

The Frugal Savant

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I have this quirk. Okay, I have many quirks, but this one is my uncanny ability to bust our household budget by implementing money-saving ideas. For example, there's that time I decided to make my own baby wipes and ended up spending more money on premium weight paper towels, baby wash and baby soap - and produced a batch of baby fresh pulp. Then, there's the time I bought the \$5 hair clippers so that I could cut our family's hair for "free," but wound up spending more money to have their hair fixed by a professional. Oh, and the laundry soap. Yep, homemade laundry soap that seemed to work great until I noticed our freshly laundered clothes were beginning to smell like my boys' gym socks.

But you know, as Thomas Edison put it, after many failed attempts at the light bulb, I haven't failed 1000 times, I've succeeded in finding 1000 ways it doesn't work.

Last summer I saw a program on the Planet Green network about how to save on your electric bill. Many of the ideas required spending money on energy saving equipment, but one idea spoke to me: wash the laundry in cold water, rather than warm or hot.

So, I decided to conduct an experiment and for a whole month washed everything in cold water. I couldn't wait for the next month's electric bill and looked forward to it like a payday.

Only, there was no change. So much for that idea.

A few months later my husband announced that we all need to take more care to turn lights out behind us. I looked at him and said, "Oh, yeah, don't expect much." Then, I explained my scientific study, relaying the data before and after as proof that little changes don't add up when it comes to electricity bills.

He smiled that smile of his. "You're so cute."

"What?" Of course, when he tells me I'm cute, I know I've done something stupid.

"Cindy, we have a gas water heater."

Yep, I'm a frugal Savant, all right. And that's Savant with a capital "I."