

Pinecrest

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Take a 'Spin on the Energy Wheel'

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The "Energy Wheel" is a handy tool I give to others so they can calculate how much electricity is used in the average home. For those of you who haven't seen the Energy Wheel, read on and

do some calculations of your own.

First, some basic definitions. A kilowatt is 1,000 watts of energy. A kilowatt-hour (kWh) is equal to 1,000 watts of power used for one hour. That's equal to a 100-watt incandescent bulb operating for 10 hours. A BTU (British Thermal Unit) is one kilowatt-hour of electricity, equal to 3,413 BTUs. One unit of horsepower is equal to 746 watts.

Let's start with the electric power you're using in your kitchen. Your dishwasher, with one load a day that uses the drying cycle, uses 30 kWh. If you use your range oven at 350 degrees for one hour, that's 60 kWh. A microwave oven uses between 16 and 40 kWh. Your coffeemaker (percolator and drip types) will set you back for 12 kWh.

How about your refrigerator? A 17 cubic foot frost-free refrigerator with freezer, operating for 10 hours a day, uses between 500 watts and 1500 kWh. A manual defrost refrigerator uses 300 watts and 90kWh.

If you do your laundry at home, the washer

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(with five loads per week), uses 7 kWh. The clothes dryer (with five loads per week), eats up 100 kWh. The hot water heater, that gives you those wonderful hot showers, consumes between 200 and 400 kWh for a typical family of four. This excludes the use of hot water by the laundry and dishwasher.

Now here are some energy-saving tips, also found on the Energy Wheel. To save on hot water, use low-flow showerheads and faucets. For your refrigerator, keep it filled (including the freezer). Check for faulty door seals and replace them. Avoid frequent opening and closing of the refrigerator or freezer doors.

In your kitchen, use the dishwasher for full loads and use manual air-drying for the dishwasher contents. Ensure that the door seals on your oven are in good condition. Thaw frozen foods before cooking to save energy.

These are only a few samples of the valuable information on the Energy Wheel. But you can see that if you've been complaining about your electric power bill, there are many ways you can start attacking that expense.

For more information, call 305-385-9379 or email <kent@kcmiami.com>.