

KUNI Radio Series “Unplugged”
Show #27: Summer Energy Savers

From the Center for Energy & Environmental Education at the University of Northern Iowa, this is Pat Higby with a series of programs on KUNI to help you save energy.

Last month our utility bills were \$100 less, because we weren't using natural gas for home heating. But as the temperature rises, our electrical bills will increase. The U.S. Department of Energy has some great tips to keep you cool and save money too. Here are a few of them.

First, use fans instead of the air conditioner whenever possible because they use far less energy. If you do use an air conditioner, set the thermostat higher, or warmer, when you are gone. Don't place lamps or TVs near the thermostat, because their heat will keep the air conditioner running longer. Is your air conditioner getting old? Replacing it with an ENERGY STAR model can save up to 50% of your cooling bills. Change it now, to get these savings for the coming season!

Reduce the amount of heat in your home by replacing incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents. Set your dishwasher to air dry, or turn it off after the rinse cycle and open the door, to reduce the heat in your kitchen. A microwave heats your food much more efficiently than your oven or stovetop, and helps keep your kitchen cool, too. Instead of using the clothes dryer, which also heats your home, hang your clothes outside. You can use fabric softener to keep them from being stiff and scratchy, and they will smell great!

During the summer we typically bathe more and wash more clothes. A quick shower will use less hot water than a bath, and add less heat to the bathroom. Try using cold water to wash as well as rinse clothes. You'll be amazed at how well detergents work at lower temperatures. Your beach towels won't fade as much, either!

Windows are great for summer breezes, but keep out the sun if you can! Awnings can shade south facing windows from the high summer sun, but allow in the lower winter sun. Awnings don't work as well for east and west facing windows because the sun is so low at dawn and dusk. Trees, a trellis, or a fence can shade these windows instead. If you close your windows, be sure to also close your curtains, shades, or blinds. Sunny windows can make your air conditioner work two to three times harder!

There are many ways to reduce your energy bills, and still be comfortable! For more energy saving tips, please stop in our Resource Room to pick up some free booklets.

I'm Pat Higby, Energy Educator at the Center for Energy and Environmental Education at the University of Northern Iowa.