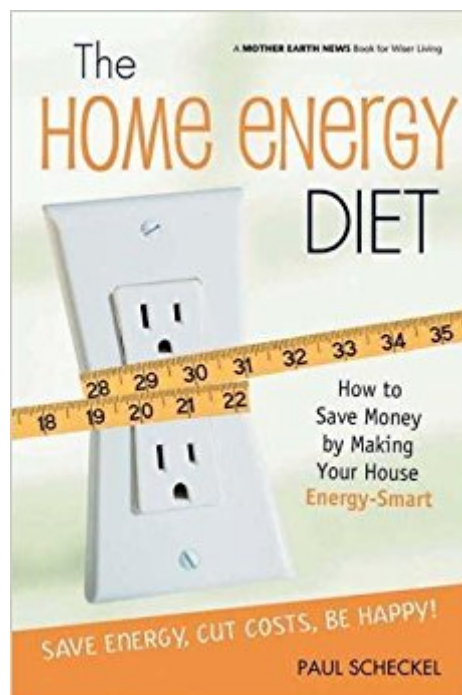




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# The Home Energy Diet: How To Save Money By Making Your House Energy-Smart (Mother Earth News Wiser Living Series)



## Synopsis

With rising energy costs, homeowners are beginning to examine the energy efficiency of their own homes, asking questions about where energy comes from and how much it costs, how to choose new appliances and what options exist for renewable energy. The Home Energy Diet answers all these questions and more while helping readers take control of their personal energy use and costs so they can save money, live more comfortably and help the environment. Energy auditor Paul Scheckel first explores energy literacy, and then describes how your home uses—and loses—energy you pay for via: Electricity Hot water Heating and air conditioning Windows, walls and insulation The Home Energy Diet involves readers in learning about their own homes by: measuring, metering, investigating and considering habits related to household energy use; learning how to quantify energy consumption and cost and making informed decisions about cost-effective improvements and upgrades. The book explores the misunderstood concept of efficiency versus cost by comparing fuel costs and equipment choices, including the possibility of using renewable energy for meeting home energy needs. This authoritative guide makes efficiency fun through personal anecdotes and humorous “tales-from-the-basement” energy misadventures. Since energy efficiency is an investment that offers returns greater than Wall Street, readers can earn several hundred dollars every year just by following the advice in this book. As a bonus, many of the energy-saving strategies described can make for improved indoor air quality and healthier, more comfortable homes. Paul Scheckel is an energy auditor who has visited thousands of homes, educating people about energy efficiency, cost-effective improvements and indoor air quality. With a passion for efficiency and renewables, he walks the talk by living in a solar-powered house and driving a car powered by vegetable oil in his home state of Vermont.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

undefined (2005-06-21)With rising energy costs, homeowners are beginning to examine the energy efficiency of their own homes, asking questions that range from where energy comes from and how much it costs, to how to choose new appliances and what options exist for renewable energy?The Home Energy Diet answers all these questions and more, while helping readers take control of their personal energy use and costs so they can save money, live more comfortably, and help the environment. Energy auditor Paul Scheckel first explores energy literacy, and then describes how your home uses-and loses-energy you pay for via:ElectricityHot waterHeating and air conditioning, andWindows, walls and insulation.The Home Energy Diet involves readers in learning about their own homes by measuring, metering, investigating, and considering habits related to household energy use, then learning how to quantify energy consumption and cost, and to make informed decisions about cost-effective improvements and upgrades. The book explores the misunderstood concept of efficiency versus cost by comparing fuel costs and equipment choices, including the possibility of using renewable energy for meeting home energy needs. This authoritative guide makes efficiency fun through personal anecdotes and humorous "tales-from-the-basement" energy misadventures.Since energy efficiency is an investment that offers returns greater than Wall Street, readers can earn several hundred dollars every year just by following the advice in this book. As a bonus, many of the energy-saving strategies described can make for improved indoor air quality and healthier, more comfortable homes.Mother Earth News Wiser Living Series (2004-12-01)

Paul Scheckel is an energy auditor who has visited over 3,000 homes, educating people about energy efficiency, cost-effective improvements, and indoor air quality. With a passion for energy efficiency, he walks the talk by living in a solar-powered house and driving a car powered by vegetable oil, in his home state of Vermont.

I think the key thing to know before you decide whether or not to buy this book is that according to the author, Paul Scheckel, the average American household consumes about 30 kilowatt hours of electricity per day. Mr. Scheckel lives in a 1,500 sq foot house with his wife and child, complete with

normal size appliances, and uses 4 kilowatt hours of electricity a day. Before I started reading this book we were above 30 kw a day usage and even getting to 10 kw a day seemed like a pipe dream. Now we are dipping below 20 kw usage some days for a house with four people and we haven't even implemented half the suggestions in the book yet or done anything major like adding insulation. Mr. Scheckel states in the book that with energy efficient appliances and low energy lighting, no one really needs to be using 30 kw of electricity a day any more. This does seem to be holding true for us. I do not think we will ever get to 4 kw a day, but 10 - 15 kw is looking very doable. Because our electricity usage is price tiered, and we are eliminating usage in the most expensive tiers, cost-wise our electric bill should be cut in half or more before too long. I have found this book very helpful and have saved many times over what I paid for the book in reduced energy bills. If you get this book it also really helps to buy a Kill A Watt or some similar wattage measuring device so you can go around the house measuring the power usage of every light and appliance that plugs into a 110 volt wall outlet.

This is the best book I've read on the subject of improving household energy efficiency. Many of the books I've read in the past go through the basic things that homeowners can do to improve efficiency, but this book explains the hows AND the whys. The book surprised me when I first started reading it. I expected another "easy reader" on the subject. I was pleasantly surprised to find detailed explanations on why things should be done, situations where a particular improvement may not be the best, and how to approach the many different systems in a house - air heating and cooling, envelope, insulation, water heating, ventilation, etc. It was also refreshing to find different ways of examining the same system - for example, amount of fuel used for different heating systems, amount of heat generated for a particular type of fuel, and all the relationships between them. As you start reading, you will find a lot of sidebars and short stories to highlight the discussion in the chapter. One thing I found slightly annoying is the number of Math Boxes that interrupt the flow of the book early on. These are sidebars that present sample calculations for the various topics, e.g. efficiency, fuel used for different heating systems, etc. I'd prefer the Math Boxes to be contained in an appendix with references in the main body of the book, but that's just me. Other readers may not find this annoying, and it's certainly not enough for me to reduce my rating of the book. I highly recommend this book if you are serious about exploring ways to improve your house's efficiency. It's not an "easy reader", but it's well worth the time to read through it.

In standard style, shows how much we save on the purchase price. For the 'The Home Energy

Diet', that is only the beginning. Based on his years of conducting home energy audits, Paul Scheckel has organized this book as a virtual home energy audit. This is an effective approach for learning about energy usage in the home, how to recognize problem areas, choosing effective solutions, and changing old habits while maintaining a comfortable home environment. On the first page, this sentence immediately caught my attention: "I will not ask you to sit alone, shivering in the dark as some readers may remember being asked to do so during the 'energy crisis' of the 1970s." I was just a kid back then and I remember that fear-based misperception for energy conservation to this day! The author advocates a logical 'Triple A' method that generalizes well:- Awareness: Learn about the ways your home uses and loses energy.- Assessment: Evaluate your home's energy requirements.- Action: Choose effective solutions to reduce energy costs and implement. The book makes an important distinction between energy efficiency and conservation. Efficiency is taking advantage of reduced-energy technologies to do more or the same with less cost. Conservation is simply using less (e.g., turning off the light) which also reduces costs. Minimizing overall energy costs requires a combination of efficiency and conservation. For the action step, keep in mind that return on investment (ROI) should constrain what to install, what to replace, or what habit to change to reduce energy consumption. The question to ask is: What is the expected payback time from reduced energy consumption to recover the cost of this energy-saving investment? The shorter the time, the better. For me, less than a year is desired. I don't want to wait twenty years to break even. Chapter 1 provides an overview of energy literacy: Measurement of energy, sources for energy, and major areas of energy consumption. It is an essential chapter on energy basics. Each of the other chapters cover specific topics: Electricity, Appliances, Hot Water, Heating/Air Conditioning, Envelope (heat loss: air movement, walls, windows, foundation, and attic) and Buying New Appliances. The appendices show how to calculate your energy consumption profile, greenhouse gas profile, and home heat load. There are two types of text boxes included throughout each chapter: Math, Diet. Math boxes provide supplemental mathematics for many of the concepts. Diet boxes provide a list of key techniques to reduce energy costs. Nice addition to the overall book content. And finally ... There should be a chapter on the futility of energy conservation with teenagers in the home. It is not their fault. They just unknowingly consume every available BTU and KWH within reach.

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