

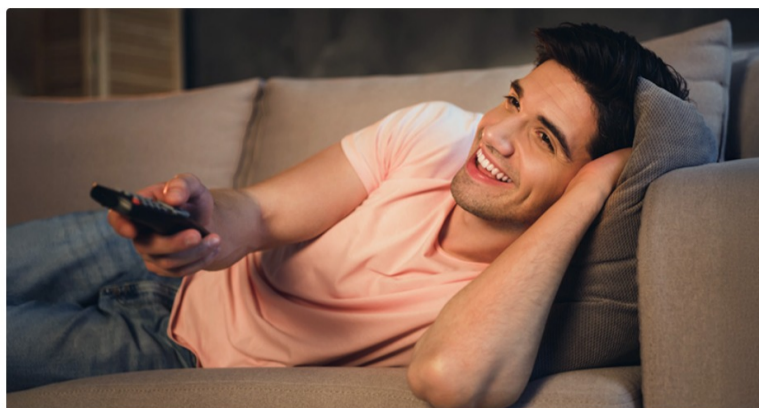
A guide to free nights and weekends: Saving with a time-of-use plan

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6-minute read

If your electricity plan's contract is about to expire, you may now be tasked with shopping for a new plan that gives you the most bang for your buck. In Texas, you can choose your electricity provider [thanks to deregulation](#), which allows you to shop for the best deals, evaluate incentives or add-ons, and find the best plan for your home and usage trends.

Here we explore the benefits of free nights and free weekends plans, also referred to as "time-of-use" plans, and discuss how they can help you save!



Understanding the basics

Navigating the world of energy plans can feel like a daunting task. At its core, an energy plan is a contract between you and your home energy supplier that details how your electricity usage is billed.

There are many types of plans that offer a variety of benefits, like renewably sourced energy plans, fixed-rate plans and time-of-use plans. Each plan type has its advantages, but finding the one that is right for you depends on how much electricity you consume and when you use it.

What is a time-of-use plan?

Time-of-use plans offer you savings during certain times of the day, which can allow you to maximize your electricity usage based on when you consume energy.

Some of the most common time-of-use plans are the free nights and free weekends plans. These plans are designed to fit your lifestyle and enable you to make smarter energy choices, which can help you save on your monthly electricity bill.

A time-of-use plan is a type of fixed-rate electricity plan, which means it offers a set rate per kWh of electricity you consume while engaged in the plan's contract. This is different from a variable-rate plan, which fluctuates the rate per kWh depending on current market prices.

The appeal of free nights or weekends plan

Imagine a plan where your energy charge dips to zero during the hours you use the most energy. That's the allure of free nights or weekends plans. They're designed to offer you peace of mind, knowing that when you come home from work or have a busy weekend hosting friends or family, you can consume energy worry-free during those free usage periods.

How do free nights and weekends plans work?

With a time-of-use plan, your day is broken down into different periods. Typically, this includes:

- **Peak hours:** When energy demand is high. This is usually during the afternoon and early evening.
- **Off-peak hours:** When demand drops. This often covers late night to early morning.

With a time-of-use plan, during off-peak hours, like at night or throughout the weekend, you get a reduced electricity rate or a zero-charge rate. With plans like the [Direct Energy Twelve Hour Power](#) plan or the [Free Power Weekends](#) plan, you can strategically enjoy free electricity during these periods to help reduce your monthly electricity costs. By waiting to do high-energy-consuming tasks like laundry or running the dishwasher until your free usage period, you can lower the amount of electricity you have to pay for and may see regular savings on your monthly bill.

The role of smart meters in tracking usage

Smart meters are the unsung heroes of free nights and weekends plans because without them, times-of-use plans wouldn't be possible. These advanced devices track your electricity usage in real time, which is how electricity providers are able to offer energy management and usage-tracking tools. Smart meters allow your energy supplier to see exactly how much electricity you consume and when it's used, and accurately apply that free usage during those nights or weekends.



Evaluating the worth of free nights and weekends plans

By encouraging energy use during free usage periods, time-of-use plans can help customers save on their monthly bills by taking advantage of the free electricity. They also promote conservation by making consumers more energy conscious and helping them make smarter, more energy-efficient choices.

Benefits uncovered: How you can save

By shifting your high-energy activities to free usage periods, you can reduce the amount of electricity you're paying for on your monthly bill. These plans work best when you can make small but smart changes to your lifestyle, which can help lead to savings that add up over time.

This can be as simple as waiting to start the laundry or dishwasher until the evening when you have a free nights plan, or doing big DIY projects on the weekends if you have a free weekends plan. The more high-usage activity you're able to shift into your free use periods, the more you can save.

Is a time-of-use plan right for you?

While the benefits are enticing, it's crucial to consider all aspects of these plans, like understanding how energy rates work during peak usage times. Assessing your typical electricity usage patterns is also key to determining if a free nights or weekends plan aligns with your lifestyle and can truly offer savings.

How do I figure out my energy usage trends?

Before selecting an electricity plan, find out the square footage of your home and determine your average kWh usage per month. Knowing your square footage can help your energy provider approximate your average usage and give you a more accurate rate quote. To find your average monthly usage, check if your current electricity provider has [energy usage tracking tools](#) to help you keep track of your usage. If not, follow these steps to calculate your average usage:

- Find your monthly kWh usage history from the last 12 months (or as many months as you have available)
- Add together the kWh total from each month
- Divide that by the number of months added
- The result is your average monthly usage

Comparing free nights and free weekends plans

While free nights and free weekends are similar, they cater to different usage patterns. Free nights plans might be ideal for those who are home in the evenings and can shift high-energy activities like laundry, dishwashing and charging electric vehicles to nighttime. On the other hand, free weekends plans offer free electricity from Friday evening through Sunday night, making them perfect for those who spend more time at home during weekends. Both plans can help reduce electricity costs, but the best choice depends on your personal schedule and energy usage habits.

Making the most of your time-of-use plan

Once enrolled in a free nights or free weekends plan, you can work strategically to get the most use out of your free use periods. If you have an electric vehicle, you can charge it overnight or on the weekends to use your free electricity. Also, unplugging chargers or other devices like phones, laptops or desktop computers during the day can help reduce daytime usage when you're not at home.

Tips for maximizing your savings

Aside from adjusting your usage habits, there are other small changes you can make around your home to help maximize your energy efficiency:

- Switch to blackout curtains to prevent heat transfer
- Adjust your thermostat by a few degrees to reduce use
- Use a fan to help make a room feel cooler during the day
- Wait until the dishwasher is full before starting a load
- Change to energy-efficient LED light bulbs

For more ways to help improve your home's energy efficiency, check out our [25 helpful energy-saving tips](#).

Choosing the right energy provider

Selecting an energy supplier is about more than just rates. It's about customer service, reliability and the additional benefits they offer. Look for suppliers that understand your needs and are committed to making your life easier.

What makes Direct Energy stand out?

At Direct Energy, we are committed to delivering top-notch customer support and plans that fit every need. We work to provide you with account management solutions and tools to take the stress off you and make powering your home easier.

For a truly free nights plan, Direct Energy offers the [Twelve Hour Power](#) plan, which boasts 12 full hours of free electricity every night from 9 p.m. to 9 a.m. Direct Energy also offers the [Free Power Weekends](#) plan, which gives customers free power every weekend from 6 p.m. Friday to 11:59 p.m. Sunday.

In addition to these time-of-use plans, Direct Energy offers many added benefits available to every customer, like [24/7 customer support](#), [energy usage insights](#), easy account management tools, helpful energy-saving tips and so much more. Plus, with the innovative [Direct Energy Mobile App](#), you can access your account quickly from the palm of your hand!

Ready to switch to a Direct Energy electricity plan? [Start shopping plans today!](#)

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