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99 Ways to Save

11 Money-Saving Tips for Your Home

Home improvement expert Bob Vila and Frugal Mama blogger Amy Suardi share their wisdom for repairs, decor

[AARP Bulletin](#), July/August 2014

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Tips from [Bob Vila](#), home improvement expert

1. Unplug it! "Vampire" electronics consume power even when turned off. A typical household can save \$100 a year using smart power strips, which cut electricity to devices in standby mode.

2. Install a low-flow showerhead. You won't even notice the difference, because a low-flow fixture reduces the volume of water but does not affect the water pressure in any way. Save 2,900 gallons a year, according to the EPA.

3. In the winter, reverse your ceiling fan. Revolving clockwise, the fan will pull up cool air and send down the heated air that's settled near the ceiling.

4. Seal drafty windows and doors so your heating and cooling systems don't have to work overtime. Save 20 percent on energy to heat and cool a home that is well sealed and insulated.

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5. Lower your water heater temperature setting. Manufacturers often configure the default to 140 degrees, when for the average home 120 degrees is sufficient. With each decrease of 10 degrees, you save an additional 3 to 5 percent in energy costs.

6. Clean or replace the filter in your furnace or air conditioner. Proper maintenance can save you 5 to 15 percent on your monthly heating and cooling bills.

7. Fix faucet leaks fast. In a single day, an average leak wastes 27 gallons of water.

99 Ways to Save



Home improvement expert Bob Vila. — Jeffrey A. Salter

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8. Install a programmable thermostat if you're always forgetting to adjust the temperature when you leave the house or go to bed. Inexpensive to buy and easy to put in, programmable thermostats can save a couple of hundred dollars per year in energy costs.

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Frugal Mama blogger Amy Suardi. — Eli Meir Kaplan/Wonderful Machine for AARP

Tips from Amy Suardi, founder of Frugal Mama blog

9. Decorate with a mix of high and low, and old and new, such as hand-me-down antiques and flea market vintage next to something new and inexpensive. The old pieces add soul to the room, so you can blend with Target or Ikea furniture.

10. Find the same rich colors offered by high-end paint companies for less by taking their chips to a hardware store that can match the color.

11. Use inexpensive nontraditional fabrics, such as a painter's drop cloth for slipcovers or osnaburg fabric, also known as "the poor man's linen," for curtains. It costs only \$1.50 a yard, but when you use a lot of it, it looks expensive.

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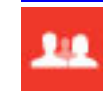
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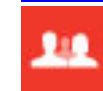
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