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# 10 Ways to Save Money on Your Utility Bill

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Although the green movement has been trumpeting the importance of energy conservation for years, it popped up on Americans' radar screens in a major way after oil-price spikes in 2008 caused utility companies to add fuel surcharges to customers' bills.

Add to that droughts and water shortages in many regions of the country that forced strict water use restrictions, and homeowners have plenty of incentive to save money on their utility bills any way they can.

Here are 10 large and small changes you can make to help your home be more energy efficient and cut utility bills for years to come:

## 1. Paint Your Roof White

A 1999 study by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory's Heat Island Group found that in sunny climates, buildings with white roofs required up to 40 percent less energy for cooling than those with black roofs. At current utility rates, that means you could save \$120 or more per year in cooling costs.

An inexpensive white, elastomeric coating will do the job and can be found at most hardware stores in states in the southern half of the U.S. Elastomeric coating is a blend of polymers that is durable, flexible and waterproof, and offers the fringe benefit of helping to increase your roof's life span and water resistance. All you'll need to apply it is heavy-duty paint rollers on an inexpensive old paint roller frame, with an extension pole attached to save wear and tear on your back.

## 2. Install an Irrigation Meter

Do you know that you are charged twice for the water you use every month -- once to pump it into your house and again to pump it out as sewage?

"The assumption is every gallon of water that you run out of your faucet is going to go back down the drain," says Eric Liskey, deputy editor for garden and outdoor living at Better Homes and Gardens magazine.

But if you use water to irrigate your lawn or garden, that water never makes it into the sewer system.

To save money by making sure you're only paying for the sewer capacity you're using, many utilities

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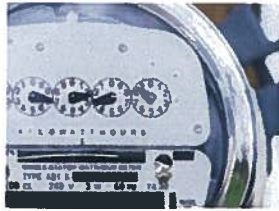
A diamond pendant hanging from a chain, used as a metaphor for a financial investment. The pendant is a large, brilliant-cut diamond surrounded by a ring of smaller diamonds, suspended from a dark chain. The background is a soft, light blue gradient.

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