



Summer Survival Guide

2023



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With another scorching summer guaranteed, now is the time for all Floridians to start thinking about modifying their behavior to prepare for seasonal increases in energy usage that lead to higher bills.

Easier said than done in another fire-breathing Gainesville summer, right? Our Summer Survival Guide is full of practical and creative tips and tricks to help you stay cool and lower your water and power bills. For starters, cut out this checklist, and hang it on your fridge or near your thermostat for a visual reminder of ways you can lower your utility bill this summer.

Gary's Summer Survival Tip:

A utility safety and training facilitator, Gary says, "If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike. Stay inside."



When not humoring us by posing for photos with unicorn floats and Super Soakers, Gary, Rodney, Jose, and Jacques are super serious about providing safe and reliable utility services.



Summer Survival Guide Checklist



Energy

- Turn your A/C to 78° while at home and higher when you head to the springs or beach for the day!
- Set the thermostat to "Auto" instead of "On"
- Let your hair air-dry
- Use fans only while in the room
- Wash clothing on cold
- Hang-dry laundry
- Use blackout curtains
- Plant shade trees



Water

- Follow watering guidelines, and always check for rain in the forecast
- Fix leaky toilets and dripping faucets
- Keep showers to 5 minutes or less
- Turn off your faucet while brushing teeth or shaving

Numbers to know:

GRU Energy & Water Surveys (352) 393-1460

Community Assistance:

Alachua County Habitat for Humanity (352) 378-4663

Central Florida Community Action Agency..... (352) 373-9805

Alachua Social Services (352) 264-6750

Catholic Charities.....(352) 372-0294

Elder Care (60+) (352) 265-9040

Gainesville Community Ministries (352) 372-8162



Cut It Close

A peer-reviewed study in the American Institute of Physics determined that less hair does, in fact, keep your head cooler. People can lose up to 50% of body heat from the tops of their heads, which is why it makes sense to wear a hat in the winter and to not wear a hat (or to wear short hair) in the summer. Interestingly, the study also found that short, curly hair is even cooler because it creates wind eddies.

Barbara's Summer Survival Tip:

A supervising engineer and utility designer, Barbara's advice is pretty simple: "Learn to swim!"

Take a Bath

A warm bath or shower an hour or two before bed can cool you down and help you sleep more soundly. Research published in *Sleep Medicine Reviews* says a warm bath or shower augments our body's natural evening cooling pattern.

In short, about 10 minutes in a 104-degree bath or shower causes blood to abandon your body's core and head to the surface. This drops your body temperature a few degrees, resulting in a cool and peaceful slumber.



Plant Shade Trees

The thick canopy of a shade tree can block the sun's rays from penetrating roofs, walls, and windows. According to the Arbor Day Foundation, shade trees can **reduce A/C costs by up to 35%**, and a yard with 50% shade can **save an average of \$30 a month** in summer electric bills.

Yes, trees can be expensive, but:

- 1) It's a lifetime investment;
- 2) You can get them for free during annual, local tree giveaways!

Shade Trees



Finish the Cartoon!

The artist couldn't think of a funny tree-related retort to finish this cartoon, can you? What should this shade-throwing tree say back? Write in your answer to complete the cartoon! Something about "barking"? "Leaf" me alone? C'mon, help me out.

Drink up!





Studies show that drinking cold water during exercise can help keep your body from overheating, but hot drinks can also cool you down in the summer.

The science says a drink that's hotter than your body will cause you to sweat. The sweat evaporates on your skin and cools you down. If you're so drenched that beads of sweat pour off your body onto the ground, stick with a glass of cold GRU water.

Alas, lots of drinks are known to possess cooling properties, including coconut water, chrysanthemum tea, and buttermilk, sometimes known as "white beer."

Citrus buttermilk cooler recipe

(courtesy clickamericana.com)

-  1/4 cup fresh orange juice
-  1-1/2 tablespoons lemon juice
-  1 pint buttermilk, icy cold
-  3 tablespoons sugar



Chill Your Sheets

To chill your sheets and pillowcases, fold them neatly, and place them in a resealable, plastic bag. Place said bag in the refrigerator for about two hours or in the freezer for a few minutes. Serve chilled. Alternatively, numerous tests show sheets made from Tercel, bamboo, and Percale are cool and breathable, even when not refrigerated.



Get Techy

Investing in a smart thermostat can be a worthwhile upgrade, as you can set your A/C to turn on/off at specific times, adjust the temperature remotely, and receive alerts if it's running longer than it should. It allows you to reduce energy waste, stay cool when home and trim your utility bill.

A smart power strip can eliminate "vampire energy" (standby power) to devices that are not in use, thus, saving energy.

Finally, switch to LED bulbs; they last longer than traditional incandescent ones and use far less energy. Win-Win!



Be an Energy Star

Energystar.gov is an excellent resource for energy-saving tips and products. Type your zip code into the site's Rebate Finder to view available federal tax credits on home products ranging from windows and doors to central A/C units.

energystar.gov



Rest your Oven

A conventional oven can use up to twice as much energy as a toaster oven or air fryer. Better yet, an outdoor grill uses none! Here's a ridiculously scrumptious summer recipe from master griller and GRU Technical Systems Coordinator Steve McElroy.



Steve McElroy
([youtube.com/StokedonSmoke](https://www.youtube.com/StokedonSmoke))



Blueberry Ribs

Remove membrane from back of ribs (personal preference, baby backs!)

Coat lightly on both sides with yellow mustard

Dust both sides of ribs with a light coating of your favorite BBQ rub.

Smoke at 250 degrees for 4-5 hours (until a toothpick slides through the meat without resistance).

Baste ribs with blueberry sauce and cook for another 30 min or so to firm up the sauce.

Serve immediately and enjoy!

Blueberry BBQ Sauce

1 cup fresh blueberries

1 cup ketchup

3/4 cup red wine vinegar

1/2 cup brown sugar

1/4 cup honey

1/4 cup molasses

1/2 tsp each of salt, pepper, onion powder and garlic powder

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1. Blend ingredients in a blender for a few seconds until smooth.
 2. Add to a saucepan over medium-high heat and bring to a simmer/gentle boil, stirring every few minutes.
 3. Lower heat and gently simmer for 20-30 minutes, stirring every few minutes, until reduced and thickened.

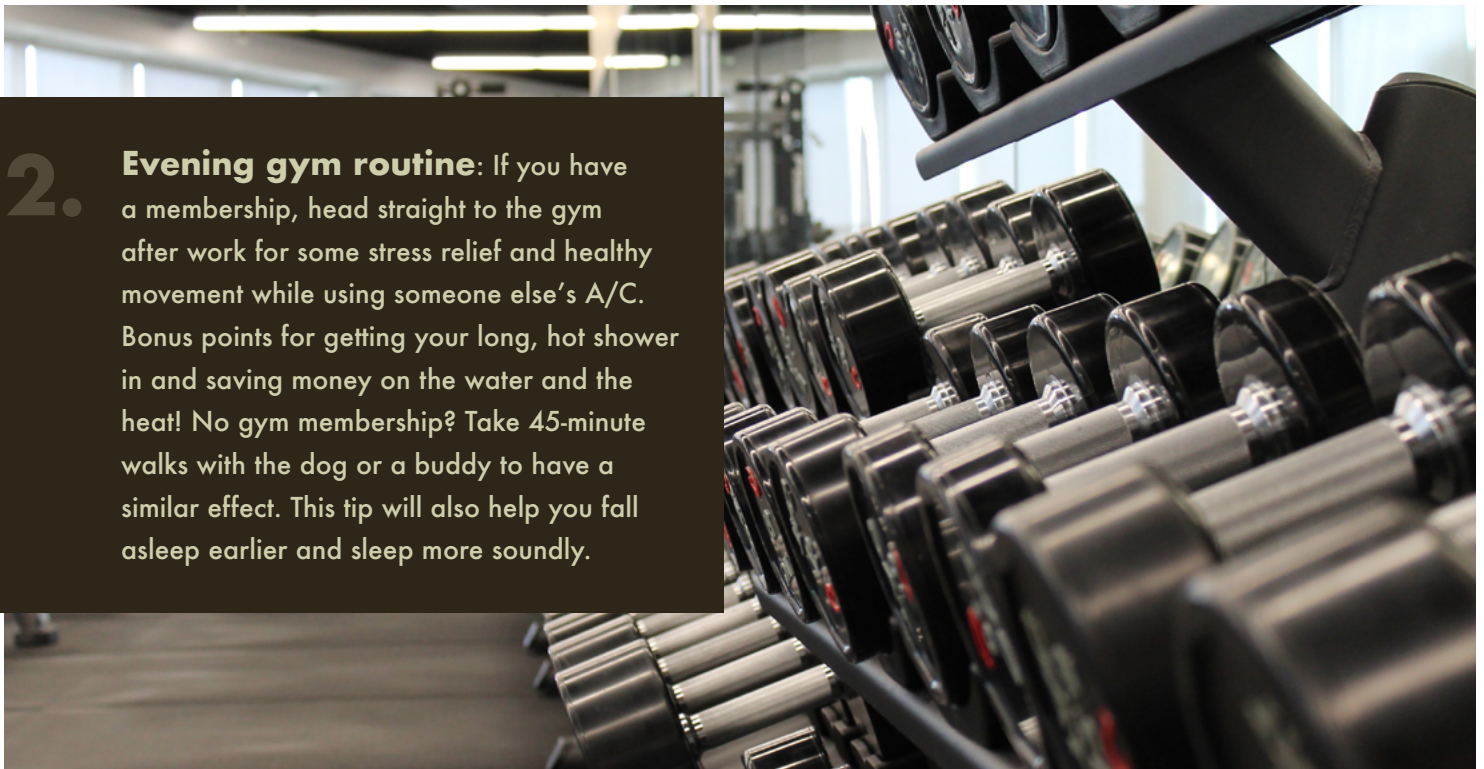
Get Out!

Peak electricity usage occurs right when we return home in the evening and in the following few hours before bed. Most of us come home and immediately plug in and crank down the thermostat. Consider creating a post-work routine that keeps your evening out of the house – especially as temperatures shift to cooler evening air.

- 1. After-dinner porch time:** Keep the thermostat up a little higher and spend those last few hours before bed on the porch instead of the couch. This is a great way to get to know your neighbors, connect with friends, and generally reset after a long day of screen time or being on the move.



- 2. Evening gym routine:** If you have a membership, head straight to the gym after work for some stress relief and healthy movement while using someone else's A/C. Bonus points for getting your long, hot shower in and saving money on the water and the heat! No gym membership? Take 45-minute walks with the dog or a buddy to have a similar effect. This tip will also help you fall asleep earlier and sleep more soundly.



3. Try something new: Dedicate one night a week to a free yoga class, an outdoor concert, a farmer's market, or exploring a new part of town. Gainesville has something for everyone, and one night a week away from the house adds up fast in utility savings!



4. Mix it up: Try a combination of the above tips and more. Keep your summer weeknight calendar busy with friend hangs, date nights, group meetups, and extracurricular activities, and you'll see a drop in your utility bill. Just be sure to keep that thermostat nice and high while you're out of the house, and resist the urge to stay up late into the night on electronics.



Rate Calculator

Lowering your monthly summer energy usage makes a big difference in your bill.

See how low you can go with our rate calculator.

gru.com/ratecalculator



Adventures

Springs

You will find more than 190 freshwater springs within a 50-mile radius of Gainesville, a feature that makes our region unique in the world. The crystal-clear waters of the springs are a refreshing oasis that remain temperature-stable at a lovely 72° year-round, perfect for swimming, snorkeling, and diving.

Make it a point to check out all of the larger springs this summer, namely:

- Poe Springs (an Alachua County park)
- Gilchrist Blue Springs State Park
- Ichetucknee Springs State Park

Most of these parks have admission fees under \$10 per vehicle and provide a developed swimming area and a full day's worth of adventure. A dip in these natural wonders is arguably the best way to enjoy a sweltering summer day in Florida out of the house, making memories.



Depot Park

The city-owned park's splash pad is open from 7 a.m. to sunset, seven days a week, as long as the outside temperature is above 70 degrees. On a hot summer day (all of them), one of Gainesville's coolest attractions is also one of Gainesville's coolest attractions.

Address: 874 SE 4th St, Gainesville, FL 32601

Open: 7 a.m. to sunset, daily



City Pools

The City of Gainesville operates three pools for locals to enjoy, including the recently renovated H. Spurgeon Cherry Pool. Have fun, and bring SPF 50 or higher!



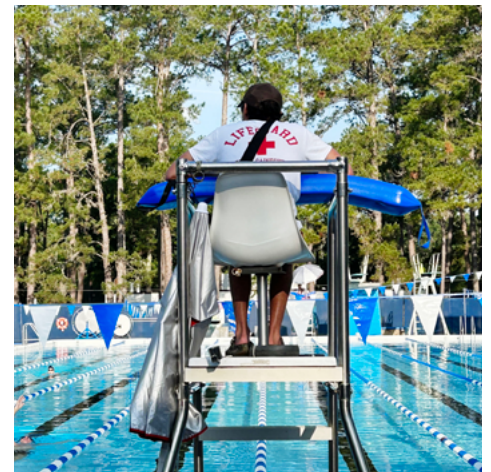
Dwight H. Hunter Pool

Prices from: \$2.25 - \$4.25



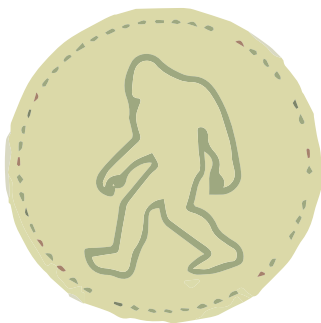
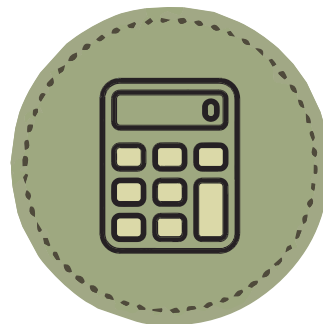
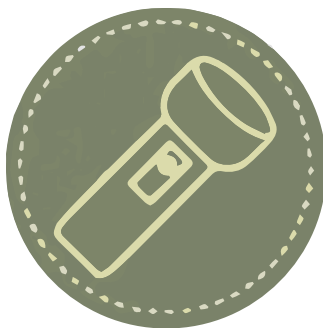
Andrew R. Mickle, Sr. Pool

Prices from: \$1.50 - \$3.00



H. Spurgeon Cherry Pool

Prices from: \$2.25 - \$4.25



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More than Energy

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