



'Tis the Season For Homeowners to \$ave

by homewarranty.com

The holidays are full of tradition, and unfortunately, one of those traditions is over-spending. Here are a few tips to help homeowners keep a little extra green in their pockets these holidays.

Upgrade Your Lighting

LED light bulbs are far more energy-efficient than their counterparts. Opt for yellow tones for bedrooms and brighter, whiter tones for work areas, such as the kitchen.

Install a Smart Thermostat

A smart thermometer allows homeowners to program an optimal desired temperature for any hour of the day. According to EnergyStar, homeowners can expect to save about 8% on their energy bills each year.

Insulate

Cold air finds its way into your house through gaps you may not even consider. Overworking your heating system will come back to bite you on your energy bill. Seal any gaps you find with caulk or window and door sealing tape. This will also be a big help when summer rolls around.

Turn Down Your Water Heater

Tank water heaters remain at the ready all day every day to provide your home with the hot water it requires for laundry, showers, dishes, etc. If you turn on your tap to "hot" and you cannot hold your hand beneath it, your water heater is probably set too high. Lowering the temp of your water heater can lower your energy bills.

Tankless Water Heaters

Often called "on-demand" water heaters, tankless water heaters provide hot water on an "as-need" basis. This means no "standby" energy losses that come with traditional storage water heaters. Less energy means lower energy bills.

Use a Ceiling Fan

Ceiling fans aren't just for the summer. Make sure you change the rotation of the ceiling fan so that the blades turn clockwise in the winter. This forces the fan to push warmer air from the ceiling down to the floor where it's needed. Keep the winter speed at low. The idea is to circulate the air, but without creating a draft in the room.

Seal HVAC Ducts

The average home loses about 20% of air moving through HVAC ducts to gaps in connections, poor insulation, and holes. This is according to the Department of Energy. Make sure your ducts are intact and insulated.

Clean Your Coils

Most of us don't think about what goes on around the back of our refrigerators, but there might lurk an energy suck in the way of dirty coils. These coils contain coolant, and keeping them clean helps them run more efficiently. Any appliance that runs more efficiently will cost you less to operate.

Install Dual-Flush Toilets

Dual-flush toilets are slowly catching on here in the U.S., but have been saving Europeans up to 30% in water consumption for years! It's simple: dual-flush toilets allow you to choose between a smaller flush for liquid flushes, and up to a 1.6-gallon flush for solid waste.



Suzanne Pelkey

REALTOR, CRS

01512847

Coldwell Banker Realty

8305 Prunedale North Road, #117

SALINAS, CA 93907

Phone: 831-206-3359

Fax: 831-626-2220

suzanne.pelkey@cbnrcal.com

December Calendar

December 7 - Pearl Harbor Day

December 10 - First Day of Winter

December 25 - Christmas Day

December 31 - New Year's Eve

Homeowner Tip:



Maintain a Healthy Kitchen Sink

The holidays find many of us using our sink without much thought to its maintenance. Maintaining the cleanliness of your sink is an important part of keeping your kitchen healthy. Our first tip may be the biggest challenge for some - avoid piling dirty dishes and other items in the sink for extended periods of time. Between deep cleanings, spray the sink with white vinegar after each use. Also, dry the sink with a clean kitchen towel when you're through using it.

Want to Paint a Room? Show Your Walls Who's Boss

Admit it. Every time you walk into that one room in your house you think to yourself...*"These walls could really use a new coat of paint"*. Stop psyching yourself out, get some supplies in order and get moving. Here are our suggestions for tools to get you started:

- Brushes (wide, and angled)
- Rollers
- Paint Trays
- Painter's Tape
- Drop Cloth
- Short Ladder or Step Stool

Next, you will need to settle on a color. Grab plenty of paper swatches from your home

improvement store to help you decide. Ask a friend, or consult a professional.

Once you've decided on a color, cover your floor with your drop cloth and pour that beautiful, new paint into a paint tray. Begin painting at the wall's edges, corners, and around any trim using your painter's tape to protect the trim. This is a great time to use an angled brush to achieve more precise strokes.

Next, bring on the rollers and paint the rest of the wall. Use even strokes, applied in an up-and-down manner for a uniform application. Depending on the type and color paint you're using, as well as the color of the paint you are covering, apply no less than two coats of paint.



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No-Knead Rosemary Bread - Foolproof and Full of Holiday Flavor

Ingredients

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 large garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh rosemary, or more, to taste
- 1 1/4 teaspoons kosher salt
- 3/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon instant yeast
- 1 1/2 cups water, at room temperature
- 2 tablespoons cornmeal

Directions

In a large bowl, combine flour, garlic, rosemary, salt, pepper and yeast.

Using a wooden spoon or your hand, add water and mix until a wet, sticky dough forms, about 30 seconds.

Cover bowl tightly with plastic wrap and let stand at room temperature until surface is dotted with bubbles, about 18 to 24 hours.

Lightly oil a 10-inch cast iron skillet or coat with nonstick spray; sprinkle with cornmeal.

Working on a lightly floured surface, gently shape dough into a round.

Place dough into the prepared skillet. Cover with a clean dishtowel and let stand at room temperature until dough has doubled in size and does not readily spring back when poked with a finger, about 2 hours.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Place into oven and bake until golden brown, about 30-40 minutes.

Serve warm.



Photo & recipe courtesy of: damndelicious.net