

## **Go Green, Save Money!**

The call to “go green” is becoming one that is harder and harder to ignore. Warnings about the effects of global climate change on our planet are everywhere in the mainstream media. But what can one person do about it?

The fact is that if everyone adopted just a few changes to decrease energy consumption and reduce waste, it would make a great impact on preserving a cleaner, greener environment for years to come.

You can start making changes right in your own home that will not only conserve energy and help the environment, but also result in direct cost savings for your family. With benefits like that, you can't afford not to try some of these suggestions to green up your house:

**1. Tighten up your thermal envelope.** Your home's thermal envelope is everything that protects the inside living space from the outside elements. If you have air leaks around windows and doors, you can bet that your energy bill is higher than it needs to be. Seal those leaks so that the heating and air conditioning doesn't have to work as hard.

**2. Insulate.** Installing adequate installation is a great way to tighten your home's thermal envelope and save money and energy. Proper loft insulation is a must. Wall cavities can be insulated with insulating foam to boost your home's energy efficiency and comfort. Insulate the hot water pipes to save even more because hot water will reach faucets faster, which saves water.

**3. Fix the leaks.** Even an occasional drip from your home's faucets can waste considerable water and money over time. Examine all of your faucets and pipes for leaks and fix them for the lowest utility bills possible and maximum water conservation. Another great way to conserve water in your home is to install low flow toilets, which only use the water you need with each flush instead of wasting gallons of water each time.

**4. Get a programmable thermostat.** Why pay money to heat or cool your home when no one is there? A programmable thermostat can be programmed to come on just before someone is due to arrive home and conserve energy for the rest of the day. It doesn't cost much, and can easily pay for itself after just a few energy bills.

**5. Replace your light bulbs.** Replace all of your traditional light bulbs with the newer compact fluorescent variety and you will be using 75% less energy. They also last much longer than older light bulbs – up to 10 times as long. Just doing this little step will result in instant savings and lower energy consumption.

**6. Get unplugged.** Appliances that are plugged in are still using energy, even if they are turned off. Make it a rule in your home to unplug everything after using it, and to turn off lights whenever leaving a room. Put multiple devices such as DVD and CD players,

the TV, video game console, and computer on one power strip that can be turned off with one button. Every little bit saved contributes to lower energy bills.

Any of these ideas are great ways to start living green at home. Not only will you feel good about helping the environment, but you will feel great about saving green too.