



Weekly Financial Tips

APARTMENT LIVING – Are you looking for ways to reduce costs at home, even when you don't own the home? Most of the following tips can be removed when you leave or the cost is so minimal, you won't worry about leaving them installed. Consider some of these tips to reduce your heating and lighting bills:

1. **Change to a low-flow showerhead.** Remove your old showerhead and replace it with a low-flow showerhead. They are easy to install and use 20 percent less water. This is especially a great option if you have teenagers at home.
2. **Install foam insulating gaskets.** Foam insulating gaskets are insulators for your electrical outlets. Your electrical outlets are a source of heat loss in the winter and can really increase your electric bill. These gaskets can be found at most home improvement stores and shouldn't cost more than a couple bucks.
3. **Invest in insulated drapes, cellular blinds or blackout curtains.** Covering your windows with insulated coverings will reduce your heating bills. Shop at thrift stores for curtains or a home improvement store may have blinds that have been previously cut incorrectly that they sell at a large discount.
4. **Switch to CFL bulbs.** Replacing either all your lights or the ones you use most often is a great way to reduce your energy bill. Talk with your electric company, they may supply these for you or offer you rebates for purchasing them.
5. **Have your landlord service your furnace annually.** A properly maintained furnace can reduce your bills. However, remember to clean your furnace filters every two months during the heating season.
6. **Turn your thermostat down.** Remember to set your thermostat to 68 degrees while you are home during the day and down to 65 degrees when you are away or at night.
7. **Pay attention to your refrigerator.** In an apartment, 25% of your electric bill may go towards the fridge. Keep its compressor coils clean to reduce electric usage. Cover your food and check the seal around the doors. If you have minimal food in the fridge, fill water containers to take up the extra space. This will help keep your food cold and cut your electric bill. The same goes for your freezer.
8. **Repairs.** One of the benefits of having a landlord is they will fix things. Don't let your leaky faucet go. Take the time to make the call to your landlord to save money on the water bill.
9. **Use draft stoppers.** Place delightfully mobile draft stoppers in front of drafty doors and windows. They usually cost about ten dollars or you can make them yourself.
10. **Door sweeps.** Your landlord may have been cutting corners when they installed your door. If there is a draft, install a door sweep.