



It's Easy Being Green

100 simple things that can make you and your home greener

Energy

1. Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents as they burn out.
2. Use a power strip for your computer and peripherals to turn them all off at once.
3. Choose Energy Star certified appliances and electronics.
4. Buy solar screens for west-facing windows.
5. Weatherstrip around your doors and windows to prevent leakage of conditioned air.
6. Buy a timer or light sensor for your porchlight so you don't have to remember to turn it off.
7. Use rechargeable batteries instead of alkaline batteries.
8. Get a solar battery charger.
9. Turn off lights and electronics when you aren't using them.
10. Replace the air filter in your HVAC system regularly.
11. Close vents in unused rooms.
12. Turn down the thermostat on your water heater.
13. Fix leaks in your HVAC ducts.
14. Keep your freezer full. Bag ice to take up space.
15. Install a programmable thermostat to allow different indoor temperatures through the course of the day.

Water

16. Don't waste cold water while waiting for hot water to reach the shower. Catch the water in a bucket and use it to water plants.
17. Get a rain barrel to harvest rainwater.
18. Fix leaky toilets and water spigots.
19. Don't run the water while brushing your teeth.
20. Keep showers to 5 minutes or less.
21. Install a low-flow shower head.
22. Run the dishwasher only when it is full.
23. If your toilets are not low-flow types, place a plastic bottle filled with water in the tank. The volume of water displaced is the amount saved with every flush.

Laundry

24. Buy clothing that doesn't need to be dry-cleaned. Perchloroethylene in dry-cleaning fluid is a hazardous air pollutant and probable carcinogen.
25. Get a clothesline to dry your laundry. Sunlight helps keep white fabrics white.

26. Use a green brand of dryer sheets. Most brands of fabric softener sheets emit many harmful gasses, including toluene, styrene, phenol, xylene, and trimethylbenzene.
27. Wash your laundry in cold water.
28. Use washing soda instead of color-safe bleach; ½ cup per load.
29. Wash only when you have a full load.

Cleaning

30. Use simple soap and water instead of chemical cleansers when possible.
31. Use hydrogen peroxide to clean your shower and bath tiles instead of harsh chemical cleansers. It kills mold and mildew, and is non-toxic.
32. Baking soda is a great cleaner and polish, and it removes odors.
33. Do not use antibacterial soaps or detergents. Triclosan, the active ingredient, breaks down into chloroform and other chlorine byproducts when mixed with tap water.
34. Empty your vacuum cleaner often, and make sure to do it outside.
35. Take off your shoes when coming indoors to bring less dirt in.

Automotive

36. Keep your car tires inflated to the correct pressure. Under-inflated tires result in poorer gas mileage.
37. Make sure the air filter in your car is clean for better engine performance.
38. Only wash your car at a car wash that recycles its water.
39. Plan your errands to minimize mileage. Each extra mile equals a pound of extra carbon in the atmosphere.
40. Take a road trip instead of flying.
41. Use public transportation or ride-sharing when possible.
42. Turn your stereo down, especially when your windows are open. Noise is pollution, too.

Indoor Air Quality

43. Buy a houseplant. Many houseplants remove harmful VOCs (volatile organic compounds) from the air.
44. Choose draperies and shower curtains that can be laundered. Fabrics can hold mold, dust and allergens.
45. Turn off the air conditioning and open your windows in good weather. Save energy and get fresh air in your home.
46. Choose Low-VOC or Zero-VOC paints.
47. Do not use ionizing or electrostatic air purifiers. They can produce toxic ozone.
48. Use beeswax or soy candles with cotton wicks instead of petroleum-based candles with metal wicks, scented oils, or air fresheners.
49. Run the bathroom fan when showering to reduce humidity and diminish growth of mold and mildew.
50. Use a quality filter in your HVAC system, and change it regularly.

Food and Drink

51. Grow a tomato plant. Patio tomatoes are compact and grow well in pots.
52. Plan meals in advance so you make fewer trips to the grocery store.

53. Use sugar or honey instead of aspartame (NutraSweet, Equal), which metabolizes into methanol, formaldehyde, and diketopiperazine.
54. Go to a farmer's market and purchase locally-grown produce.
55. Buy in bulk when possible.
56. Use fresh vegetables when in season instead of frozen or canned.
57. Filter the fluoride out of your drinking water. Elevated levels of fluoride are associated with bone fractures, thyroid function losses, IQ deficits, bone cancer, and Alzheimer's disease.
58. Cook on a gas grill in hot weather to keep your house cooler.
59. Use the microwave instead of the oven or stove.
60. Eat a meatless meal once a week.
61. Choose foods that don't contain chemical preservatives.
62. Choose meat from animals that have not been given antibiotics or growth hormones.
63. Eat less fast food and take-out to minimize packaging waste.
64. Buy reusable containers for food storage instead of single-use storage bags.

Outdoors

65. Plant a tree. Trees provide shade, clean the air, and sequester carbon.
66. Choose native or naturalized plants that tolerate heat and drought.
67. Choose plants that produce flowers or fruit to attract birds and butterflies.
68. Increase the size of landscape beds to decrease your lawn area. Grass requires more water and care than established shrubs and plants.
69. Use solar landscape lighting.
70. Keep landscape lighting dim to minimize nighttime light pollution.
71. Use a soaker hose instead of a sprinkler to water landscape beds. Less water is lost to evaporation, and many plants stay healthier when their leaves are kept dry.
72. Mix compost into your flower beds. Compost helps retain moisture in the soil and add nutrients for the plants.
73. Mulch your flower beds to retain soil moisture and keep plant roots cool.
74. Baking soda is an effective fungicide. Mix with water and spray on plants to control fungal diseases.
75. Control fire ants with boiling water and natural orange oil.
76. Keep your grass cut long to keep the roots shaded and slow evaporation.
77. Look for pre-emergent products that use corn gluten meal instead of toxic chemicals.
78. Look for pest-control products that contain natural plant oils, like neem or orange oil.
79. Beneficial nematodes can control many garden and soil pests, including termites.
80. Top dress your lawn with compost to replace soil nutrients and retain moisture.

Consumer goods

81. Buy downloadable software online instead of packaged software at a retail store. Save both fuel and packaging.
82. Buy products in refillable containers.
83. Avoid disposable and single-use products.
84. Buy clothing made from natural fibers, like cotton. Many synthetic fibers are made from petroleum.

85. Choose products in recycled or recyclable containers.
86. If your favorite store doesn't carry green products, request that they do.
87. If something breaks, fix it instead of replacing it.
88. If you don't need a bag, let the store keep it. Keep a tote bag in your car, and use it instead.
89. Choose products that don't contain dyes and perfumes.
90. Choose solid wood products instead of pressed wood, particle board, or fiber board that contain formaldehyde and other volatile chemicals.
91. Goods and products that are seldom used can often be rented or borrowed instead of purchased.

Waste

92. Give what you don't use to someone who will use it.
93. Recycle all the plastics you can. Most plastics are made from petroleum.
94. Recycle aluminum cans and foil. Recycled aluminum uses much less power to produce than virgin aluminum.
95. Make sure to use the compostable paper bags for yard waste.
96. Start a compost pile. Divert food waste from the landfill, and keep your plants happy.
97. Make sure all trash is in bags. Loose trash easily escapes from the garbage trucks.
98. Be familiar with your city's recycling program, and take advantage of the services.

And finally ...

99. Find out more about green living by reading a book, looking online, or taking a class.
100. Tell others what you know so they can be green, too!