

# THE EFFICIENT HOME

## 8 Habits *To Improve Your Life and Your Wallet*

The best ways to save on everything from household tasks to insulation

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### *Pro Secrets Revealed*

Meet our energy expert and discover ways to better manage your money.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



## IT STARTED WITH ONE LITTLE CHANGE

*How I got into the habit of better habits.*

Welcome to the first edition of *The Efficient Home* from Atlantic City Electric. I'm so glad you're here.

Starting something new makes me think about what really matters: feeling comfortable at home, staying on top of monthly expenses and believing tomorrow can feel a little easier than today.

Like many of our South Jersey neighbors, I've felt the pressure of rising costs and busy schedules. And I've learned that real change doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. It can start with simple habits like switching to LED bulbs, using a smart thermostat or plugging electronics into an advanced power strip.

That's what inspired this issue. Across our community, from the shore towns to the inland neighborhoods, people are finding practical ways to lower energy use, reduce bills and make everyday life run more smoothly. Their efforts often start with helpful programs, expert advice and support that turns "maybe someday" into "how about now."

On these pages, you'll meet a local contractor who shares easy fixes that can make surprising differences in comfort. You'll also discover smart gadgets that give you more control over your

energy use as well as a few time-saving recipes for busy days.

These days, energy efficiency and affordability aren't just ideas. They're essential. From the steps I've taken in my own home, here's what I've found most encouraging: Simplifying your future doesn't mean doing everything at once. It just means starting somewhere ... and knowing you don't have to do it alone.

Because this is our first issue, we wanted these pages to do more than inform. We wanted them to reassure you that practical help exists today—help designed for real homes, real budgets and real lives. Even modest changes can lead to meaningful comfort, confidence and relief over time.

I hope this magazine leaves you feeling supported, confident and ready to take the first step toward meaningful savings and lasting comfort. We're happy to be here to help.

**LISA THOMAS**

SENIOR MANAGER  
INNOVATION AND NEW PROGRAMS  
ATLANTIC CITY ELECTRIC

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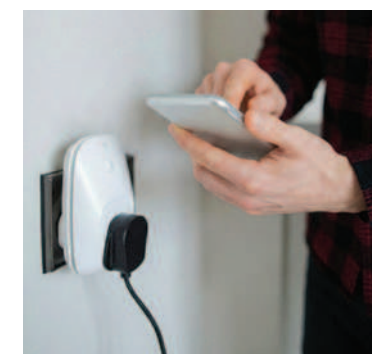


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# 8 HABITS TO IMPROVE YOUR LIFE AND YOUR WALLET

Habits account for nearly 45% of our daily behaviors.\*To improve your schedule and your bank account, let's cover several habits that will help you streamline your life.

\*Source: psychologytoday.com

## TIME-SAVING HABITS

### 01. Create a cleaning schedule.

To prevent your cleaning tasks from feeling overwhelming, take one thing at a time. Assigning specific tasks to certain days prevents chores from building up and eliminates the "Saturday morning dread" of an all-day cleanup.

### 02. Automate your home.

If you have the means, use smart doorbells, robotic vacuums and smart thermostats to lighten your daily load. That's what technology should do: Streamline your life.

### 03. Batch cook and meal prep.

Preparing weekly meals in one sitting saves time. And don't forget to utilize slow cookers and air fryers to save you time while saving you energy.

### 04. Seal windows and doors.

By preventing drafts, air leakage and improperly installed insulation, you could save on the energy used to heat or cool your home. The best way to do this is to check out your insulation along with getting a caulk gun to seal gaps in your windows and ductwork. Sealing these gaps also increases the efficiency of your HVAC system. You'll no longer need to frantically run around your home closing doors and windows, thinking every degree preserved can save the day. You've already saved the day, you Super Insulator you—but we'd close them anyway.

# ENERGY- SAVING HABITS

## 05. Grab an advanced power strip.

An advanced power strip can eliminate “Vampire Power”—energy sucked by electronics in standby mode. This can save you the time and discomfort of shimmying under your desk in your home office trying to unplug that printer you use every eight to 10 business days to save money.

So, get into the habit of good habits—and saving energy. Building new habits is like building a muscle. The more you use it, the stronger you’ll get. And use the One Percent Rule. Make a 1% improvement each day. It’s the perfect way to stick to your habits and give yourself props for advancing daily. And it’s how you’ll build some habit momentum.

## 06. Optimize garden care.

Growing your own food can be the perfect way to find a hobby that adds to your mindset and your money. Garden and lawn care can be very therapeutic. Studies have shown that gardening can help your mental and physical health.\* Going from a garden of flowers to a garden of veggies transforms a hobby into a hobby that helps with your bottom line. It’s also a great way to spend time with children and teach them about healthy living and eating. Side note: If your kid grows kale, they will eat kale.



## 07. Use a smart thermostat.

These devices learn your schedule and constantly adjust for added energy savings. The result? You won’t be monitoring your thermostat and you will greatly reduce the totally epic Thermostat Wars in your home.

## 08. Switch to LED bulbs.

A quality LED bulb can last 30 times longer than an incandescent bulb.† This saves energy and means you’ll spend far less time on a rickety ladder with an old bulb in one hand, balancing off the wall with your other hand, and tucking a fresh bulb in your back pocket.

## DID SOMEONE SAY DRAFT?

When it comes to improving not only efficiency but comfort, nothing beats a no-cost **Whole Home Energy Assessment** from Atlantic City Electric to help you find ways to save. An expert will test will test your home for air leakage (a prime culprit for drafts) along with assessing your home’s insulation and checking for proper ventilation.

Keep saving at [atlanticcityelectric.com/WHEA26](https://atlanticcityelectric.com/WHEA26).

\*Source: Journal of Community Health  
†Source: U.S. Department of Energy



# The Savings Are Already in Your Home We’ll help you see them.

The **Whole Home Energy Solutions** program can help you uncover personalized ways to improve your comfort and lower your energy use by up to 20%.\* Plus, up to **\$7,500 in rebates** and **0% interest** financing options can make your upgrades more affordable.†

Use the link to discover your savings.  
[atlanticcityelectric.com/FindIt](https://atlanticcityelectric.com/FindIt)



Scan the code  
to play a game.

\*Source: energystar.gov  
†Rebates are capped at \$7,500.  
You must be an active residential Atlantic City Electric customer with a valid account number and reside in a single-family residence that is not a condominium or apartment (no separately metered units above or below your residence) to participate.  
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YOUR ENERGY. YOUR MONEY.

# TIME, ENERGY *(and sanity)* SAVING RECIPES

You have errands to run and dogs to walk. You have batteries to buy and split ends to unsplit. Because of those and an ever-growing list of things to do, what you don't have is time. Or at least time to waste making four-course meals involving a tasting menu of appetizers and made-from-scratch desserts. So, let's tackle ways you can save time on the things you do every day.



## Ingredients



## Sun-Dried Tomato and Herb Baked Eggs

Perfect for breakfast, a time when you rarely have a lot of time, these delicious eggs will upgrade your cooking game. You'll just need one ramekin or any oven-safe bowl per person.

### Instructions

**Step 1.** Preheat toaster oven to 350°F.

**Step 2.** Coat the inside of one ramekin or oven-safe dish with olive oil.

**Step 3.** Line the bottom of the dish with sun-dried tomatoes and break two eggs on top. Sprinkle with fresh herbs and salt.

**Step 4.** Bake uncovered for 15–20 minutes until egg whites are firm. Serve immediately.



2 pounds chicken wings

## Ingredients



## Air Fryer Buffalo Chicken Wings

You can't go wrong with wings. They're crispy, they're delicious and they require no utensils to enjoy. That last one is big if you have kids in your family. So, embrace your carnivore messiness and dig into these crowd-pleasers.

### Instructions

**Step 1.** Pat the chicken wings dry and sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Place the wings in the air fryer basket so they are not touching.

**Step 2.** Set the air fryer to 360°F and cook for 12 minutes, then flip the wings with tongs and cook for 12 minutes more.

**Step 3.** Melt the butter in a microwave-safe bowl for one minute. Whisk in the hot sauce.

**Step 4.** Toss the wings with the sauce in a large bowl. Serve with dressing on the side.



# Smart Gadgets

MADE SIMPLE

Read on for unexpectedly awesome gadgets that give you greater control of your domain, from how you kick back to how you save.



App Control



Voice Control

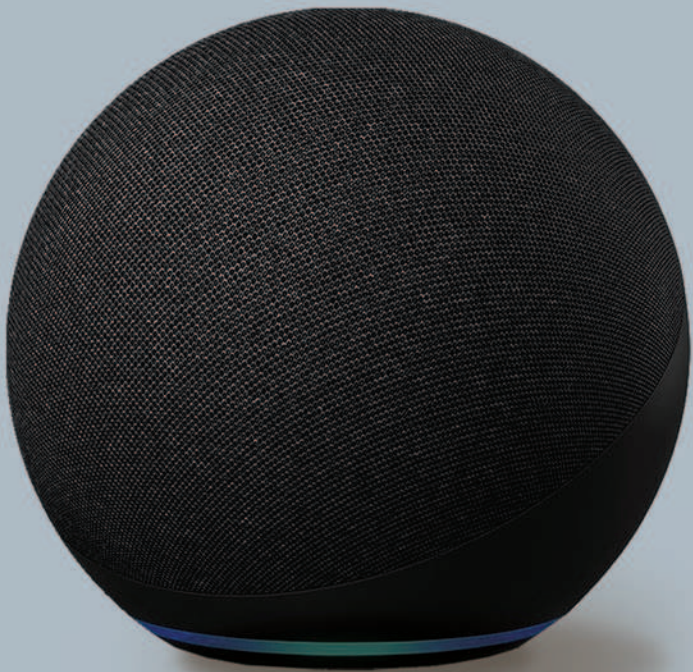
## Do you use your voice-activated assistant 20 to 30 times a day?

If the phrase “Tech Head” has been used to describe you, **smart, voice-activated lights** will warm up your home—emotionally speaking. A doorway to a world of ultimate lighting control, these gadgets transform your home into a sanctuary of light that will adjust to your every whim. And all you’ll need is your voice to light the way.



## Do you enjoy a spontaneous dance party?

Are you an audiophile? A multitasker? A trivia hound? A smart speaker will be perfect, no matter your preferred title. The new generation of wireless models offers a long-lasting battery that delivers from morning coffee to the occasional all-nighter. So you save energy while you work up a sweat rehearsing for your next viral dance video.



## Do you have tons of electronics that spend most of their time in standby mode?

You have electronics. You have a lot of electronics. And like it or not, many of them are energy vampires. Now, imagine possessing the power to control all of these standby-energy-devouring devices via your smart hub. An advanced power strip gives you everything you need to slay these phantom power suckers, without having to emerge from the comfort of your blanket cocoon on the couch.

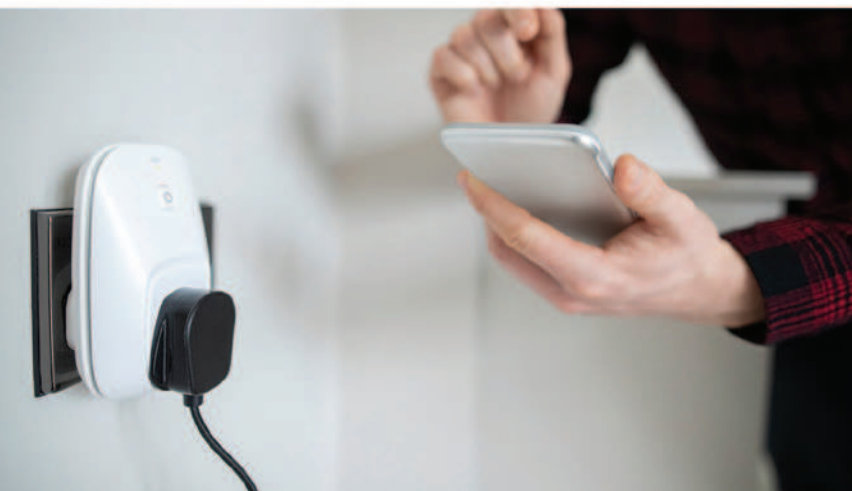
## Do you see yourself as an energy detective?

Hmmmm. Something in your home is on some mysterious energy binge. Is it the lamp? The TV? Your dog having the zoomies? Let's find out.

We'd like to introduce you to the smart plug. Here's how it works:

- Plug the smart plug into your outlet.
- Plug the desired appliance into the smart plug.
- Monitor the energy use of that appliance.
- Control your appliance via a smartphone app.

An advanced smart plug does more than control an outlet—and the device plugged into said outlet. It automates. It does more than monitor your energy use for that device. It optimizes.



## Do you want to stay on the couch and still see if the pizza guy has arrived?

Maybe you want a visible deterrent to would-be criminals. Maybe you want to lower your homeowners insurance premiums. But smart doorbells can do more than all of this as a part of a broader smart home ecosystem. When integrated, they can trigger actions like turning off lights or adjusting the thermostat when the doorbell detects you are leaving, helping to manage overall home energy usage. Tell people that it's for enhanced automation. Admit to yourself it's for enhanced laziness.



## WHO DID IT BEST? PRO SECRETS REVEALED

We sat down with **Josh Callahan**, a born-to-do-it electrician turned energy expert working in South Jersey, to discover how he does his job and what you can learn from his experience. Because all customers should feel like “good customers.”

ENERGY  
EXPERT



### How long have you been doing the contractor thing, Josh?

I've been doing it for four years. I'm an electrician by trade. I've been doing electric work pretty much since I was old enough to know how to spell “electrician” because I come from a family of them. My wife would work for my brother-in-law, and every now and again they would need an electrician to come fix something or they'd ask a question. Well, finally, he had hounded me enough to come work for him about four years ago. And I've been doing it ever since.

### And what do you get out of your job?

The biggest thing is the satisfaction of helping people who feel like they've exhausted all their options in trying to make their home more efficient. Or people trying to fix a discomfort that they've been having. Being able to give them a solution or telling them, “Hey, you're on the right path, keep doing what you're doing and eventually you'll have that problem solved. You just need to do more of what you're doing.”

With the programs we participate in, the ones that are paid for by the utilities, it's the simple things that actually make some of the customers happy.

We hope these suggestions add a dash more joy (and perhaps some savings) to your hang time at home. You can brag about your energy-saving prowess or keep it to yourself. Your secret's safe with us. As an added bonus, you can get rebates for many energy-saving items through the Appliance Rebates program. Simply go to [atlanticcityelectric.com/Rebates26](http://atlanticcityelectric.com/Rebates26) and start saving.

WHO DID IT BEST?

Got any good examples of this happening?

One story is not mine, but it was a heartwarming story from one of the technicians that I work with.

About two years ago, we were in this guy's house and his mom had just passed away. The house had kind of gotten destroyed in a way—people broke in, messed some things up. Well, the showerhead in the bathroom was completely clogged. It was barely just a drip when you would turn it on. We replaced the showerhead for the guy and he finally had water pressure. The guy broke down in tears because he could actually take a real shower again.



Replacing your showerheads with WaterSense-labeled showerheads could save 2,700 gallons per year.\*

Are there any big things that you discover or is it more simple everyday stuff?

It's a lot of little things. There are some big things that we discover. You know, I've discovered total disconnects of your ducting system. So, you're paying hundreds of dollars a month to air condition your attic or your crawl space instead of the room that it was designed to cool. That usually relates to the discomfort that a customer is having.

When you hit something big like that, how does that feel?

That actually feels pretty good too, because it brings an immediate answer to a question. For years, this customer might be asking why. Well, I found the answer for you. They might not know they need to call an HVAC guy until I tell them. Or if it's one of the programs where we do it, it's an instant thing. We go up there, we see the problem, we reconnect it, and by the time we leave, they have air again.

It seems like you're helping them out in two ways: with comfort and then helping them save energy and money. Is that how you feel it went down?

I think comfort and energy efficiency kind of go hand in hand in the customer's eyes. Say drafty windows, for instance. You're sitting in your living room and you feel the breeze.



A blower door test can identify gaps in your home, large and small.

“Hold your hand right here and you can feel the wind pushing through.”

As an energy expert, I can look at your window and say, “Well, you know, you're just missing a bead of caulk around the trim.” I can usually take a customer over to it and say, “Hold your hand right here and you can feel the wind pushing through.” The customer might think, “I need new windows and I know I can't afford it.” Well, you might not necessarily need new windows. You just need to go buy a tube of caulk for a few dollars and seal around the edges.

\*Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

When you show up, do you kind of go into detective mode to find clues?

Yeah, you listen to what the customer says, then you have to go find the reason why. Sometimes it's not obvious. Sometimes we have to refer them to other programs where they bring out the blower door and do diagnostic testing. A lot of what we do is visual inspections to see what the obvious problems are. We always try to go in and play detective and try to locate the problem as fast as we can and give as many solutions as possible. Stage Two is where they do the diagnostic testing. They bring in the blower door, which depressurizes the home and will show you every air leak that that home has. You won't be able to see it, but you will be able to feel it.



What are some other tests that you use?

We'll test for carbon monoxide leaks and gas leaks in the home. This is all part of that Stage Two testing. Before you even run the blower door, you want to make sure there are no health hazards—no asbestos, biological growth or anything that could resemble mold.

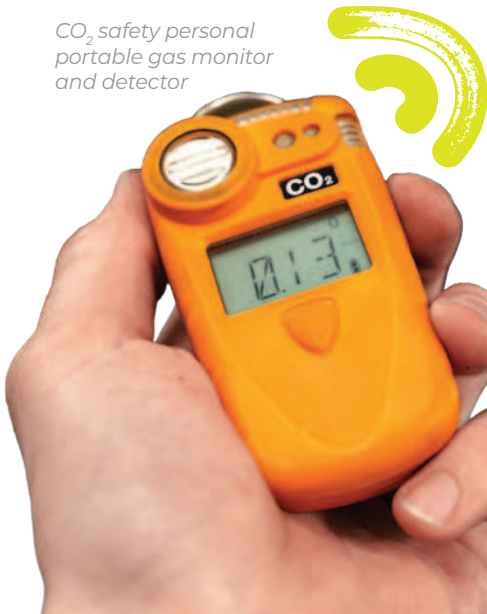
How does it feel to show them an opportunity to improve their health versus just their comfort or their bill?

Health and safety are always something that we try to drive home. Certain things, health- and safety-wise, could coincide with energy efficiency. If we notice discoloration in a bathroom or basement, we could point to a higher level of moisture or lack of ventilation. It all kind of works together.

Is there any piece of advice you'd give to someone who's considering bringing you out?

I would definitely say if there are any concerns you have about your home, it's always worth having an expert take a look. We are trained to look for things that you might overlook as a homeowner. We might tell you information that you've never even thought was a real thing.

CO<sub>2</sub> safety personal portable gas monitor and detector



Get your own energy expert

You can schedule an appointment with your own “Josh” to find energy-saving opportunities in your home with a **Whole Home Energy Assessment**. Now, your Josh may be the real Josh or the most Josh-like equivalent available. Your energy expert will come to your home, check everything out and may even offer items like an advanced thermostat and smart power strips. And bonus: It's all at no additional cost to you.

Visit [atlanticcityelectric.com/WHEA26](http://atlanticcityelectric.com/WHEA26) to learn more.

# Let It Steep. Your Savings Are Brewing.

**Doing hardly anything can be surprisingly productive.**

With Energy Wise Rewards™, your smart thermostat makes small, automatic adjustments during peak demand periods.\*

You'll hardly notice, but your energy bill will. Plus **we'll reward you with up to \$100** during your first year.



\*Not all smart thermostats are eligible for the program, so be sure to confirm the model you choose is eligible for Energy Wise Rewards before purchasing or installing. You must be an active residential Atlantic City Electric customer with a valid account number to participate.  
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To enroll, scan the code or visit  
[atlanticcityelectric.com/EWR26](https://atlanticcityelectric.com/EWR26).