

# Five Simple Steps for Saving Money, Energy, and the Environment:

## A Guide for Apartment Dwellers

Making energy efficient choices can help save you energy and money—without giving up the traditional comforts of home. Swapping older, less efficient appliances and



electronics with high-efficiency models and making a few easy changes to the way you use your current stuff can bring big savings. And beyond the personal satisfaction and economic rewards of reducing your energy consumption you will be doing your part to reduce the pollution that contributes to global warming.

### 1. Unplug and Reduce Standby Power Consumption of Electronics Devices

■ Unplug seldom-used appliances and use power strips to switch off televisions, home theater equipment, and other electronics when not in use. Even when you think these products are off, their “standby” power consumption can be considerable—up to 10 percent of all residential power usage.

Upfront Cost	Annual Cost Savings	Annual Reduction in CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions
\$10 - \$15	\$117	1,694 lbs

### 2. Set Computers to Sleep and Hibernate

■ Enable the “sleep” mode feature on your computer, allowing it to use less power during periods of inactivity and configure your computer to “hibernate” automatically after about 30 minutes inactivity. When you’re done with your computer for the day, be sure to shut down or put it into “sleep” mode.

Upfront Cost	Annual Cost Savings	Annual Reduction in CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions
\$0	\$72	657 lbs



[www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org)

February 2009

© Natural Resources Defense Council

## Five Simple Steps for Saving Money, Energy, and the Environment: A Guide for Apartment Dwellers

### 3. Use Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs and Reduce Your Lighting Usage

■ Swap the five standard light bulbs you use most for energy-saving compact fluorescents (CFLs) and you can save roughly \$58 in energy costs over the course of the bulbs' lives (7 years). Make sure you use Energy Star CFLs, which are tested for quality and longevity.

Upfront Cost	Annual Cost Savings	Annual Reduction in CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions
\$15	\$8.30 (expected life of 7 years)	378 lbs

■ Turn off lights when they are not needed, and take advantage of natural light during the day. Use lower-wattage bulbs in places where bright light isn't needed, such as hallways and vestibules. Consider installing dimmers, which allow you to reduce the amount of energy consumed by incandescent bulbs (and many CFLs) while using little power themselves.

### 4. Swap Appliances for Energy Star Models and Use Your Appliances Efficiently

■ Work with your landlord or building manager to swap out appliances and individually replace electronics as they age, buying only those new models with Energy Star certification. Energy Star appliances meet strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. EPA and U.S. Department of Energy. While these models can initially cost slightly more than conventional versions, the savings from reduced energy use can pay back that difference within a year or two.

	Upfront Cost	Annual Cost Savings	Annual Reduction in CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions
Refrigerator	\$ 30	\$10	123 lbs
Air Conditioner	\$ 30	\$11	126 lbs
Dishwasher	\$ 0	\$25	119 lbs
Computer	\$ 0	\$69	704 lbs

■ In the laundry room: Operate washers and dryers only with full loads, using warm or cold water when possible. Keep the lint filter of your dryer clean.

■ In the kitchen: Set the temperature at 38° to 40° for the refrigerator, and no lower than 0° for the freezer. Check the door seals of your refrigerator/ for air leaks by placing a piece of paper between the door and the cabinet. If the paper does not resist being pulled out all the way around the unit, you may need to adjust the hinge or replace the seal—or both. Keep the condenser coils at the back or bottom of your refrigerator clean by vacuuming or brushing them at least once a year.

### 5. Work with your Landlord or Superintendent to Make Your Apartment Energy Efficient

■ Use this information and other materials available on the Internet to learn more about efficiency and conservation. Activities can include the following simple projects:

■ Find and seal air leaks: Anywhere you feel air seeping into your apartment, seal cracks with caulk or spray-in foam. Check where cabinets meet floors, near air ducts and heating vents, around chimneys and recessed light fixtures, and where phone or cable lines enter the building.

■ Insulate windows and doors with weather stripping or gaskets around edges.

■ Talk to your superintendent about installing ceiling fans and low-flow showerheads, faucets, and toilets. Consider installing insulating blinds in your apartment.

For more information and additional tips on saving energy and money, please visit us at [www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org), [www.simplesteps.org](http://www.simplesteps.org), and [www.rebny.com](http://www.rebny.com).

