

the realist

3 EASY WAYS TO SAVE MONEY ON YOUR ENERGY BILL

TRY A FAN

Ceiling fans can help make a room feel 10 degrees cooler while using just 10 percent of the energy an air conditioner would, says Lauren Urbanek, senior energy policy advocate at the Natural Resources Defense Council. Ensure the fan is running on high and counterclockwise, which pushes cool air down and creates a breeze.

CHANGE YOUR AC FILTERS

A clean filter can reduce your cooling system's energy consumption by up to 15 percent. In summer, if you run your unit daily, change or wash the filter once a month.

OPTIMIZE THE WASH CYCLE

Ditch hot water—today's washing machines (and detergents) clean clothing just as well on the cold or warm setting, says Urbanek.

You'll cut energy use by 50 percent if you use warm water instead of hot, and opting for cold could save you even more.

By Maggie Puniewska