

In Indonesia it is very expensive to "up" the wattage so you may want to check that first. The same goes for installing a telephone. Especially outside Jakarta, rents are usually paid by the year and very often it is possible to come to an agreement with the landlord about electricity and telephone.

Another factor which is hard to change is your general location and neighborhood. Social differences being as extreme as they are in Indonesia, it is wise to consider what kind of neighborhood you are moving into, especially if you have older children. We once had a nice house but too close to a kampung (poor) area. After the novelty of having white people in the neighborhood wore off, the poorer, ignorant kampung children made it very hard on our children; so much so, that they could hardly play in their own yard! This doesn't happen among educated, middle and upper class Indonesians. You will often find beautiful new houses very close to, or right next to, the huts of the poor. This, naturally does not improve socio-relations.

In our next home, we were happy to find a more "homogeneous" almost middle-class neighborhood where our children were able to mingle freely, make friends and learn the language.

You might also find it worthwhile to check the proximity of the markets, shops and transportation centers.

A few last household hints which can prove to be a blessing: spraying and mattresses. It is a good idea to spray your house regularly, like 1x a month for a big house and every 2 months for a small house. You can find a reliable, professional pest-control company listed in the Yellow Pages. (The local fellas will obligingly spray with a mixture of chalk and water for you.)

Spraying the whole house like this will eliminate most of your problems with cockroaches, ants and mosquitoes. Provided, of course, your house is screened in as well. Be sure to give everybody advance warning and take the children out for the duration and thereafter.

In our house we used foam rubber mattresses because kapok which is actually healthier, needs to be aired frequently in the sun, or else it gets lumpy and prone to bed-bugs, etc. We use absorbant bed-pads to soak up the sweat as foam rubber doesn't do this. The bed-pads get washed weekly. Be sure that there is proper air circulation under the mattress by having the mattress a minimum of 15 cm. off the floor and on wooden planks which have slots between them, or else on a solid board with holes in it.

For making house improvements, labor is very cheap here and you can hire carpenters, painters, etc. by the day (Rp1500--Rp 3000) depending on where you are. But you must supervise them very closely, especially if you have them do something which--to their way of thinking--is out of the ordinary.

You will find that, with just a bit of effort, living in the Tropics can be just as convenient if not more so, than what you were used to in the West. "He never takes anything away from you but He gives you something better."



Love,
Ben and Mirjam Dutch
May 28, 1982
Jakarta, Indonesia

Keeping Comfy

There are some rooms where the thermostat can very well be turned down to 70° or less, but not the room where you plan to relax in the evening. There are some places in your house, in fact, where you don't need to have any heat at all, and where the lack of heat is no sacrifice.

Different rooms have different uses in the average home, and what would be too warm for one activity isn't warm enough for another. The ideal answer is a heating system that can be fine-tuned, sending different amounts of heat to different places.

The old-fashioned custom among the wealthy — a little fireplace in each bedroom — was an early variation on the zone-heating theme. One of the servants would go upstairs and light each fire a half hour before bedtime to take off the chill. Later, as the fire died down and the room cooled, the occupant was asleep and wasn't made uncomfortable. Getting up in the morning could be a chilly unless the servant crew was instructed to kindle new fires before the folks woke up.

Thermostat: The Key to Savings

Thermostats, where they are in your home, and how you set them, can be instrumental in deciding the size of your winter's fuel bill.

Separate thermostats in bedrooms will save on winter bills. You can, in fact, go as low as 15°C, and still find ways to keep warm in bed, even without an electric blanket.

When you'll be out for an evening, turn down the thermostats. If you'll be away for a weekend or more, lower the thermostats to 5°C, or to the lowest temperature setting before "off." You'll save on heating without changing a freezeup of your water pipes.

When you can shut your house for a few days or more, you'll save a little on the operation of the refrigerator and freezer, which won't need to work so hard to maintain their cool.

How low can your home thermostats be set? We've gotten accustomed to 22° C, as a comfortable norm. Reduce the heat just one degree at a time and try it for a week. Each 1/2 degree drop means about a 3 percent reduction in your fuel bill and — gradually — you might be able to go down three or even four degrees comfortably and save a chunk of money.

Try turning down the thermostats five to ten degrees at night, and then cranking them up again in the morning when the coffee is heating. If you can get used to that, you'll save five to ten percent of your heating bill.

Do you need to talk yourself into a lower thermostat setting? Here's an argument. Your plants are healthier in the cooler air.

The health of your plants isn't in the same discussion with your personal comfort? All right, you'll be healthier in the cooler air. Your body will burn a few more calories keeping you warm, thereby helping you to lose the weight you wanted to lose anyway, to improve your

general health

When it's time to open the windows for a little fresh air indoors in the spring, remember to turn down the thermostats. Those cool breezes that feel so good will send your furnace on a fuel burning rampage unless the thermostats are reset.

Planning a good-sized party? Turn the thermostats down. Each guest is the equivalent of a 175-watt heater, and the gang will warm up the place without the furnace or the heating units in operation.

HOUSEPLANTS HELP

We count on houseplants to provide the extra humidity we need in the winter. The natural respiration of the plants, plus evaporation from the flowerpots, provides enough additional moisture to turnspinning humidity when you to eliminate the dry-throat problem. We have a few, but only ferns we had experienced in the mostly on the broad-leaved nasturtium, and to keep the furniture lives and different kinds of ferns from falling apart. The moist air that demands little attention and feels warmer (it isn't the heat, it's the maximum pleasure).

Economical Lighting

Want to slow down that spinning electric meter? Be careful how you use lights in your home. Here are three ways.

1. Use high wattage reading lamps for reading. Candles or 25 watt bulbs offer plenty of light for evening conversation, create a pleasant mood for talking, and will reduce electric bills.

2. When you have a choice between incandescent light bulbs and fluorescent tubes, choose the tubes. They use much less power for the same amount of light. You don't like that ghostly blue tone they put out? Check your store for the newer, warm tone tubes that are much more flattering, and closer to a daylight radiance.

3. Dark walls and ceilings may be dramatic, but they absorb light. Pastels or white on walls and ceilings will give maximum illumination with fewer light fixtures burning in the evening, and will make a room with drapes open pleasantly light without electricity during daylight hours.

Speaking of Drapes

By closing drapes and shades at night, you can cut your heat bill by as much as 16 percent. Pull them back during the day, of course, for free light and heat.

In fact, you'll do well to install your drapery rods well over the wall on each side of windows to gain full light and heat benefit by putting drapes all the way off the windows during daylight.

Because those drapes are important at night when they are pulled to minimize heat loss and cut drafts, we recommend heavy drapery material, or lined drapes.

Courtesy '547 EASY WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY IN YOUR HOME', by Roger Albright, pub. 1977 Garden Way Publishing, Vermont.

Check Your Driving Habits

Courtesy '547 EASY WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY'. Your driving habits are a key to economical operation of your car. The place to begin understanding those habits is with a miles-per-gallon record that will take the guesswork out of driving economy.

The first place to apply that mpg record is in the regular trips you make, as in driving to work. You may be following a traffic flow, or going by what you think is the shortest way, but that may not be the cheapest route. If there are alternative ways from home to job, or any other regular destination, take the trouble to check them out for mileage efficiency. You may wind up going a new way.

The reason an alternative route may be less costly is that your car operates most efficiently at a steady speed. If the shorter route has lots of stops and starts it probably will burn more gas than a longer way around that lets you keep an even pace.

The other way to get there may have fewer stoplights. Good. With your engine idling you'll burn a gallon of gas in fifty minutes, going nowhere. Lots of zero-miles-per-gallon waiting at stoplights and stop signs can be expensive over the course of a year. Have the right change ready at toll booths on your way for minimum waiting time.

The most economical driving in any car is when you are just feeding enough gas to maintain momentum at a steady speed on the level. Build up that momentum in as relaxed a way as you can, consistent with the traffic flow. That means easy starts away from your driveway, away from the traffic lights — every time you are accelerating.

Remember, every time you touch the brakes you are paying to reduce the momentum that cost so much to build up. Watch the traffic signs and ease off gradually instead of having to use your brakes to get to a slower speed.

Tailgating — driving too close to the guy in front — puts your driving pace at the mercy of his whims. As a tailgater you'll be alternately braking and pumping gas as you respond to the forward driver's perception of the road, which is different from yours. Tailgating is not only hazardous, it's expensive.

A quick jab at the gas pedal, or pumping the pedal, squirts raw gas into the engine's combustion system. Trying to get started, you can flood your engine that way, as you have probably already discovered. A smooth, steady pressure on the gas pedal is always a money-saver.

When you're approaching an uphill climb, there's a money-saving technique to use. Build up a little extra momentum as you approach the base, then keep it steady or even ease off a little as you are climbing. Trying to add speed as you are climbing a hill is one of the most expensive maneuvers you can devise. If you're driving a low-horsepower car uphill, be prepared to downshift rather than feed more gas in high gear. It's cheaper.

If you have a choice when you are traveling, make your stops on a downhill slope. Starting from scratch is much cheaper when you're rolling downhill.

Resist the temptation to coast on a long downhill. In many states this practice is illegal, and for good reasons: it's dangerous. When coasting, you don't have the control of your car that is possible with the engine engaged. Your brakes can overheat and fade away; you run the hazard of locking your steering wheel in some cars, and you'll save very little gas. When going downhill leave the engine engaged, but take your foot off the gas, or touch the pedal on so lightly.

Ease off on the speed. A car that gets forty miles per gallon at forty miles an hour might get as little as twenty-five miles per gallon at seventy. A ten-mile trip flat-out at sixty will take ten minutes. It will only take two minutes longer at fifty, and that kind of difference can be blown away at a stoplight, or looking for a place to park.

In the winter, start off slowly in a cold car. All the lubricants are like molasses for a mile or two. They'll loosen up, and then your engine won't need to work so hard to keep you moving at highway speed. A short warm-up of the engine before starting can also help reduce engine wear, since the first ten minutes are the hardest wearing — especially in cold weather.

How to Stretch a Tank of Gas

You can get 6 to 20 percent better mpg with a properly tuned engine. Keeping a mileage record will tell you when your mpg is slipping, which is a signal for a tune-up.

There are a few items you can take care of easily without going to a garage. One of them is the air filter. A clogged air filter leaves your engine gasping for breath, and means you're probably running with a "rich" mixture, that is, more gas and less air. Many chain and auto stores carry air filters and they are simple to change. A clogged air filter can cost you 1 mpg. Fix it.

If your fan belt is too tight, your engine is working too hard and wasting gas. The belt should give a little to finger pressure when the engine is not running. If it doesn't, the adjustment is easy to make with a wrench.

Badly worn spark plugs can cost you as much as 2 mpg. You'll need a special wrench to remove the spark plugs for inspection, and when you get them out you may not know a good one from a bad one. This is probably a job for a trained technician. If you decide to check the plugs yourself, be sure you mark the leads to the distributor cap before taking them off the plugs, so you can get them back on in the proper order.

A CHEAP START

Followed by a downhill stretch of road before we hit much traffic with the standard transmission we have, there are times in the winter when we start rolling, rather than cranking the engine and pumping gas to get started.

EASY CHAMP

Let's take a look at the tires. Your owner's manual has important information on your tires, including the air pressure that should be in them. Underinflation or overinflation can cost you as much as one mile per gallon, be planned for minimum mileage

overinflation will wear the tires out sooner. You can buy a small pressure gauge and check the pressure yourself from time to time more accurately than the reading on the gas station air pump. MAKE A LIST We live about twenty-five miles from town, so we make lists before we go shopping. It's a pain in the neck to get back home and discover we've forgotten something. The house-hold shopping list is an excellent idea. It not only cuts down the number of shopping trips, but also makes each trip one that can be planned for minimum mileage