

Home energy savings **How DO you reduce laundry costs?**

1. Do you buy and only use those appliances that are necessary to your personal situation? Remember, every additional appliance you use increases energy

usage-and your utility bills.
2. Do you read the instruction booklet thoroughly before using an appliance? Follow directions for normal use and care and keep the reference handy. If you do not understand how to use the appliance, ask your dealer or utility company for a trained representative to help you.

3. Do you minimize hot water use whenever possible? The major cost in clothes washing can be reduced by setting more loads for cold and warm cycles.

4. Do you run only full loads in washers, dryers and dishwashers? On the other hand, avoid overloading as the jobs may have to be repeated, using more energy and water.

5. Are you sure that refrigerator, freezer and freezing compartment doors have tight seals? Check the gaskets by placing a dollar bill between the gasket and cabinet; there should be a slight drag as you pull the bill straight out.

6. Do you keep appliances in good repair? The age and condition of an appliance affect its operation.

The main energy cost in a clothes washer lies in the hot water it uses. If you have a large load of laundry, set the water control for maximum fill. If you have a smaller load, set it for proportionately less. In most models with a large tub capacity, the difference between the maximum and minimum fill is from 20 to 30 gallons. For best economy, note that washing a few large loads is more advantageous than washing the same amount of clothes in many small loads.

Water-temperature selection provides another opportunity to save on energy. It makes sense to use as little hot water as possible. If you have a load of unusually dirty clothes, use a hot wash (if the clothes can take it). Otherwise, a warm or cold wash may do the job. Always use a cold rinse: Warm water doesn't rinse any better—and it may increase wrinkling of permanent press fabrics.

There may be a hidden energy with some saving with some

washing machines if you machine-dry your laundry. A washer that spins the water out well will yield loads that shorten the running time of a dryer—and reduce operating cost.

As with a clothes washer, the larger the load to be dried, the more efficient the energy use.

Try waiting until you have enough laundry to fill the washer and dryer close to capacity, but not beyond. Overloading can prevent adequate washing in the washer and air circulation in the dryer.

The longer a dryer runs after the laundry is dry, the more

energy it wastes. Over drying wastes energy, yields harsh-feeling laundry, and may result in damage to some fabrics.

To save energy, set a dryer's automatic control for as low a dryness setting as will provide proper drying. Another way to cut energy costs: Use a clothes-line or drying rack.



Check furniture closely before buying

Never buy furniture without looking to see how it is put together. That means you are going to have to pick up furniture, look behind and beneath it, or maybe even get down on your hands and knees to inspect.

Look at corners where two pieces of wood make a right angle. How are they held together? Right angles that are merely nailed or glued together are weak. Look for blocks or wedges of wood screwed and glued in place to strengthen corners.

And legs should be firmly attached by means of some obvious reinforcing. A leg joined only by a center screw or bolt is weak.

Doors should move without rubbing and should stay closed. You should not feel doors moving vertically as they are closed. Beware if the salesperson tells you that the door will be adjusted before delivery. Such problems can be almost impossible to fix.

Look at the lines of shelves, door hinges and drawer openings. If the lines are not straight to the eye avoid the piece.

If the back of a cabinet is made of solid, thick wood chances are good you have a quality piece of furniture. Most shoppers will never notice until many years when it pops out.

Pull out a drawer and examine how easily it moves back and forth. Does it fit evenly and not rub or bind as it moves? The construction of the drawers will indicate the quality of the entire piece of furniture.

Wood screws are much better fasteners than nails. But in high quality furniture the screws are usually hidden. If you see nail heads inside drawers or on the back of cabinets it could be a sign of cost cutting.

The term "overstuffed" is sometimes to describe upholstered furniture in which the entire frame is covered.

A high price doesn't guarantee high quality or a long lasting fabric. Many of the highest priced fabrics are quite delicate.

The frame is the supportive

skeleton of any upholstered piece. You might not be able to see much of it but you can learn by its weight and stability. A heavy, substantial frame shows thick hardwoods have been used.

Check the upholstery for padding at the points where it's most likely to wear. You should not be able to feel hard frame edges through the fabric. If you can, there is poor padding and the fabric will wear out quickly.

Look at the hangtab and find out what material is used for padding. Utrthane foam padding is the most common.

Sit on the chair or sofa with the cushions removed. You should not bottom out. If you do, the springs are weak to start with. Sit on the couch for as long as you can; after all, comfort is important.

Seat depth measured from the front of the seat to the back support should be between six-

teen and twenty inches. And the back should extend at least thirteen inches above the seat. Furniture that varies a lot from these norms can be uncomfortable for the long sit.

Inspect the tailoring of the upholstery just as you would a good suit or dress. Look for straight seams. Puckering and loose threads are signs of cost cutting.

Look for careful matching in the fabric between the seat cushions and the body. This is especially important if fabric patterns have to match. The main difference in two couches can be purely one of tailoring; and that difference can be worth hundreds of dollars.

Custom orders for upholstered goods take from four weeks to six months or even more. This is not poor service, it is the industry standard. Be prepared for a long wait.

Fabric should be flame-proof

Considering the purchase of upholstered furniture? Color, style, and fabric type are undoubtedly part of your considerations. Add one more factor—safety.

Much of the furniture manufactured today has significantly greater resistance to ignition by cigarettes than upholstered furniture manufactured ten to 15 years ago. Such upholstered furniture may be identified by the gold colored tag on the furniture item. The legend on the

front of the tag in red letters states—"Important consumer Safety Information from UFAC."

In addition to upholstered furniture, your home contains many other items which will ignite and burn. As a back-up to the use of fire resistant materials, install smoke detectors on each level of your home and ensure that they are maintained in operating condition. These will provide an early warning if a fire does occur.

Which freezer is best?

With freezers, the type you buy has some effect on performance and energy efficiency. Tests suggest that chest freezers (models with a lid on top) have an edge over uprights (models that open at the front). Chests are generally cheaper to buy, too.

The design of the chests helps explain why they tend to have

slightly lower energy costs. When you open the lid of a chest freezer, cold air tends to stay put. But when you open the door of an upright, the colder air at the bottom spills out and warmer air moves in to take its place.

As with refrigerators, the internal temperature of a freezer may change with the seasons.

Are coupons worth the effort?

With over 60,000 name brand items available in this country, food manufacturers are anxious for people to try their products. One way of starting a buying habit is to offer a cents-off coupon to consumers as an incentive. Coupons can help you save money IF you:

Use coupons with common sense. Getting a few pennies off an overpriced item isn't much of a bargain. Before you buy, check the price of the generic or store brand of a similar product.

Use coupons to buy those items you use regularly. Avoid clipping coupons for things you don't need or regularly use.

Make food cost cuts carefully

If you feel you must cut some food from your grocery list, make sure you cut the frills and not the necessities. Nutrients are the necessities. It is important to get all the nutrients your body needs to function from the food you eat.

The easiest way to make sure you are getting all these nutrients is to select from a variety of foods, including milk, meats, fruits, vegetables and grain products. Cut costs by avoiding extras like cake, candy, soft drinks and low-nutrient snacks which provide little more than calories.



Making gifts by hand are inexpensive ways to show your love. It also provides a way in which you or your children can express creativity.

Select new carpeting with care

Your aim undoubtedly is to select a carpet or rug that looks good and will wear well. Here is some information on fibers and construction and some guidelines for judging quality.

***Fibers.** Good wear begins with the fiber, which may be natural like wool or man-made like nylon, acrylic, olefin and polyester. The chart below can help you become familiar with these. You will find that no one fiber is superior to all others in every way; each has its own set of strengths and weaknesses.

***Labeling information.** If a label reads "100 percent acrylic pile," for example, it is referring specifically to the fibers in the pile. The backing is made of something else. The manufacturer's name of the Federal Trade Commission's registration number and the country of origin must also be included. There may be additional labels describing any special warranties. Look for them. The carpet's backing is also important. The backing material is usually either jute or polypropylene. Some carpets are offered with an attached cushion made from latex foam or urethane.

***Note on flammability.** All carpets and rugs must pass a flammability test, in order to ensure that they will not contribute to the spread of fire from a small source of ignition.

***Construction.** Factors that affects quality are density, the amount of face yarn in a carpet; twist, the winding of the yarn around itself; and in cutpile carpet, heat-setting, the setting of twisted yarns by heat or steam.

***Density.** The denser the better. To check the density, bend the carpet sample and note how close the tufts are to each other. Ideally, the backing should hardly be seen.

***Twist.** To judge that twist level of cut-pile carpets, look at the cut ends. They should not blossom open!

***Heat-setting.** This process will hold the yarns' twist through wear and cleaning. Check the labels on the cut-pile carpet samples to see if the yarn has been heat-set.

The most durable combines the best fiber with the greatest density and tightest twist. For heavy traffic areas buy the best you can afford; middle and economy grades will probably perform satisfactorily in bedrooms and dining rooms. Compare a carpet only with those made of the same fibers. Some manufacturers produce several price grades of carpet with identical texture and color, so you can get a coordinated look throughout your home, if desired, at a saving.

***Textures.** Carpet textures fall into two general categories—loop piles and cut piles. In loop pile carpets the yarns on the carpet's face form loops, both ends of which are anchored to the backing. Uncut loops may be of equal height, producing a level surface, or if an unequal height, creating a variety of patterns that are referred to as "sculptured" or "carved." A single level is recommended for high traffic areas. A cut pile is so called because each loop is cut, resulting in two individual tufts of yarn.

***Padding.** Separate padding—which generally is not included in the price of the carpet—prolongs its life by protecting it from impact damage and helps to increase walking comfort by acting as a shock absorber. It also contributes somewhat to sound control and insulation and gives a feeling of extra depth, softness and luxury. There are several different types of padding—felt, foam and rubber—the prices of which vary with the quality.

***More Shopping Guidance.** To get a better idea of a carpet's appearance, have it removed from the hanging rack so you can examine it on the floor. If it looks promising, ask to borrow a sample overnight so you can see how it will look at home. The same carpet can vary in price considerably from one dealer to the next; discounts are common. Price differences stem in part from the amount of markup, installation costs and variations in the padding. Find out what the price includes—all parts of the installations? The measuring, stairs and padding? Ask for a breakdown of costs?

Installation should probably be done by professionals, for a poor job can ruin the appearance of even expensive carpet. (It costs as much to install a cheap carpet as a costly one!) Get a guarantee to cover a callback, in case you're dissatisfied with the job. Find out if the installers will take your old carpet and dispose of it and if there is a cost for this. And be sure to ask for any "left-overs"; they could come in very handy. Another smart idea: be home when it's delivered so you can be sure it's the color and quality you ordered.

"Saving money is not punishment, but a planned way of reaching goals and ambitions."

Impulse buying proves costly

Impulse buys are more common than you may realize. They make up 70 percent of consumer purchases. Consider the impact of this incident:

"Josie, come and look at this terrific book on horses I got today!" Dad yells triumphantly. "I thought you went to get the car washed," says his ten year old daughter suspiciously.

"I did, but there was a bookstore nearby with this in the window and I just couldn't resist. I could have spent hours there, and a lot of money, too," sighs dad, self-indulgently.

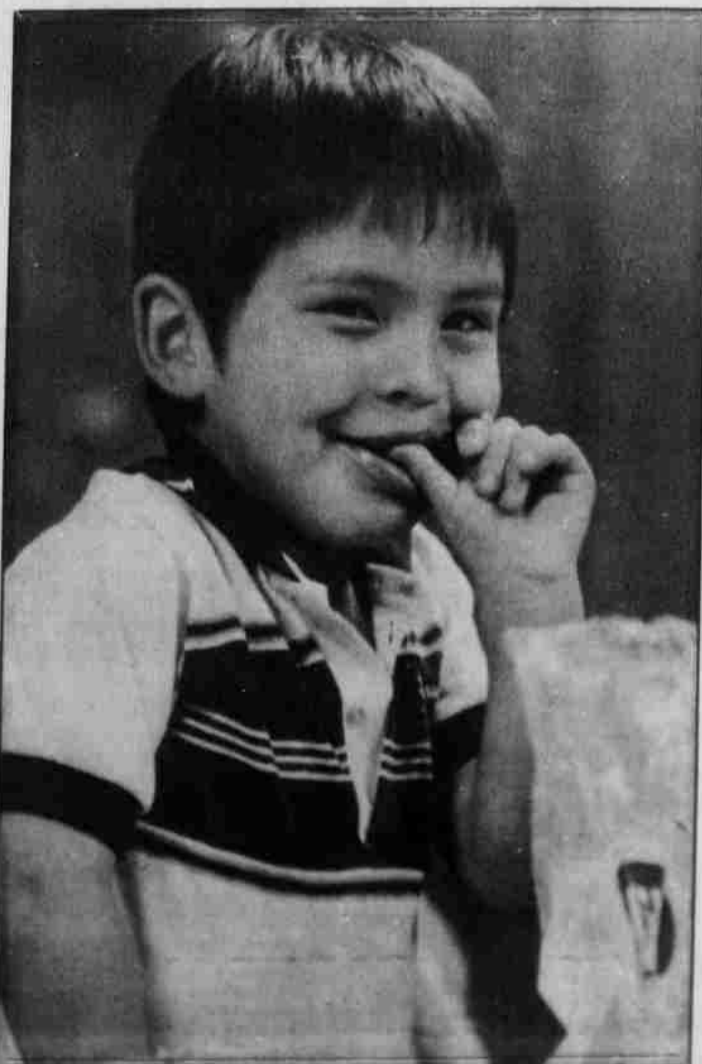
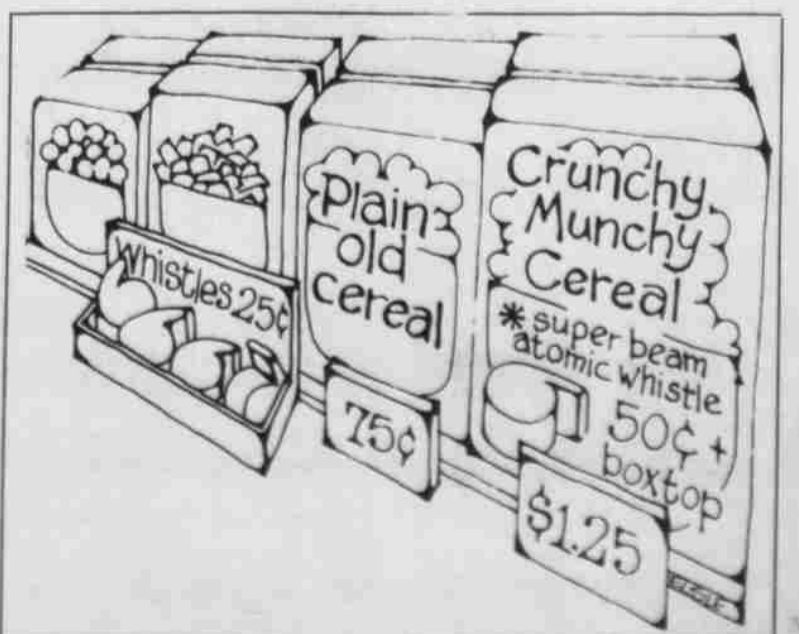
"You did, didn't you? And I'll bet you forgot to pick up the stuff from the cleaners," says Josie smugly.

"Oh yeah, well, tomorrow, tomorrow..." Dad mumbles.

If this is the pattern in Josie's house, she probably thinks Dad has a lot of money to throw around. She's also left with the impression that even those who drew up the family budget don't

think it matters much whether or not they stick to it. She may even conclude that it's all right to satisfy your whims before

doing the things others expect of you. Impulsive buying can be a learned behavior.



Children learn how to save money by mastering a cooking skill. They also learn how to be self-reliant and how to try something new. Cooking also offers taste-testing.