Pulling the plug makes sense

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Have you ever noticed the lights or clocks on your electronics that stay lit even when the device is turned off?

One light I always notice is on my electric skillet. When I turn it off, there is a little orange bulb that remains lit as long as the skillet is plugged in. It always makes me second guess myself, have I turned it off, is it off all the way, or is it just that stupid light?

The use of energy by a device that is not powered on or performing its primary function is called “standby power,” “vampire power,” or “leaking energy.”

According to the Lawrence Berkley National Laboratory, the average American home typically has about 40 products constantly using electricity. This amounts to roughly 10 percent of our total residential power use.

There isn’t much you can do about some of these devices that use energy constantly. Your refrigerator and freezer need the constant energy to stay cold, and the alarm clock has to stay plugged in to keep the time, etc. And to go around and unplug everything in your house is kind of crazy and totally unrealistic.

I will not be unplugging my microwave or oven or coffee maker. I won’t be obsessing over this issue like I do with my recycling and water conservation, but I do know there are things in my house that use energy plugged in and don’t have to.

My hair straightener has a red light that stays on so you know it’s turned off, and that really doesn’t need to be plugged in. From now on, for energy’s sake it won’t be. I also keep my electric skillet unplugged and put away-to save energy yes, and also to keep my sanity. Our stereos have a dim LED light that display a clock even when they are off, and I almost never use them anyway, so why not unplug them?

To me, it’s a lot like fixing a water leak. Why waste a resource if you don’t have to?

If “leaking electricity” makes up 10 percent of our electric use, and there are things we can unplug, we all could really be saving. Money and electricity. It all adds up and it adds up quick.

So next time you’re done using something, ask yourself if it can be unplugged. I’ve said it before and I mean it, and will say it again, every little bit helps.

I challenge you to see how many things in your home you can find to unplug just for the sake of saving energy.