

THE EFFICIENT HOME

WISE MOVES BIG IMPACTS

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can make in your home and
your community.

Smart Energy Habits for Every Season

Tips for spring, summer, fall and winter



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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



A SMART WAY OF REACHING SOMETHING BETTER

I'm honored to be the first-ever editor of *The Efficient Home*. Now, that title is more than a little ironic. Truth be told, my home could be more efficient. My life could be much more efficient, but I guess that's why we're all here.

We began creating the pages in this issue with one very pointed mindset: Let's get people from a good place to a better place. Eventually it evolved into the shorter, "Let's get people from good to better." You don't have to be perfect. You can and should be grateful for where you are, and that positive viewpoint can be the launchpad for discovering new ways, both small and not-so-small, that get you to "better."

And the best way to be better is by being smarter. I have chosen to discover more and more smart ways of living. Yes, these options do involve a smart thermostat and smart power strips. But I'm not going to limit my smart choices to tactics that have "smart" in their names. The truth is, the road to energy efficiency is less expressway and more country road. And there is more than one way to get there. What works for me might not work for you. And that's OK.

Because, after all, living a smarter life is more journey than destination. It's a lifestyle. One that uses less energy, yes. But it's so much more than that, too. It saves you money. It makes every room more comfortable season after season. It provides much-needed relief to a warming planet. And it brings people together. (What else unites the frugal, the techies and environmentalists so harmoniously?)

So, get going and get reading.

I hope you'll find inspiration in these pages to seek out opportunities here and there in your own home to make the changes that make sense to you and how you live. I hope these smart changes lead to a smarter life—and that they bring you moments of empowerment in our wonderful, beautiful, continually changing world.

KARA L. JONAS

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Giulian loves helping others become the best version of themselves. And golf. He started as an intern and has worked his way to several roles before taking on his current position. He also enjoys saving energy by washing his clothes in cold water. His efficiency advice? With the right energy-efficient appliances, you can save energy without even thinking about it.



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Philip loves his air fryer just as much as his grill—and he uses both to reduce his energy use. He also takes a bit of pleasure in turning off the lights when he's the last one to leave a room. His efficiency advice? You can save up to 10% on your heating bills by simply turning your thermostat down 7–10°F nightly.



Oak Park, Illinois

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SMART ENERGY HABITS FOR EVERY SEASON

THAT TIME OF YEAR

**With a little planning,
you might actually enjoy
the new season.**

First off, let's be clear. There are levels of clean. There's just-getting-by-clutter-pickup clean. There's unexpected-company-last-minute-just-throw-it-in-the-closet clean. Then there's the almost-reach-a-Zen-level-of-inner-peace clean.

Deep cleaning is classic level three.

It's rarely a spur-of-the-moment event. You plan. You buy supplies. You give up sacred space on your calendar. Often, family members are recruited—often against their will.

And this idea of an annual cleaning event isn't new. During the Persian Empire, the now-century-old tradition of *khaneh tekani*, which literally translates to "shaking of the house," involved an annual cleaning that would make any compulsive tidier proud. Carpets, drapes and furniture were thoroughly cleaned, and often a fresh coat of paint was involved. This was all done in preparation for Nowruz, or the Persian New Year, to entertain ancestors. So, apparently, doing this to impress your relatives isn't a new idea either—in-laws included.

The American tradition has its origins in the 19th century, in spring. But no matter the season or heritage, there's never a bad time to clean.



CLEANING TIPS

TIP 1 *Make a Plan*

Write down what you are going to do, estimate the time it will take and give out assignments to the whole clan. And if you get any static about all the attention to detail, give that naysayer a steely-eyed stare and say, “Hope is not a plan.” What does it mean exactly? Who knows? But it will confuse them enough to get back to work.

This was all done in preparation for Nowruz, or the Persian New Year, to entertain ancestors. So, apparently, doing this to impress your relatives isn’t a new idea either—in-laws included.

TIP 2 *Gather Supplies*

Deep cleaning is an event. And, unless you want to adjust your carefully planned schedule, having the right tools for every job will serve you well. In short, don’t put “Wandering around a big-box retailer looking for the right cleaning caddy” on your schedule. Be prepared. An entire youth organization that has lasted for over a century used it for their motto. You can too.

HERE’S A QUICK LIST OF SUPPLIES:

- ▶ Cleaning Caddy
- ▶ Microfiber Cleaning Cloths
- ▶ Towels or Cotton Cleaning Cloths
- ▶ Wand Duster
- ▶ Vacuum Cleaner With HEPA Filter
- ▶ Mop and Bucket
- ▶ Carpet Cleaner
- ▶ Blind Cleaner
- ▶ Scrub Brushes
- ▶ Window Squeegee
- ▶ Lint Roller
- ▶ Garbage Bags
- ▶ Dish Soap
- ▶ Hydrogen Peroxide
- ▶ All-Purpose Cleaning Spray
- ▶ Window/Glass Spray
- ▶ HVAC Filters

TIP 3 *Declutter*

Here’s a crazy thought. If you have less stuff, you have less stuff that needs to be cleaned. Yep. Very deep. But it’s valid, and there’s an entire movement called “Swedish death cleaning.” The idea is that if you declutter your world, your life (in this case, your cleaning) will run smoothly.

TIP 4 *Give Mother Earth a Break*

There are ways to clean up your home with a nod to the environment. When you declutter, recycle or donate your unwanted stuff. When you air out your home, open a window instead of buying chemical air fresheners. When you clean, use a little elbow grease instead of toxic chemicals. And when you replace a lightbulb, do it with an energy-efficient LED option.

TIP 5 *Spiff Up Your Energy Use Behaviors*

The final step in deep cleaning is to make sure you’re running it as energy efficiently as possible. Switch your ceiling fans to spin counterclockwise to create a cooling downdraft effect when the temps are high-ish.



Oh Tidings of
Comfort and Clean

Let’s be honest: No one will notice that your place is spic and span if they’re huddled around the A/C vent sweating. Let’s go from cleaning to comfortable in preparation for everything Midwest seasons have to offer.

Air Sealing

Getting control of the air that leaks in and out of your home is a cost-effective way to cut heating and cooling costs. You’ll also increase the comfort for you and your guests. **Caulking** and **weatherstripping** are two simple and effective practices that offer quick returns on investment. We’re talking often one year or less, mostly because it’s a very inexpensive approach, relatively speaking. This approach will also improve the durability of your HVAC system for both our relentlessly cruel summer and winter temps. Caulk is perfect for cracks around door and window frames. Weatherstripping, generally, is best for sealing components that move. Doors and windows are two great examples.



Insulation

It’s your heat. Protect it. If you want to maintain a level of comfort, the heat lost from our winter temps must be replaced by your heating system. Properly insulating your home will decrease this heat flow by providing an effective resistance to the flow of heat. And yes, we are aware that we used the word “flow” a lot in that sentence, but that’s what you really want.

To truly get control of the flow of your heat, your home should be properly insulated from roof to foundation. So, let’s start in the attic. If you have an unfinished attic, insulate between the floor joists. Next up? Move from your attic to adding insulation to your exterior walls. After that, tuck in your ducts. You can then move on to insulating your floors above unfinished spaces like your garage. Lastly, you can properly insulate your basement, foundation and crawlspaces.

One or some of these insulating tactics can give you control of your temps. Wait, wait. More accurately, one or some of these insulating tactics can give you control of your flow. It’s all about the flow.

Humidity Control

We will be using “humidity” moving forward as a public service. Controlling humidity can make your home more energy efficient, less costly to heat and cool, more comfortable and less prone to mold growth. Managing your humidity will improve the effectiveness of your **air sealing** and **insulation** efforts. In turn, these efforts will help control dampness. Proper **ventilation** should also be part of your efforts to control humidity.

Lastly, the easiest thing you can do to get your home ready for all of our crazy seasons? That’s simple. As a ComEd customer, you can uncover opportunities to reduce energy usage with a FREE energy assessment that includes free and discounted products for your home.

All the details are available at **ComEd.com/HES**. Following these tips could save you just enough to pay for next year’s deep cleaning extravaganza. And maybe you can even splurge and upgrade your cleaning caddy. We know. Crazy, right?



Cool gadgets

MAKE
BEING HOME
MORE ENJOYABLE

What's better than a new gadget that makes your home life better? How about a new gadget that brings you a bit of comfort? Read on for four unexpectedly awesome gadgets that give you greater control of your domain, from how you kick back to how you tidy up.



If you use your
**voice-activated
assistant**
20 to 30 times a day

If the phrase “Tech Head” has been used to describe you, these 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.

SMART LIGHTBULB:
ComEd.com/ShopandCompare

If 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. This new generation of wireless models offers a long-lasting battery that sips energy, drastically reducing charging time. So you save energy while you work up a sweat rehearsing for your next viral dance video.



If you want to **reduce waste** one banana peel at a time

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency **reports** that food waste is the single largest contributor to everyday trash. Your family member with the green thumb reports that they need fertilizer. Fortunately, there's a solution for both—the home compost bin. Whether you go with a sleek countertop model for the kitchen or 36-gallon behemoth in the backyard, the right compost bin will help you reduce waste while creating some nutrient-rich homemade fertilizer. That's a move that's good for your pocketbook and the planet.



If 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.

ADVANCED POWER STRIP:
ComEd.com/ShopandCompare

GEN

has earned the title of **Gen E**



That “E” is for the “environment.” For these folks, it’s a priority. According to the **Pew Research Center**, they’re more than willing to talk face-to-face about the needs of the environment—no screens required. This is even more impressive when you realize that this is the first generation to spend their entire lives in a digital world. Technology is more than second nature. Technology is fundamental to their existence.

TREND WATCH

When it comes to the planet, the numbers don't lie.

The very **same report** from the Pew Research Center reveals that 62% of Gen Z shoppers buy from sustainable brands. Even more surprising, 73% are willing to pay more for sustainable products. That survey also revealed that 67% of Gen Zers believe that the climate should be a top priority.

They make the environment part of who they are. Gen Z cares deeply about protecting the planet, more than any other generation.

And more than any other generation, they've taken personal action (such as donating money or volunteering) to help address causes they believe in.

67% of Gen Zers believe that the climate should be a top priority

Rules? What rules?

Gen Z has already experienced so much in their lives; the recession of 2008 and the pandemic of 2020 shaped their worldview. They were also primarily raised by Gen X to be independent and able to figure things out for themselves. This enables Gen Z to produce without constant reinforcement. All of this encourages them to question everything.



They will bring a fresh set of eyes and ask questions others may have avoided, like, "Why do we do it this way?" and "Why don't we challenge the status quo?" It's up to previous generations to listen and give them the opportunity to be tenacious, lead with passion and make a difference when it comes to the environment.

Their high-tech, highly efficient homes

The more aptly named Gen E prefers to live in an eco-friendly, energy-efficient home. They look for features that are kinder to the environment. That can be energy-efficient appliances, bamboo flooring and even recycled glass countertops.

There's an old saying in real estate that the three most important things about a property are "location, location, location." For Gen Z, it could be more like "efficiency, efficiency, efficiency."

This native digital generation was reared on tech, and they expect the technology in their homes to be as efficient as they are. For example, that means smart thermostats. These Wi-Fi-enabled devices automatically adjust the temperature in your home to save energy without sacrificing comfort. Some new users are intimidated by that level of intelligence in their homes. Not Gen Z.

CURIOUS
ABOUT SMART
THERMOSTATS ?

Learn more. Visit
ComEd.com/Appliance



TREND WATCH

This generation has lived with technology throughout their lives, and smart lighting and smart home security are welcome additions to their homes. That's a lot of technology. How does Gen Z solve that problem? With technology, of course.

They use a smart home hub. This "one device to rule them all" approach manages all your smart gadgets with one device or operating system. It's a one-stop solution for unifying connected gadgets so you can operate them from one app.

And on a more holistic view of home ownership, Gen Z sees the value in ENERGY STAR® certified NextGen homes. These advanced homes and apartments incorporate leading-edge energy efficiency technologies and electric vehicle (EV) charging capabilities to maximize energy and emissions savings. The NextGen home just fits their beliefs better.

Eco-friendly and on the move

Past generations have made their travel decisions based primarily on price.

Gen Z shifts that priority to support travel and hospitality companies that match their values. They research the companies, probably on their smartphones, to find organizations that support sustainable practices.

Their **daily travel choices** are also made with the environment in mind. This generation is open to simple, low-cost alternative forms of transportation like e-bikes, scooters and ridesharing.

And they are **more likely** to consider driving an EV. While an EV can save drivers 3 to 5 times the

cost of a gas-powered car, the environmental impact of this choice will appeal to many in Gen Z. These EVs produce zero tailpipe emissions, are cleaner than burning gasoline and will allow you to only need a gas station for the random squeegee windshield wipe-down.

Hold on to your hat

In short, this generation will look the status quo in the eye and not blink. They take action. They are values driven, socially conscious and unafraid. Armed with the latest technologies built to save energy, Gen Z has more tools at their disposal than any generation that has come before them. Combine that with the fact that Gen Z sees a technological world as their native world, and we have a group of people empowered to make a difference.

They're the brightest generational option when it comes to a cleaner, greener environment. And that's why Gen Z should really be called Gen E.

DID YOU KNOW?

ComEd trims approximately 9,000 miles of tree lines each year to improve electric reliability. 100% of our tree trimmings are recycled, including up to 60 cubic yards per week of approved plants and tree species that go toward feeding a wide array of animals at Brookfield Zoo, Lincoln Park Zoo and Phillips Park Zoo.





YOUR ENERGY. YOUR MONEY.

YOU'LL DEVOUR THESE DELICIOUS AND ENERGY-EFFICIENT RECIPES.

Give your traditional oven a rest and lean on your microwave or slow cooker and save. By substituting your microwave or slow cooker for your conventional oven, you use significantly less energy. Big on flavor, small on electricity consumption—these cooking options will win over taste buds and energy bills by using smaller appliances that use less electricity than a traditional oven. Pretty tasty, right?

Microwave Super-Fast Breakfast Burrito

RECIPE CREDIT: COOKIN' WITH KILOWATTS

Yes, you could go to a high-end breakfast place, wait in line and do your best to charm the waitstaff—and you'd still not hit the culinary sweet spot that this surefire morning hit has. You save energy. You save time. And you only have to spend your charm on the family dog, who can be a surprisingly tough audience.

INGREDIENTS:

2 SLICES OF BACON

1 EGG

1 TORTILLA

¼ CUP SHREDDED CHEESE

SERVE WITH:

SALSA OR HOT SAUCE

INSTRUCTIONS:

STEP 1. Place bacon on a plate between a double layer of paper towels and microwave for 2 minutes or until it reaches desired crispiness. It will continue to crisp after cooking. Set aside.

STEP 2. Crack the egg into a 4-inch ramekin. Add milk and use a fork to scramble. Cover with a small plate and microwave for 90 seconds. Set aside.

STEP 3. Place tortilla on a plate, sprinkle cheese on top and microwave 10–15 seconds until cheese is melted.

STEP 4. Top the tortilla with cooked egg, bacon and salsa or hot sauce as desired.

WRAP AND ENJOY.



Can't go wrong with
a cheddar-jack mix.



Jibarito Plantain and Steak Sandwich

RECIPE CREDIT: IMMACULATE BITES

Sure, we love bread. Who doesn't? But we'd put this bread-free option up against other gluten-filled options in your kitchen any day. Plus, this Puerto Rican hometown hero (no sandwich pun intended) might have hints of the Caribbean, but the jibarito originated right here in Humboldt Park. Consider it your civic duty to enjoy it. Get it to your mouth even faster with an induction cooktop.

INGREDIENTS:

2-3 LARGE GREEN PLANTAINS
OIL FOR DEEP FRYING
½-1 POUND THINLY SLICED STEAK
1 TABLESPOON SAZON SEASONING
1 TEASPOON CUMIN
1 TEASPOON OREGANO
1 TEASPOON WHITE VINEGAR
1 TABLESPOON OLIVE OIL

INSTRUCTIONS:

STEP 1. Cut plantains in half and fry in 2-3 inches of oil on medium heat for 3-4 minutes on each side. Remove from oil and flatten to about 1/4-inch thick. Refry until golden (about 2-3 minutes). Season with salt and pepper.

STEP 2. Season steak with remaining ingredients and set aside. Heat skillet on medium with 1-2 tablespoons of oil. Once the oil is hot (within minutes on an induction cooktop), add the steak and fry each side for 2-3 minutes. Remove from pan.

STEP 3. Assemble and enjoy. Spread spicy mayo on the fried plantain. Add tomatoes, onions, steak, lettuce and cheese. Top with another plantain and savor.

SERVE WITH:

SPICY MAYO AND TOP WITH TOMATO, ONION, LETTUCE AND CHEESE.

Slow Cooker Balsamic Pork Tenderloin Awesomeness

RECIPE CREDIT: ADD A PINCH

If two of your favorite things are eating and doing nothing, then this may be the greatest recipe on the planet—which will also help save the planet via your energy-friendly slow cooker.

If done right, these fall-apart, crazy-tender tenderloins will make you slow cooker royalty.

INGREDIENTS:

1 2- TO 3-POUND BONELESS PORK TENDERLOIN
1 CUP CHICKEN STOCK OR BROTH
½ CUP BALSAMIC VINEGAR
1 TABLESPOON WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE
1 TABLESPOON SOY SAUCE OR COCONUT AMINOS
1 TABLESPOON HONEY
½ TEASPOON RED PEPPER FLAKES
2 CLOVES GARLIC, CHOPPED

INSTRUCTIONS:

STEP 1. Place pork tenderloin into the insert of your slow cooker. In a 2-cup measuring cup, mix all remaining ingredients. Pour over pork and set the timer for your slow cooker (6-8 hours on low).

STEP 2. Once pork tenderloin has cooked, remove it from the slow cooker with tongs onto a serving dish. Break apart lightly with two forks and then ladle about ¼-½ cup of gravy over pork tenderloin. Be warned—you may need a big, slotted spoon to transfer from pot to plate. It's that tender—and that delicious. It serves eight adults or four teenage boys. Totally your call.

Fancy honey dipper is optional. But worth it.

Rice Cooker Chocolate Upside-Down Cake

RECIPE CREDIT: FOOD.COM | VEGAN-FRIENDLY RECIPE

Traditionally, a rice cooker was meant for healthy, nutritious, decadence-free fare. Until now. It's time to transform your rice cooker into a contraption that would make a pastry chef jealous. Just properly clean your rice cooker after this recipe or your rice may taste like chocolate. Wait. Maybe we have two recipes here.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ½ CUPS ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR
- ½ CUP RAW OR WHITE SUGAR
- 4 TABLESPOONS DARK COCOA POWDER
- 1 TEASPOON BAKING SODA
- ½ TEASPOON SALT
- ½ TEASPOON CINNAMON
- ¼ TEASPOON BAKING POWDER
- 90ml VEGETABLE OIL
- ½ TEASPOON VANILLA
- 1 TABLESPOON VINEGAR
- 1 CUP WATER

SERVE WITH: POWDERED SUGAR, BERRIES OR ANY OTHER DESIRED TOPPINGS

INSTRUCTIONS:

- STEP 1.** Add flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking soda, salt (optional) and cinnamon into a bowl. Mix all dry items with a whisk.
- STEP 2.** Add the wet ingredients to the bowl—oil, vanilla, vinegar and water. Mix again. Pour mixture into the rice cooker.
- STEP 3.** Cook in your rice cooker for 30 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean to test the cake. Bring the bowl out of the rice cooker and cool for 5 minutes.
- FLIP THE CAKE TO TOP WITH BERRIES, POWDERED SUGAR OR OTHER SWEET GARNISH OF YOUR CHOOSING.**



TIME FOR AN IN(TRO)DUCTION

You've got four new must-try dishes. Why not add a little efficiency to the mix? We're talking about induction cooking, and once you know how it works, we're pretty sure you'll be drawn to it. And not just because of its electromagnetic energy—though that helps.

Science-fiction-like safety

Unlike your typical electric stovetop that heats glass burners, induction cooktops heat only your cookware. In this case, compatible stainless steel and cast-iron pans. With nothing lost in the heat transfer process, that safety also equals energy savings.

Speedy sips

For caffeine lovers, no matter if you're from Wicker Park or Downers Grove, it's all about getting the day's first cup in record time. Induction cooktops bring water to a boil 2 to 3 times faster than their gas counterparts. A steaming kettle that's good for your mood and your monthly energy costs? We'll take two cups.

Quick cleanup

The bigger the mess, the better the meal, right? Not so much here. With no grates, dials or burners, spills and splashes are easily wiped up once each masterful meal is complete. We will admit that this does ruin your "I'll clean that spill up once things cool down" excuse.

Meet electric's cooler, younger cousin

Induction and electric cooktops are both powered by electricity, but their similarities pretty much end there.

Speed—Induction heats water **20–40% faster** than standard electric

Safety—It takes standard electric **10 minutes** or more to cool down after cooking, while induction remains cool throughout

Savings—Induction is up to **10% more efficient** than standard electric, plus ComEd offers a **\$100 induction rebate** on select models

Learn more. Visit
ComEd.com/Appliance

Source: consumerreports.org

Safer cooking? Sounds delicious.

Faster cooking and less mess on a surface that doesn't get hot sounds like a no-brainer. Plus, induction cooktops use about 18% less energy than standard cooking models.

With a **\$100 rebate** on select models, ComEd makes it even easier to bring this safe, energy-saving innovation to your kitchen. Considering all-electric living? You could **save \$150** on an induction cooktop.



Learn more at [ComEd.com/Cooktops](https://www.comed.com/Cooktops) or scan the QR code.

Terms and conditions apply. Offers are subject to change. Rebates are available exclusively to qualified ComEd residential customers. The ComEd Energy Efficiency Program is funded in compliance with state law.
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WISE MOVES

BIG IMPACTS

How tiny, ordinary changes can lead to remarkable results

Despite the likely **6 billion Earth-like planets** in our galaxy. Despite the observable universe containing around 300 sextillion stars. Your presence here on planet Earth is significant. In fact, your actions can overcome these—quite literally—astronomical numbers by making even the smallest changes. This kind of thinking may seem counterintuitive. It may not make good math, but it does make a difference.

The truth is, every one of us is capable of being a force for good. And we're here to help you find those little things—energy efficiency and otherwise—that aren't so little once you begin to add them up. Speaking of adding things up, we didn't even know sextillion was a number. Turns out it is. And that number contains a boatload of zeros—21, actually.

Let's get real

We're here to deliver practical, pragmatic information that will give you useful, actionable ideas. For starters, consider this: A small act like changing the air filter in your heating and cooling system isn't in itself huge. Buying one advanced power strip will not result in the world throwing you a parade. The cynic will say, "That's just a drop in the bucket." And they are right. But it all really depends on the drop and the bucket. We'll help you find some acts that can collectively make the largest impact.

And never forget the value of the drop. A constant drip, over time and with dogged persistence, can drill a hole through a rock. So, let's start drilling holes.

Good acts at home

Now that we've used them as an example, let's talk air filters. You may just change the filter so your HVAC system can run more efficiently. And that's good. A clean one can lower your air conditioner's energy consumption by **5% to 15%**. That's drop one.

That clean filter can also improve the air quality in your home. Drop two. The cleaner air quality can result in a cleaner home. Drop three. That means you won't have to dust so often. And not dusting is a lot like weeding a garden or showering—people only notice if you don't do it.

SMALL ACTS.

BIG

CHANGES

“

Studies have shown that performing acts of kindness can not only boost your mental health but your physical well-being as well.”

Getting back to air quality. A clean filter can promote good health for everyone in your home, especially children and older adults. That can result in fewer allergic reactions, fewer trips to the pharmacy and fewer trips to the doctor. Drop, drop, drop. So, in conclusion, good acts add up, and every time you must unnecessarily dust, you lose a little part of who you are as a human being. And no one wants that. So, it's just one filter, but it really isn't. It has a ripple effect of benefits.

And think of changing from incandescent lightbulbs to LEDs. If that isn't the smallest deed you can do for your home, it is at least in the top five of small actions you can do for your home. An LED does so much more than light a room. These contraptions last longer. Today's LED bulbs can last up to 15 times longer than traditional

bulbs. They are also cooler to the touch than traditional bulbs, reducing the risk of catching anything on fire. And, most importantly, they use less energy. Not a big deal until you see it through a larger lens, specifically a national lens. The U.S. Department of Energy projects that the energy saved by a national switch to LEDs could equal **348 terawatt-hours by 2027**. That's enough to power 33,810 homes for one year.

Many of these small acts of efficiency can be accomplished with a free **home energy savings assessment** for the folks who qualify. From checking for insulation levels and air leakage to installing efficient-flow showerheads and hot water pipe insulation, we can help you turn your home into the center of the energy efficiency universe.



Good acts for yourself

Now, some might initially think that a good deed for yourself is selfish. They may think any action you take that helps yourself disqualifies that deed from being “good.” It’s not that they’re wrong. It’s just that they may be missing something. You must take care of yourself before you can care for others. So, let’s start viewing actions for yourself as nothing short of generous. With that in mind, consider something as simple as recycling. Or taking a long walk outside and collecting any litter you find. You’ll improve the look of your neighborhood (good for your community) and get a nice hit of dopamine (good for you).

The science behind good deeds is impressive. Studies have shown that performing acts of kindness can not only boost your mental health but your physical well-being as well. Good acts in a crisis, for example, give you what’s been termed a “Helper’s High,” with surges of dopamine and endorphins flooding your brain. And here’s an amazing one: **Medical studies** have discovered that people who perform good deeds have more immunoglobulin A—an antibody that fights off infection. Yes, displays of compassion can give you a super immune system. No, you will not be asked to star in an epic superhero movie featuring you and your magical abilities. Good acts can do a lot, but let’s not start overpromising here.

This potential change in your life will create good energy. You’ll start seeing the world differently, and people will start seeing you differently through your actions. And have we mentioned how you can change your filter and dust less? Not dusting should be one of your favorite deeds for yourself and your super-charged immunity.

GOOD ACTS AT WORK



There’s no need to stop doing good deeds when you head out to your place of employment. You could bring doughnuts, put the dishes in the dishwasher, thank someone for their help and praise folks for their accomplishments. Since we’re being all science-y, **another study** found that good deeds in the workplace can lead to increased communication, better teamwork, a boost in creativity and an overall sense of fulfillment. Not a bad return for doing a little good.

And your good deeds can also help your company succeed when you introduce **energy efficiency programs** into your business—because saving energy and money at work could give your profitability a boost. And your comfort. And your ambiance. No matter how much money you save with an energy efficiency improvement or two, still bring doughnuts. Because doughnuts.



ENERGY

Good acts for others

This is easily our favorite of all the deed categories because these are the deeds that have an exponential effect. It's also so enjoyable because you will never know the good you've really done. You could donate clothes and toys to charity or give books to little free libraries or volunteer at the local nonprofit. It'll change your outlook and really make quite a difference.

Holding the door open for a stranger could be the tipping point on a complete turnaround in their day. Letting a random driver merge into your lane might make their commute. Paying for the meal of the person behind you in line at that burger joint may relieve some financial stress. Now, here's the cool part: Your good energy is designed to be contagious. And the results are exponential.

The results

Your acts may be small, but your influence is great. You may see it as only a drop in the bucket, but consider the drop and the bucket. Good acts in your home and your life contribute to goodness in a much larger world. Start with your home.

ComEd offers lots of programs that can result in good acts. Getting a free **home energy savings assessment** (yes, we are plugging it twice—it's that good) can help you save money. Customer Seth M. says, "I discovered so many things today that will help me be smarter with my energy." Great things often start with small acts. These small acts join other small acts to form a tidal wave of positive change. And that wave will leave stronger, more sustainable communities in its wake.



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Energy Efficiency

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Visit **ComEd.com/HomeProducts** or call 855-433-2700 to learn more. See if you qualify for higher rebate amounts.

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YOU'VE GOT THIS

LEAVE YOUR (THERMOSTAT) WORRIES BEHIND



It's your home. It should be a place where you can focus on family and friends, not thermostats. Luckily, technology is getting smarter—and the new smart thermostats are downright geniuses. Fortunately for us humans, it doesn't take a brainiac to benefit from a smart thermostat to increase your home's comfort and reduce energy use.

19.6 million users can't be wrong

According to S&P Global Market Intelligence, 19.6 million smart thermostats were installed in the U.S. by the end of 2023—something that helped the nation use 1.4% less energy on heating and cooling than it otherwise would have. That may not sound like much, but considering that almost half of all the energy you use at home goes to heating and cooling, it really adds up.

This trend will only accelerate. The number of installed smart thermostats is expected to reach **38.3 million** in 2026, saving up to 15.5 terawatt hours of electricity—equivalent to the CO₂ emissions from powering 1,412,095 homes for a year. That's a lot of savings for you and your family.

YOU'VE GOT THIS

Turn up the convenience—and the benefits

Cutting your home's energy use and saving money is easy with a smart thermostat. These Wi-Fi-enabled devices learn your family's heating and cooling preferences and can automatically adjust your home's temperature based on that learning.

You may be thinking, "That sounds great, but what does that really mean for me?" Glad you asked. Let's say you're someone who likes to keep the temperature cooler at night for sleeping but someone else in your home prefers it nice and warm when you get out of bed in the morning. Your smart thermostat can do that for you. And if you normally turn the heat down before you head out for work, your thermostat will learn that, too. You get comfort and savings, without having to lift a finger. Pretty neat.

Smart thermostats also let you control your home's temperature on the go using a mobile device.

Imagine your family from Florida is arriving at your home for a visit while you're still at



the office. Your thermostat is normally at an energy-saving setting while no one's home. Do you want to spend the evening listening to a debate about your home's comfort? Forget about it. With a smart thermostat, you can quickly and easily tweak the temperature from your mobile device. Crisis averted.

Or say you're halfway to Lake Geneva for a summer getaway when someone in your family reminds you that you forgot to turn the thermostat up a few degrees to save some money. In a flash, you can raise the temperature and get back to planning your day on the lake.

A word to the wise. There's a big difference between a smart thermostat and a programmable thermostat. While the two can do many of the same things, you have to manually enter all the settings in a programmable thermostat yourself. In other words, you

or someone in your family will have to program it. Not so with a smart thermostat. It learns your preferences and does the work for you.

Save. Then, after you save, save some more.

When you're ready to purchase an ENERGY STAR® smart thermostat of your own, you can **get a \$75 rebate** from ComEd. You'll keep saving for years to come thanks to reduced energy use.

Not a DIYer? Not a problem.

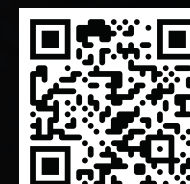
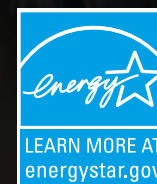
While the handiest member of your family may be able to install your smart thermostat on their own, it's even easier to have a pro do it for you. Bonus: You won't have to debate who the handiest member of your family is. Take a look at ComEd's **Home Energy Savings** to see how you can get a smart thermostat installed at little or no cost to you—while discovering even more ways to save on energy costs.



Energy Efficiency

Create a home full of savings.

Whether you rent or own, reducing energy costs is now easier than ever. Complete a **FREE energy assessment** and you can receive free or discounted energy-saving products such as certified LEDs, smart thermostats and more.



Learn more at ComEd.com/HomeEnergySavings or scan the QR code.

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WHO DID IT BEST?

SUPER SCOTT IMPROVES Superdawg®

There are folks with “big personalities,” and then there’s Scott Berman. Berman’s personality is so big that he could have been 15 minutes late to tell us his story, and his personality would still be on time. In short, Scott is a passionate man. You may think that’s odd—a person who’s passionate about hot dogs. And he is.

But it goes much deeper than that.

We sat down with Berman to find out what makes him tick—and what you can learn from his experience when it comes to your passion and energy efficiency.

From the look on your face, I can see you have a story to tell.

It is a good story. My mother and father, they were from the same neighborhood in Chicago, Albany Park, and met in the local high school when they were 14 years old.

My father, Maurie Berman, and my mother, Florence Miska, dated all through high school. They went to prom together. They were sweethearts. After my father graduated high school, he went off to World War II and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. When he came back, he married my mother in 1947. They both decided to go to Northwestern University. To earn money and supplement the GI Bill, they opened Superdawg as a summer-only hot dog stand. We still call it the stand.

They graduated in 1950 and my mother became a teacher and my father became a CPA, and they looked at each other and said, “It’s more fun owning Superdawg than accounting or teaching.” So, they opened Superdawg year-round. I coincidentally was born in that same year.

So, that version of Superdawg is precisely as old as you are.

Oh yes, exactly. The building they built in 1948 is still the building that we operate out of. They placed two Superdawgs characters that they designed on the roof just a few days before we opened. And these were papier-mâché, and they still are. Twelve feet tall, he is named Maurie, my father’s name, and she is named Flaurie, which is the name my dad always called my mom.

And that is the origin of Superdawg, but it’s really the story of my mother and father. Building this business together, enjoying it all the time, never retiring, treating it as both business and hobby. My mother was honored by Northwestern Alumni Magazine about 20 years ago. When they put her on the cover, they said she was one of the early women entrepreneurs of Chicago. My mom and dad were partners in every way.

They brought romance back to hot dogs.

There you go. Absolutely true. Take a look at the photos, and you’ll see the looks on their faces—my mom and dad longingly looking at each other.

They didn’t talk about their income, or the number of locations, or the number of employees.

Right, but our staff was, and still is, the heartbeat of our business. Many are related to each other and have been with us for decades. Our mom and

dad always said that a paycheck to our staff is a thank you for helping us in our endeavor.

They always thought of it that way and they always worked along with our staff.

They lived long into their 90s. My mother was answering the switchboard in her 90s and my father was there in the kitchen. We’re a family business that my mother and father were passionately involved in every day. I remember that as soon as I was able to, I wanted to work. At 8 or 9 years old, I was tall enough to reach the pop machine, so I helped put the drinks up on the counter for the customers. We continue to own Superdawg as a family business with my sister Lisa, my brother-in-law Don, and my daughter Laura.

Seems like you’ve made two things a priority: Treating your customers well and training your employees well.

100%. From the beginning, my parents said they didn’t just want to be another hot dog stand. Our Superdawgs are made with our special recipe and served with fresh-cut Superfries in special print boxes.

Our purveyors know we want a certain taste of mustard, relish, onion, pickle, sport peppers and pickled tomatoes.

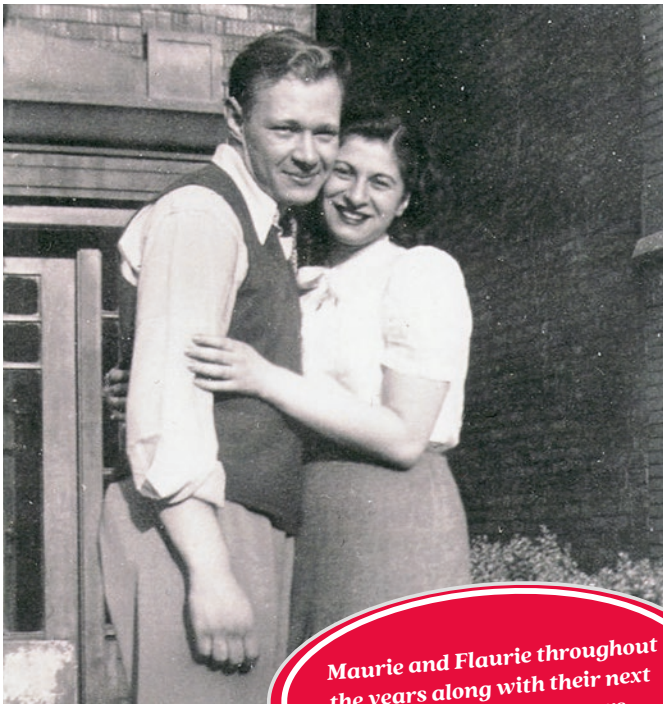
I’m so glad you didn’t mention ketchup. We know to never put ketchup on a hot dog.

All of your responses from the moment we started talking about the product focus on attention to detail, down to the box. Did that help you when you started getting into energy efficiency?

One of the things we’re famous for is the neon that my parents put on the building in 1948 and continues to this day. Also, our lit canopies surround the building and the parking lot, so there’s a lot of electricity that we use.



WHO DID IT BEST?



Maurie and Flaurie throughout the years along with their next generation of energy savers.



We want those lights to be of a certain brightness under the canopies. But it doesn't blind you and doesn't shine in your eyes. We are an old-fashioned drive-in. Those menu housings that people press the button and talk to us on are also illuminated beautifully. So yes, electricity not only powers the building but it powers our image.

How did the whole energy efficiency upgrade thing start?

It came from ComEd. It was a wonderful thing. So many ComEd people are customers of ours, and I think they know how brightly lit we are and how important lighting is to us.

That appeals to a business focused on those details, and you guys are a detail business, so it seemed like a really natural fit.

It was—no doubt about it. As soon as they called, there was no second thought. But we didn't want anything to look different. And they assured us with lots of testing that each energy-efficient light would look exactly as it looked before. ComEd would change bulbs in our presence and say, "How about this one? How about that one?" so we could all get the light quality right, and we were thrilled.

We wanted it to look the same as it always had. That was very important. We wanted the neon to glow as it always had. So, the ComEd people understood all of that, and they were respectful in our relamping and energy efficiency moves throughout both our Superdawg Drive-Ins.

How did the upgrade affect your business during that time?

There was nothing ComEd did that interrupted our business. They were very sensitive to that. They said when they began, "Nothing we do will interrupt one car." And that was absolutely true.



“The investment and ROI were great, and we knew about them on day one.

Sounds like a good collaboration and painless installation. Tell us about the results.

We couldn't be happier. Every single thing is perfect. The lighting in the kitchen is better. Everything is brighter without having changed the quality of light. The lighting in the back rooms is better. The lighting in our 15,000 square foot warehouse is better and brighter. And the menu housings are more readable. Every single thing is brighter without having changed the nature of the lighting.

You saw the difference in your warehouse. You saw the difference in your restaurants. Did you see the difference in your bill?

Yes, of course. Our ComEd bills are significantly lower. There was a significant percentage drop on day one after the conversion.

When did this investment pay for itself?

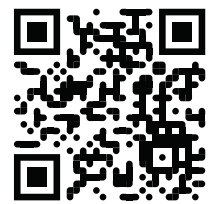
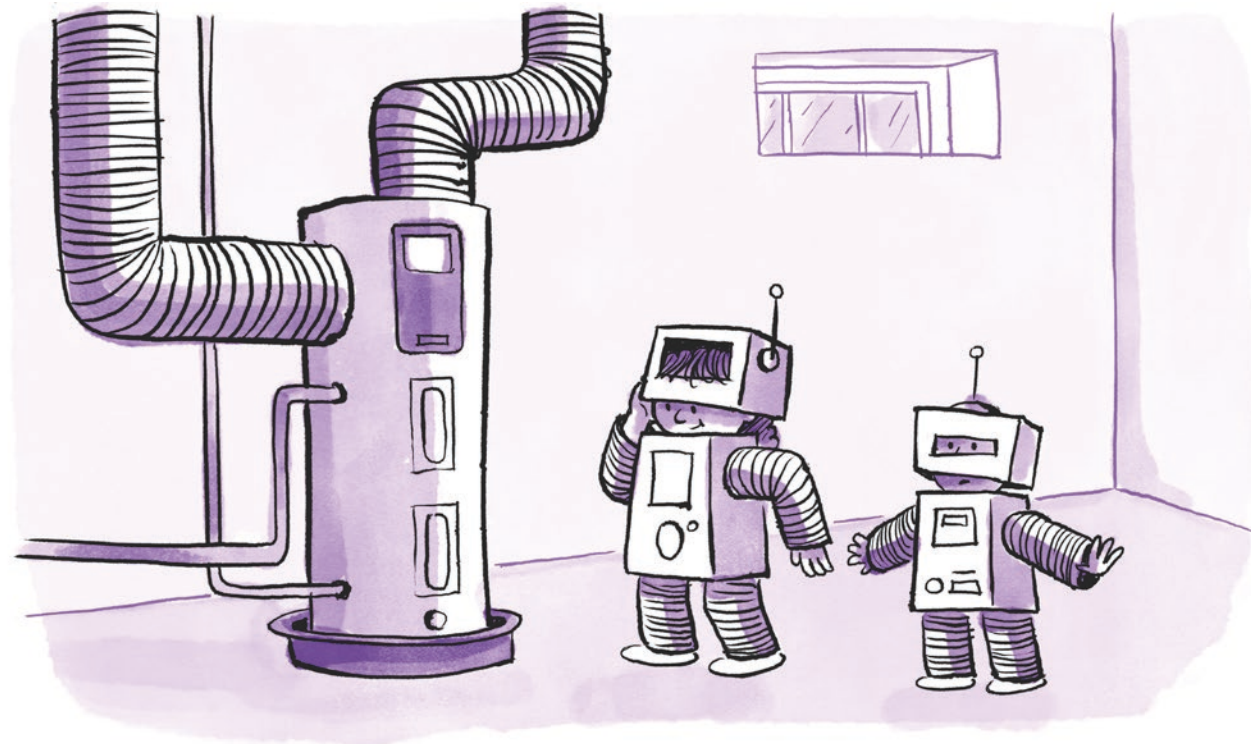
The investment and ROI were great. From day one, the amount of the investment was minimal compared to the amount of savings. And ever since then, there's been that constant level of savings from what it had been for 70 years prior.

Learn more about facility assessments at ComEd.com/SmallBiz

{ And what advice would you give to a businessperson considering this? }
Big thumbs up. Do it in a minute. There is no downside to this.

COMIC CONVERSATION

CAPTION THIS!



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