



Regions Next Step Podcast

Spotlight on Savings: Saving on Energy Bills

In this podcast, Alicia Somers, a Financial Wellness Relationship Manager for Regions Bank in Jacksonville, Fla., offers tips for making your home more energy efficient to help reduce your energy bills.

Tune in to hear Alicia's thoughts on the following:

- Gaining better control of your energy usage
- New appliances and tools for more money savings
- Tracking monthly usage to target areas for cost savings

Episode Transcript

Narrator:

You're listening to the Next Step Podcast "Saving on Energy Bills" – part of our Spotlight on Savings series presented by Regions Next Step – advice, tools and resources to help you get closer to reaching your unique financial goals. Today, we are with Alicia Somers, a Financial Wellness Relationship Manager for Regions Bank in Jacksonville, Florida. Alicia will be sharing her top tips for saving money on your energy bills. Now let's get into it.

Alicia Somers:

Controlling your energy usage and efficiency at home can be simple. Consider these six ways to lower your monthly bills.

The first is trying a home energy monitor. To improve the energy efficiency of your home, you'll need to identify the areas, devices or appliances consuming the most energy. A monitoring system can help you track your family's energy usage. It will display how much energy each appliance or device is using – and the associated costs.

New models can connect to your Wi-Fi network to deliver energy data to devices connected to the cloud. Some also have apps that help monitor your home's energy usage right on your mobile device. Having access to this data can help you determine how behavioral changes can help you cut costs each month. These changes can be as simple as turning off a computer or cutting back on the AC.



The next option is to use smart power strips. Devices and appliances plugged into the wall continue to use small amounts of electricity even when powered off. “Smart” power strips do double duty – they allow you to plug in more devices while also cutting off the excess power they consume when not in use. Additionally, smart power strips shut down based on a timer, an occupancy sensor or when a “master” device, like a computer, is turned off.

Another way to control your energy usage is by installing a programmable thermostat. These thermostats automatically reduce your cooling or heating based on a preset schedule. You can set temperatures for daytime and nighttime, and even for specific days of the week. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, these devices can save you as much as 10 percent on heating and cooling.

Speaking of energy costs, the average household spends 5 percent of its energy budget on lighting. To cut costs here, consider energy-efficient lighting. Replacing conventional incandescent light bulbs with halogen incandescent, CFL or LED light bulbs, is a simple way to save and increase your home’s energy efficiency. In fact, the U.S. Department of Energy suggests replacing the five most frequently used light fixtures or bulbs with models that have earned the ENERGY STAR. You could also opt for lower wattage bulbs — 30 watts instead of 100, for example. For outdoor lighting, consider solar-powered lamps, which recharge during the day and provide light at night.

To cut further costs, you may want to invest in a hybrid water heater. Unlike conventional models, new and enhanced water heaters with high efficiency pumps can reduce the amount of electricity used to heat water by up to 50 percent or more. These pumps work by drawing in heat from the air, which helps reduce fuel use and carbon emissions – all while saving you money.

Lastly, you may want to purchase water-efficient showerheads. Showering not only uses a significant amount of water, but also saps energy when water is heated and pumped to the showerhead. High-efficiency showerheads with the WaterSense label provide a lower flow of water, so it reduces both water and energy use. The EPA estimates that the average family could save 2,900 gallons of water and 370 kilowatt-hours of electricity each year. That’s enough to power a home for 13 days!

Whether you opt for one or all six of these cost-cutting options, simple updates can improve the energy efficiency of your home and cut down on your utility bills. So no matter what you do, make sure to review your statement for accuracy each month to make sure you are only paying for your household.

You can find additional information about saving and more online at www.regions.com/nextstep. No matter your goals, Regions will help you with each step you want to take. Thank you for listening.



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