



Energy Mythbusting: Dispelling common myths about energy use

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www.jhsph.edu/clf

Myth: Leaving your computer monitor on when not in use prolongs its life.

Reality: Technically this may be true but most monitors are replaced because of outdated technology and not disrepair. Monitors use as much as 1/3 of the total energy consumed in an average office.

Action: Turn off your monitor when leaving for an extended period of time (especially at the end of the day) and set your sleep mode to activate after a few minutes of idleness.

For more information:

http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your_home/appliances/index.cfm/mytopic=10070
<http://www.nef.org.uk/energyadvice/mythstruths.htm#answer1>

Myth: You should let your car warm up for 5 minutes before driving.

Reality: Idling does not effectively warm up your car engine, even on cold days.

Action: Only run your car for 30 seconds before driving and if you have a fuel injection engine do not step on the accelerator when starting it. Avoid high speeds for the first 3-5 mins.

For more information:

<http://www.hcdoes.org/airquality/Anti-Idling/IdleKnow.htm>

<http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/communities-government/transportation/municipal-communities/articles/idling-myths.cfm?attr=28>

Myth: Driving a car with the air conditioning on is more fuel efficient than driving with the windows down.

Reality: Efficiency depends on the rate of speed you are driving and vehicle size. The effect of drag from windows increases with speed and trucks/SUVs.

Action: On average, when driving at speeds below 40 mph it is more efficient to roll your windows down. As your speed increases to 45 mph roll up the windows and turn on the AC.

For more information:

http://www.treehugger.com/files/2005/06/windows_up_or_d_1.php

<http://www.bankrate.com/brm/news/auto/20050804a1.asp>



Myth: Frequently shutting off and turning on fluorescent lights wastes energy.

Reality: Modern fluorescent light bulbs do draw a higher level of current when starting up but only for 1-2 seconds.

Action: If you are going to be out of a room for more than 10 -15 minutes you should turn off your fluorescent lights. During the day take advantage of natural sunlight and leave the lights off.

For more information: http://www.consumerenergycenter.org/myths/fluorescent_lights.html
http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your_home/lighting_daylighting/index.cfm/mytopic=12280

Myth: Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) are those humming, flickering, glaring tubes.

Reality: Today's CFLs are quiet, steady, available in a range of tones and wattages, and fit in standard light fixtures. More importantly, they use 70% less energy than incandescent bulbs.

Action: Replace your incandescent bulbs with CFLs and save up to \$30 and >450 lbs of emissions from power plants over the lifetime of each bulb.

For more information:

<http://www.environmentaldefense.org/page.cfm?tagID=632&campaign=mts>

http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr_cfls



Myth: Setting your thermostat at a higher temperature will heat your home more quickly.

Reality: Heating systems run at the same level of output until they reach the set temperature. It takes the same amount of time to heat a room regardless of how high you set the temperature.

Action: Set your thermostat to the maximum temperature desired and leave it. Close drapes at night to keep the cold out.

For more information:

http://www.portlandgeneral.com/home/energy_savings/features/energy_myths/myth3.asp?bhcp=1
http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your_home/space_heating_cooling/index.cfm/mytopic=12720

Myth: Setting your thermostat at a lower temperature will cool your home more quickly.

Reality: Cooling systems run at the same level of output until they reach the set temperature. It takes the same amount of time to cool a room regardless of how high you set the temperature.

Action: Set your thermostat to the minimum temperature desired and leave it. For every degree you raise your thermostat setting above 72 degrees F, you'll save 5-7% on your cooling costs.

For more information:

http://www.portlandgeneral.com/home/energy_savings/features/energy_myths/myth4.asp?bhcp=1
<http://www.bge.com/portal/site/bge/menuitem.5586c28fb223006509c031e0da6176a0/>

Myth: Keeping your thermostat at the same temperature day and night is more efficient.

Reality: It takes less energy to heat a cold house or cool a warm house for part of the day than to maintain a constant temperature throughout the day and night.

Action: For maximum efficiency, install a programmable thermostat. In the winter, set the thermostat to 65 degrees at night and 68 degrees while you are home. In the summer, set the thermostat to 75 degrees while you are home.

For more information: <http://facilities.uoregon.edu/cps/energy/myths.html>

<http://www.pepco.com/home/education/conserving/save/>

<http://www.bge.com/portal/site/bge/menuitem.5586c28fb223006509c031e0da6176a0/>

http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your_home/space_heating_cooling/index.cfm/mytopic=12720

Myth: Frequent starting and stopping of car engines wastes gas and damages the engine.

Reality: Idling for more than 10 seconds uses more fuel than turning off your engine and restarting it. Restarting has little impact on engine components and is estimated to cost \$10 a year which is easily recovered in fuel savings.

Action: If you are going to be sitting for more than 10 seconds - except in traffic - turn off your engine.

For more information: <http://www.consumerenergycenter.org/myths/idling.html>

<http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/communities-government/transportation/municipal-communities/articles/idling-myths.cfm?attr=28>



Myth: Only hot water gets your laundry clean.

Reality: It is not necessary to use hot water to get your laundry clean. Most detergents are compatible with cold water washes. Between 80 - 90% of the energy to wash laundry comes from heating the water.

Action: Always use cold water for the rinse cycle. Use cold water for regular washes and only use hot water for highly soiled items.

For more information: <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/laundry.html>
<http://www.mge.com/home/appliances/laundry/>

Myth: When an appliance is turned off it isn't using electricity.

Reality: Many appliances, continue to draw electricity even when they are turned off (avg. 5-8 watts). This is called “phantom load” and can comprise 6% of the entire national residential electricity consumption.

Action: Unplug cell phone and other chargers when charging is complete. Plug other devices into power strips and turn them off at the power strip when not in use.

*Programmed information will be lost

For more information: <http://www.consumerenergycenter.org/myths/appliances.html>
<http://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~recycle/ssec/download/Phantom%20Load.pdf>

Myth: I don't have a choice about how my electricity is produced.

Reality: Electricity was deregulated in Maryland in 2000. Customers can now choose who to purchase their electricity from based on the cost and how the electricity is produced.

Action: Contact your electricity provider to see what options you have for purchasing electricity generated from renewable sources such as wind power.

For more information: www.eere.energy.gov/greenpower/buying