise in the summer and clockwise in the winter
- Turn the thermostat up to 78F in summer and down to 65F in winter
- Get your air conditioner and furnace tuned up annually
- Draw your curtains during sunny summer days, but open them during winter to get free heat
- Replace your air filters
- Don't block inside vents or outside units
- Dust and vacuum to prevent clogs
- Dress lightly in summer and warmly in winter
- Use blankets and scarves for extra wintertime warmth

Read more tips: [Inexpensive Tips to Improve the Energy Efficiency of Your HVAC](#) | [How Do I Take Care of My Air Conditioner in the Summer?](#) | [What Temperature Should I Set My Thermostat in the Summer?](#)

# 2. Water Heating

As another often-used appliance, your water heater comes in second at 14 percent of your home's energy usage. An average water heater will run about [3 hours a day](#) and uses 4500 watts, adding up to 13.5 kWh per day, or 405 kWh per month. Use these tips to take the heat off your energy bill:

- Set your water heater's temperature to 120F or lower
- Wrap an older water heater with an insulation jacket
- Insulate the hot water pipes

- Turn down your water heater when you go on vacation
- Install water-conserving shower heads and faucet aerators
- Upgrade to a solar water heater

## 3. Appliances

Your home appliances account for about 13 percent of the typical electric bill. Below are some tips on how to save on your major appliances' energy use:

### Refrigerator

An average refrigerator uses 225 watts, and assuming you use your refrigerator all day, you'll use 162 kWh per month. Although we can't turn our refrigerators off or use them less, there are other ways to save:

- Don't overload your refrigerator
- Keep most-used products in accessible areas
- Arrange contents for optimal efficiency
- Set your fridge to the manufacturer's recommended temperature
- Regularly clean behind and underneath the refrigerator to maintain airflow
- Replace older refrigerators with modern, energy-efficient models

Read more tips: [How To Maintain Your Refrigerator](#) | [What Is My Refrigerator Trying To Tell Me?](#) | [How To Organize Your Refrigerator To Make It Energy Efficient](#)

### Washer and Dryer

Washers and dryers collectively use about 5 percent of your home's energy. These appliances cumulatively use 3045 watts. If you used each for one hour per day, your laundry appliances would use about 91 kWh per month. Keep these tips in mind when you do laundry:

- Wash full loads
- Wash with cold water
- Avoid overfilling the machines
- Use drying racks when possible

- Clear lint after each load

Read more tips: [Energy Efficiency in the Laundry Room | Eco-Friendly Laundry Tips](#)

## Electric Oven and Stove

At 2,500 watts for an oven and 1,500 for a stove on medium-high heat, using these for one hour a day results in 75 kWh and 45 kWh a month, respectively. These appliances, particularly your oven, can also make your home warmer and increase the load on your AC. Reduce the electricity load from these appliances with these tips:

- Opt to use a toaster oven, microwave, slow cooker or other smaller appliance
- Use the oven and stove during cooler hours of the day
- Don't preheat unless it's necessary for the dish to cook properly
- Turn off the burners a few minutes before the dish is done and let the residual heat do the rest

Read more kitchen tips: [Tips to Save Energy in the Kitchen](#)

## Dishwasher

An average dishwasher uses 330 watts. Used for one hour each day, that's almost 10 kWh per month. Your dishwasher can also affect how hard your AC has to work since it can heat up your home. Use these tips to reduce your dishwasher's primary and residual energy use:

- Wash full loads
- Turn off heated dry
- Wash during cooler hours of the day
- Pre-rinse heavily soiled dishes to prevent the need for a second cycle

Read more tips: [What is My Dishwasher Trying to Tell Me?](#)

## 4. Lighting

Lighting accounts for about 9 percent of a typical home's energy use. Light bulbs' energy use can vary widely based on bulb type and usage. A 100-watt incandescent bulb left on for two hours a day uses about 0.2 kWh a day, or 6 kWh per month. Add that up for about 50 bulbs in the household, and it becomes 300 kWh per month. Reduce the electricity usage of your lights with these tips:

- Turn off lights when you leave a room
- Use energy-efficient LED light bulbs
- Use natural light, especially in winter, when you also get the benefit of heat
- Choose LED holiday lights and put them on timers so they don't stay on all night
- Install motion detectors on outdoor security lights so they only turn on when you need them

Read more tips: [What Are The Benefits Of LED Light Bulbs? | Understanding The Differences Between CFL & LED Light Bulbs](#)

## 5. Television and Media Equipment

Electronics make up about 4 percent of our energy use. Our electronic entertainment in particular, including televisions, set-top boxes and video game consoles, can use a significant portion of our homes' energy. If we watch an average of [five hours of TV a day](#) and play video games for [6.3 hours a week](#), these devices can use about 55 kWh per month. These electronics are also culprits of using standby power even when they are not in use. Keep their energy usage in line with these tips:

- Deactivate standby mode and quick-start settings
- Shop for ENERGY STAR certified electronics
- Turn down screen brightness on televisions and monitors
- Always turn off electronics when they're not in use
- Choose more energy-free entertainment activities like reading and board games