

UNDER\$PENT

10 top tips to save money in your home

Earlier this week the ABC radio asked their listeners “How do you keep your electricity bill down?”. They were asking because prices are forecast to double over the next 5 years. The rising cost of living is a big issue for all of us.

There are loads of really simple ways to save money that aren't a major chore. You don't have to be frugal or penny pinching to save money. I don't sit in the dark to save cash at my place but I am passionate about being underspent not overspent. Here are my super simple and really easy 10 top tips to save money in the home.

1. **Food.** Australians toss \$8 billion worth of edible food every year. Apparently that's 1 in every 5 bags of food shopping that we buy. *The average household throws \$1,036 of food in the bin every year.* I hate food waste. I make soups from spare veg and compote from fruit. My freezer is stuffed full of pureed fruit and soup for lunches and quick dinners.
2. **Shopping lists.** I always make a shopping list before I go to the markets or Aldi. That way I only buy what I need. I want to be like my friend Suzy though (I need to get more organised!). She goes to the Sunday markets just before the lunchtime closing time and gets two huge bags of 'must be sold' fresh food and veg for just \$5.
3. **Slow cookers.** Slow cookers or crockpots make it really easy to prepare dinner in advance. Just throw the ingredients into the pot, turn it on and let it simmer all day long. Meals are affordable, often less than \$5.
4. **Bin liners.** I reuse plastic shopping bags (that I get when I forget to take my green bags) as bin liners.
5. **Curtains and blinds.** I keep the curtains and blinds shut in winter to keep the house warm and closed during summer to keep the sun out and the house cool. I save hundreds of \$\$\$ each year by not using the air con.
6. **Dry clothes outdoors** – I dry clothes outdoors rather than tumble drying. I'm a bit lazy so I hang wet clothes on clothes hangers to reduce the ironing pile!
7. **Appliances.** I switch off all appliances. I don't leave anything switched on.
8. **TV standby.** Same with the TV I switch it off at the electricity switch rather than leaving it 'running' on standby.
9. **Borrow and share with neighbours.** Why have 400 people with 400 lawns in your suburb got 400 lawnmowers?
10. **Bed by 10pm....** 8 hours sleep is good for your health and it's the easiest way to keep your electricity bill down!

Do you agree? What will you do to save money at your place?

"I didn't buy anything new or 2nd hand during 2014 and I saved a staggering 38% of my take-home salary, without dramatically changing my life" Rachel Smith, Author of Underspent