

Green Homes Save Money: Find the Hidden Savings in Yours

Green living is aimed towards reducing our environmental impact by conserving energy and reducing waste in our daily lives.

Our homes are a great place to develop “green living” habits, because not only will we be doing our part to help the environment but saving energy also means saving money that can be put toward other things. We all need to be more responsible stewards of our resources and good citizens of the planet we live in. It doesn't have to be complicated.

Here are a few places in your home that with some attention might result in significant energy and cost savings.

1. Use less water. Conserving water is an excellent habit to get into. Replace traditional toilets with more efficient low flow ones which use 1.25 gallons to flush as opposed to 3.5 gallons. Imagine the savings in your water bills, as this one change can cut down your home's water usage by 20,000 gallons each year.

2. Only use the clothes washer and dishwasher when they are full. The good news is that if you run the dishwasher when it is full, you actually use less water than you would if you washed dishes by hand. When in the market for these appliances, buy energy efficient models. The extra cost will be returned over the lifetime of the appliance in energy bill savings.

3. Wash clothes in cold water. Most of the energy needed to run your clothes washer is used up heating the water. Today's laundry detergents can clean efficiently in cold water, so keep the hot water turned off. Your clothes will still look great and you will be saving energy.

4. Tighten your home's thermal envelope. The thermal envelope is everything that protects the inside living space from the outside elements. Efficient insulation is very important, especially in the attic space and wall cavities, which can be filled with insulating foam.

5. Seal up doors and windows. At the very least, examine doors and windows for air leaks and seal them up. Any leaks make your heating or cooling system inefficient and drain energy. If you're in a position to upgrade your windows, consider double-glazed or even triple-glazed insulating glass. These are hermetically sealed, which means they have maximum insulating properties due to the fact that the air sealed between the panes is isolated from the environment outside. They are much more efficient than single paned windows because they greatly decrease heat loss.

6. Change your light bulbs. Traditional light bulbs are not very efficient compared to the compact fluorescent variety (CFLs). CFLs cost a little more than regular light bulbs, but only use 5% of the electricity and last up to 10 times longer. Even better than that, newer

LED lights are even more efficient and long-lasting than CFLs. Energy efficient light bulbs are an easy purchase that can get you going green in no time at all.

Anyone can use some of these suggestions to start living a green lifestyle at home. Every eco-friendly change can result in savings in your pocket and more manageable energy bills. If you care about being environmentally responsible, you can't afford not to live green in your home.