
Energy Efficiency in the Kitchen

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We tend to ignore it, but it is our kitchen which eats up most of the energy we use in our house, excluding heating. If you only follow a few of the tips mentioned below, you can easily reduce the energy consumption to a level you have never thought real without any drastic means.

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First, the cooking. Use a microwave oven to reheat the food, not the stove. Microwave ovens are about 40% more energy efficient. Then, heat small pots only on the small burners. Placing a small pot on a large burner won't make the process faster, but increases the energy use by 10-30%. Also, try to use a crock pot whenever possible. You can start cooking a meal in the morning before you leave for work, leave it for the whole day and get a hot meal in the evening. The point is that crock pots need only little energy and even though they will be heated for several hours, they are still more energy efficient than cooking meals fast using a lot of energy.

Another important issue is your fridge. Unless you pay attention to its settings, you may end up with using up to 20-30% more energy than you could otherwise. Here's how to do it: experiment a little with the settings - in most cases we set our fridges colder than it is necessary. It is especially important in case of freezers: 20 Celsius below zero is just as good as 40, but uses only around half the energy. Also, make sure that the door are well-insulated, especially that the insulation seals completely when you close the door. Replace the sealing the moment you notice any cracks - if cold air gets out and warm air can get inside, the fridge starts using much more energy.

Another major reason of energy consumption in the kitchen is the lighting. While it is important to keep your work area well-lighted, it is recommended to change standard bulbs with their newer, energy-efficient alternatives. Fluorescent bulbs use only around a third of energy needed to power their counterparts of equal brightness. Even though the individual price is a bit higher, fluorescent bulbs pay off in a few month-time.

Generally, try to use your common sense when limiting your energy consumption. Especially, pay attention to the energy-efficiency of appliances you're about to buy. Sometimes paying a hundred dollars more during the purchase may bring you \$20 monthly savings on the energy