

Tips for lowering your fuel costs

1. SLOW DOWN

Reducing your speed by just 1 knot can save you up to 20 percent on fuel costs. Slow down 2 knots and you can save up to 30 percent.

Most of your engine's power is used overcoming the displacement waves at the bow and stern of your vessel. Slow down to flatten out those waves and save on fuel.

2. CHECK THE COLOR OF YOUR EXHAUST

Your exhaust fumes should be invisible. If your exhaust is black, it could be overloaded with unburned fuel, or you may have worn injectors or insufficient combustion airflow. If your exhaust is white, there could be an injector, valve or gasket problem that is allowing coolant steam to enter the system. If your exhaust is blue, the engine is burning oil.

3. CHECK YOUR PROPELLER

Bent, dinged, corroded and growth-fouled propellers make your vessel less fuel-efficient. Repair or replace your prop if this is the case.

If you've added or reduced weight to your vessel since purchasing your propeller, use a tachometer or pyrometer to ensure your prop is still operationally efficient. Make sure the engine is reaching its rated RPM and exhaust temperature according to the engine manufacturer's specs.

New propeller designs are available. Typically, larger diameter and fewer blades produce greater fuel efficiency.

4. KEEP YOUR HULL CLEAN

Find the best anti-fouling paint for the bottom of your vessel. Marine growth, such as barnacles or weeds, decreases your vessel's fuel efficiency. To save fuel, make sure the hull is as smooth and clean as possible.

5. TURN OFF UNUSED EQUIPMENT

Motors, generators, lights and other on-board equipment consume energy while they are running. Turning off lights and other electronics at home reduces your monthly electric bill, the same principle applies to your boat.

6. REDUCE THE WEIGHT OF YOUR VESSEL

Each extra ton added to your vessel causes the engine to consume an additional 1 quart of fuel per hour.

It's important to remember that fuel and water account for much of this weight: 300 gallons of diesel fuel and 250 gallons of water each weigh approximately 1 ton. Fill your tank with less fuel for shorter trips, but be sure you have enough extra fuel in case of an emergency.

Also, remove un-needed equipment to further reduce vessel weight.

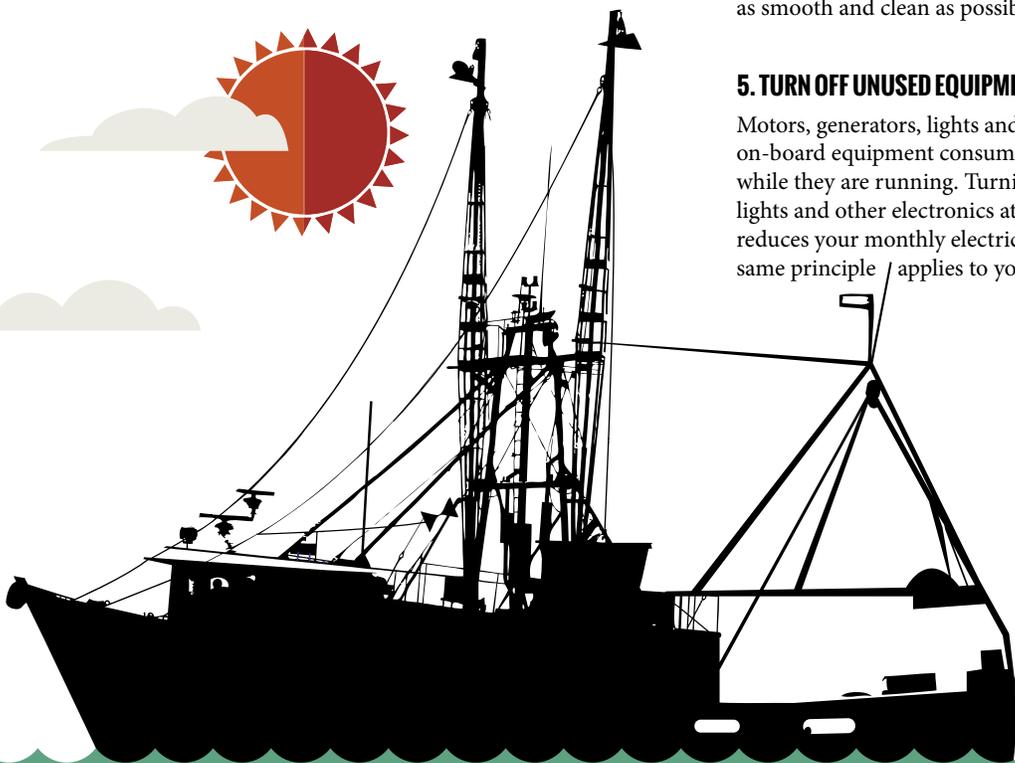
7. PROMOTE AN ENERGY CONSCIENCE CREW

In order for many of these tips to work, your crew must be on board with the idea of conserving fuel. Otherwise, the actions of some may offset attempts by others to conserve energy.

It takes the combined efforts of everyone on board to make sure your vessel is operating as efficiently as possible.

8. USE ENERGY EFFICIENT GEAR

Consider fuel flow meters, high efficiency propellers and generators, a Genset eliminating electronic system, cambered trawl doors and Sapphire/Spectra webbing (for shrimp).



Conduct your own energy audit for more ideas on efficiency and savings; visit <http://seagrant.uaf.edu/map/recreation/fuel-efficiency/fuelaudit.pdf>

