



FOUR UNCOMMON ENERGY SAVINGS

Here are four uncommon things that you can do to save energy.

1) Change time zones.

That is, when possible, travel when others are less likely to be on the road. You will save gas by avoiding delays. For example, avoid rush hour traffic by leaving an hour early. Then use this extra hour to read, plan your day, or add an little extra to your job. If your company permits flex time hours, then you could leave for home before rush hour starts.

Also, consider shopping early or late in the day. Besides encountering less traffic, you will find that there are fewer shoppers and shorter lines in the stores. That produces a time saving bonus by making your shopping more efficient.

2) Ride a bicycle.

But do this in your car. That is, pretend that you have to peddle in order to make your car move. Avoid quick starts, acceleration up hills, and driving into a stop. Instead, start gradually, take it easy going up hills, and coast to a red light - just as if you were the engine.

Of course, use common sense. For example, move with the traffic and do this when appropriate.

3) Shut it off.

Some people leave the engine running when they park. This is a terrible idea because: a) it wastes gas, b) it leaves your car exposed to theft, and c) if children are left in the car, they could cause an accident by putting the car in gear.

Similarly, turn off the engine any time that you have to wait for more than about half a minute, such as at a railroad crossing.

Note: most cars use about a gallon of gas an hour while in idle. If gas costs \$4 a gallon, then 15 minutes of idle will cost you a dollar.

4) Stop leaks.

Most offices have dozens of small transformers that supply power to computers, network hubs, printers, modems, scanners, and other accessories. Transformers are also used to recharge batteries in cell phones, cameras, and iPods.

These transformers keep using electricity even when the device has been turned off or disconnected from it. It's like having a faucet leak around the clock. Drop by drop it's wasting energy (and money).

While each transformer uses only a small amount of electricity, six or eight of them are equivalent to a standard light bulb. Over time that adds up to a significant amount of electricity.

Put all of the transformers on a circuit strip. They turn off the strip at the end of the day. Or, unplug the transformer when it's not being used.

Similarly, check your home for electrical leaks. Unplug coffee makers, toasters, and small ovens. Some of these have decorative lights or clocks - all things that we can live without.

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