



15 Easy Things You Can Do At Home to Preserve the Earth

Energy Savings

1. **Replace your incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lights (CFLs).** A 23 watt CFL provides the same amount of light as a 100 watt incandescent bulb, saving 77% in electricity costs. The life of a compact fluorescent is 10,000 hours, compared to only 750 hours for a standard incandescent bulb. Over its life, the compact fluorescent will save approximately \$100 in electricity costs plus another \$6 in replacement bulb costs for a total savings of \$106. A 4-pack of CFLs can be purchased for under \$10.
2. **Replace old showerheads with new energy saving, low flow heads.** A low flow showerhead using 1.6-2.0 gallons per minute may use less than 50% of the hot water of an older head. Not only does this reduce water consumption, but a lot of energy is saved because less water has to be heated by your hot water heater.
3. **Don't over-heat your hot water.** Hot water heaters typically do not need to be set over 120° F. Insulate your water heater and pipes if they aren't already insulated.
4. **Green your laundry** by washing in cold or warm water and line drying your clothes when the weather is nice. Electric clothes dryers account for 5-10% of home electricity usage and also cause clothes to wear out prematurely (that's why they come with lint filters!).
5. **Kill the vampires.** Many home electronics use electricity even when they are turned off. If it comes with a remote control, then it is not truly "off" – it is merely in a "standby" mode waiting to be turned on again. This "vampire" energy can add up over the course of a year. The remedy? Plug your home entertainment systems, which are full of remote-controlled TVs, DVD players, cable boxes, and stereos, into a power strip and shut the strip off when you are not using it. Also, turn off your computer monitors when you are not using your computer.
6. **Unplug that spare refrigerator.** Refrigerators are the biggest single user of electricity in the average household. Older refrigerators can use twice as much energy as newer ones, so when you buy a new one, retire the old one. Keep the condenser coil clean on the fridge you are using.
7. **Turn the thermostat down in winter and up in summer.** Even a 2° – 3° F change can save as much as 10% in energy usage over the heating or cooling season. Shoot for 78° F or higher in summer and 68° F or lower in winter. In summertime, use ceiling fans to increase comfort at warmer temperatures.



Resource Preservation and Pollution Prevention

1. **Stop Unwanted Junk Mail** – the average household receives 41 lbs of unsolicited mail per year. Contact the Direct Marketing Association (at <http://www.dmchoice.org/consumerassistance.php>) to remove your name from mailing lists. To stop unsolicited credit card offers, go to <https://www.optoutprescreen.com>.
2. **Recycle all of your waste** – recycling not only has the obvious benefit of reducing landfill waste and preserving natural resources, but it requires much less energy and produces less pollution to re-make materials such as paper, glass, or metals from recycled stock than it does from raw materials.
3. Paper vs. Plastic Shopping Bags? Well, the best answer is... **NEITHER! Use re-usable shopping bags** at the food store or mall and reduce consumption of both paper and plastic.
4. **Make your yard more eco-friendly.** Grass lawns can be very high maintenance, require frequent watering, and are often treated with more fertilizers and pesticides than necessary. Often, these excess chemicals are washed into the Chesapeake Bay and degrade its quality. Pledge to make your yard “chemical free” by skipping the fertilizer and pesticides this year. Better yet, reduce the size of your lawn by substituting grass with plants that are native to this area. This will also reduce your lawn mowing needs, cutting down on the air pollution produced by mowers (which don’t have the sophisticated pollution controls cars have) and saving you time and money spent on gasoline.
5. **Eat lower on the food chain.** It is very resource-intensive to feed grain to livestock and then eat the meat from the livestock. Make the effort to occasionally substitute meat-based meals with plant-based ones and you will reduce both water and air pollution, as well as conserve energy.
6. **Eat local foods, in season, whenever possible.** The average item on a supermarket shelf traveled 1,300-1,500 miles to get there. Buying locally reduces transportation costs and supports your local economy. Visit www.localharvest.org to find the places closest to you.
7. **Watch “The Story of Stuff” and learn about our society’s overconsumption of materials.** The Story of Stuff is a 20-minute, fast-paced, fact-filled look at the underside of our production and consumption patterns. Visit www.TheStoryofStuff.com.
8. **Reduce bottled water consumption.** Millions of plastic water bottles are discarded every year, but another impact is the amount of energy required in producing, filling, and shipping the bottles. Filtered tap water in a re-usable container is just as healthy for consumers and comes with much lower financial and environmental costs.