

*“Water heating is the second largest energy expense in your home. It typically accounts for about 18% of your utility bill after heating and cooling. There are four ways to cut your water heating bills: use less hot water, turn down the thermostat on your water heater, insulate your water heater, or buy a new, more efficient model.” ~ U.S. Dept. of Energy*

### **Turn Down the Thermostat on Your Water Heater**

Energy Savings: \$12-\$30/year for each 10 degree reduction (Dept. of Energy)  
Cost: \$0

Many water heaters come with higher default temperature settings than most households require. These higher temperatures can pose a safety hazard, by producing scalding water, and contribute to faster mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes, which can impact the lifespan and efficiency of your system. Turning down the temperature on your water heater reduces these risks and saves you money otherwise spent on electricity or gas to maintain the higher temperatures.

What can you do?

1. Ask a professional to adjust the temperature setting on your water heater
  - a. When you have a new water heat installed; or
  - b. Whenever a plumber is doing work at your house.
2. Adjust the temperature setting yourself
  - a. **Directions:** check the manual for your water heater, or visit the Dept. of Energy’s website, at <http://energy.gov/energysaver/projects/savings-project-lower-water-heating-temperature> (the use of a thermometer is optional – once you find the temperature control, you can adjust it slightly every few days until you find a comfortable setting).
  - b. **Tip:** Electricity-powered water heaters often have two thermostats, one at the top of the water heater and one at the bottom – you should adjust them both. Most gas water heaters have a single thermostat dial near the bottom of the tank on the gas valve.
  - c. **Warning:** for electricity-powered water heaters - turn off the power to the water heater *before* adjusting the temperature. If you are not sure which switch on the circuit panel controls the water heater, ask a professional or use a voltage tester to confirm that the electricity to the water heater is off.
3. Turn down the temperature, or turn off the water heater, if away for more than 3 days
  - a. **Directions:** Check if your water heater has a “vacation” setting that you can use. To turn off electric water heaters, turn off the appropriate circuit breaker. To turn off a gas water heater, you will need to locate the gas supply valve to the water heater and turn it off.
  - b. **Tip:** For gas water heaters, make sure you know how to safely relight the pilot light before turning it off completely.

The Department of Energy estimates that, for most households, 120°F is a sufficient temperature for the water heater. You can make multiple adjustments to determine the best temperature setting for your home. Just remember, higher settings cost more money to maintain.