



Environmental Tips

Automotive/Travel

- Turn off your car when idling for over 30 seconds and not in traffic.
 - Why It's Important – An idling car gets 0 miles to the gallon. While older cars may have consumed more fuel on start up, this is no longer the case. Modern cars use electronic fuel injectors that limit the amount of fuel delivered to the engine when it's turned on. If you could eliminate 10 minutes of idling every day, you would save approximately \$36 at the pump each year.

- Watch the speed limit and avoid aggressive driving.
 - Why It's Important – Aggressive driving such as speeding, rapid acceleration and sharp braking wastes gas and can lower gas mileage by as much as 33% on the highway and 5% in the city.
 - More Info – U.S. Dept. of Energy
<http://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/driveHabits.shtml>

- If you have to drive, try to avoid the rush hour by traveling at off-peak times.
 - Why It's Important – Nobody likes to sit in traffic, but the current American has 24.4 minutes of daily commute time to get to work. This amounts to spending over 4 days each year in your car. Besides wasted time, traffic congestion is responsible for 5.7 billion gallons of wasted fuel annually.

- Wash your car at a professional car wash rather than in the driveway.
 - Why It's Important – A commercial car wash uses an average of 45 gallons of water per car and captures the water used for treatment. Home washing generally requires between 80 and 140 gallons of water.
 - More Info – International Car Wash Association
<http://www.carwash.org/Pages/default.aspx>

- Try to be more efficient by combining your errand trips.
 - Why It's Important – Each week the average American household makes 19 different car trips of 7 miles or less. If we combined or skipped 2 of those trips we could save 3.6 billion gallons of gasoline each year. If you have to drive, plan ahead and finish all your errands at once.

- Utilize public transit when traveling within your city.
 - Why It's Important – For every passenger-mile traveled, public transportation is twice as fuel efficient as private automobiles. This efficiency translates directly into savings of resources and reduction of emissions. Per year, public transportation saves more than 855 million gallons of gasoline and reduces CO2 emissions by more than 7.4 million tons.

Shopping

- Keep reusable/canvas bags in your car and use them when shopping.
 - Why It's Important – The average American consumer uses between 500-1000 plastic bags each year. This means that in the U.S. we consume approximately 100 billion plastic bags every year, and we only recycle about 2%. Using reusable bags cuts down on waste in our landfills as well as the energy and resources necessary to create so many bags.
- If you are taking your clothes in for dry cleaning look for “perc” free dry cleaners, or cleaners that advertise either (1) wet cleaning or (2) CO2 cleaning.
 - Why It's Important - PERC or perchloroethylene is the standard solvent in conventional dry cleaning. It is a central nervous system depressant that is a listed hazardous air pollutant and that the EPA considers a health and environmental hazard.
 - More Info – An EPA compiled list of “wet cleaners” and CO2 cleaners nationwide at www.epa.gov/dfe/pubs/garment/gcrg/cleanguide.pdf. (Created in 2001).
- If in the market for a new television, take energy consumption into account when making your purchase.
 - Why It's Important – Each television consumes different amounts of energy based upon its type and size. Some televisions are much more energy efficient than others, for instance an LCD TV consumes up to 2/3 less energy than a standard television.
 - More Info – Check out a breakdown of energy consumption per television monitor at CNET. http://reviews.cnet.com/4520-6475_7-6400401-3.html
- Use a reusable coffee mug rather than a disposable cup.
 - Why It's Important - It's estimated that American's consume more than 16 billion paper cups each year. That equates to approximately 252 million pounds of waste in our landfills...each year. Starbucks alone estimated that it used 2.3 billion cups in 2006.

- Learn which foods are harvested in your area and try to purchase those foods that are grown locally.
 - Why It's Important – Produce from many domestic sources will travel up to 1000 miles before reaching your dinner table. Purchasing those foods grown at local farmer's markets and groceries helps to cut down on these "food miles" and also helps to support local farming organizations.
 - More Info – A directory of farmer's markets can be found at <http://farmersmarket.com/>

- Purchase goods that come in bulk or that are in concentrate form.
 - Why It's Important – Purchasing goods in bulk reduces overall consumption of packaging materials thereby reducing resource consumption and resultant waste. Goods that are in concentrate form also require less packaging while providing the equivalent amount of use.

- Recycle your old, unused cell phones.
 - Why It's Important – The average American upgrades their cell phone on an average of every 9 months. The old phones can't be thrown away because they contain hazardous chemicals that can leach into groundwater. Proper recycling of phones prevents pollution and also provides cheap phones to people who otherwise couldn't afford a new model; all with less energy consumed.
 - More Info - <http://www.electronicrecyclers.com/recyclingprogram.aspx>

- Don't purchase bottled water.
 - Why It's Important – It takes approximately 1.5 million barrels of oil to make all the water bottles used in the U.S. each year, and most people don't realize that EPA standards for tap water are actually more stringent than FDA standards for bottled water. Yet every day Americans pay a price up to 1000 times greater than tap water for it. Save resources and money by purchasing a reusable water bottle and taking it with you when you're on the go.

Home

- Replace old incandescent bulbs with energy efficient lights such as compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) or light emitting diodes (LEDs).
 - Why It's Important – Incandescent light bulbs are notoriously inefficient – up to 90% of their energy is lost in the form of heat. CFLs can provide equivalent light while consuming 2/3 less energy and they have a lifespan up to 10 times longer. Replacing your 5 most frequently used bulbs with CFLs can save about \$60 per year.

- Check to see that your showerhead is low-flow (2.5 gallons per minute).
 - Why It's Important - A low-flow showerhead is one of the easiest ways to conserve water. A family of four can save almost 15,000 gallons of water per year.

- Unplug your electronics and chargers when they are not in use.
 - Why It's Important – Even though they're not turned on or there is nothing attached, those electronics and chargers are still drawing electricity. The estimated electrical load drained from appliances and electronics in standby mode accounts for 18 million tons of CO2 emissions each year.

- When purchasing cleaning products purchase those that are “plant based” rather than petroleum based, or that have been certified as safe by organizations such as Green Seal.
 - Why It's Important – The average home contains over 60 products that are considered hazardous to human health. These products are also potentially dangerous to the environment. Manufacturers are often under no duty to disclose their ingredients because they are protected as “trade secrets.” Pay attention to product labels containing the words “Caution,” “Warning,” “Danger,” or “Danger-Poison.”
 - Caution means slightly toxic – one ounce may be fatal to a 150 pound adult
 - Warning means moderately toxic – a teaspoon to one ounce may be fatal
 - Danger means highly toxic – a taste to one teaspoon may be fatal
 - Danger – Poison – means the most toxic
 - More Info - <http://www.greenseal.org/>; Consumer Reports at <http://www.greenerchoices.org/products.cfm?product=greencleaning&page=RightChoices>

- If looking for new appliances and/or electronics, look for the Energy Star logo.
 - Why It's Important - Energy Star qualified products are the most energy efficient models on the market. They meet strict efficiency guidelines set by the EPA and Dept. of Energy. By purchasing Energy Star qualified products, Americans avoided greenhouse gas emission equivalent to 27 million cars and saved \$16 billion on their utility bills.
 - More Info - <http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=home.index>

- If you have an automatic dishwasher, use it rather than washing by hand.

- Why It's Important – Automatic dishwashers use less water and energy per full cycle than an individual washing by hand. Additionally, scrape your dishes off rather than pre-rinsing dishes before running a full load. This can save up to 20 gallons of water per load, or over 1000 gallons per year.
- Wash your laundry with cold water whenever possible.
 - Why It's Important – Hot water heating accounts for about 90% of the energy required to wash clothing. Unless you're dealing with oily stains, warm or cold settings will effectively clean your clothing.
 - More Info – U.S. Dept. of Energy
<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/laundry.html>
- Check your home for leaky faucets and repair them.
 - Why It's Important – Leaky faucets are a major source of wasted water. A faucet that is leaking at one drop per second wastes 2,700 gallons of water per year.
- Sort your waste and recycle appropriate materials such as paper, plastic, aluminum and glass.
 - Why It's Important – Recycling waste keeps materials out of our landfills, saves resources and reduces the energy required to make new products. If every American would recycle just the Sunday paper each week, we could save over 500,000 trees, every week.
 - More Info – To learn more about recycling or find recycling facilities near your home contact your local waste hauler or go to
<http://earth911.org/>
- Make sure your home is properly insulated and weatherstripped to avoid unnecessary heating and cooling costs.
 - Why It's Important – Insulation helps to keep homes warm in the winter and cool in the summer, yet many homes don't have proper levels of insulation. By insulating ceilings, walls, attics, floors, and crawl spaces to recommended levels you can reduce heating and cooling costs by 5-25%.
 - More Info – U.S. Dept. of Energy at
<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/insulation.html>
- If your water heater is over 5 years old, insulate it.
 - Why It's Important – Wrapping the tank and hot water pipes will help to alleviate heat loss thereby saving money on energy costs. Insulation and tank wraps can be purchased for about \$20 at most home improvement stores.
- Cancel unwanted junk mail and recycle the mailers you receive.

- Why It's Important – The equivalent of 100 million trees are used to produce the 4 million tons of junk mail that Americans receive each year. Most of this mail is unwanted and will end up in a landfill if not recycled.
- More Info – Cancel unsolicited catalogs at www.catalogchoice.org
- If repainting the interior of your home, purchase environmentally friendly paints.
 - Why It's Important – According to the EPA, the air inside your home is up to 3 times more polluted than the air outdoors. Much of this pollution comes from paints and finishes. If you are going to repaint any rooms in your house, look for low or no-VOC (volatile organic compounds) paint for the project.

Work

- Turn off your computer at night or when you are leaving for an extended period of time.
 - Why It's Important – The screensaver mode on a computer doesn't reduce power consumption, and in some cases may increase the amount of electricity consumed. When you are done with work, either turn off the computer or put the computer into sleep/hibernation mode.
- Try to avoid air travel if possible.
 - Why It's Important – While flying only accounts for 3-4% of the greenhouse gas emissions in the world, that percentage is rapidly increasing. Many business trips are necessary, but as new video and teleconferencing technologies mature it may be possible to skip some trips.
- Reduce the amount of paper consumed at work by working electronically and recycling the paper used.
 - Why It's Important – Each year the average office worker consumes approximately 10,000 sheets of copy paper. U.S. businesses use about 21 million tons of paper per year. Proper recycling will save energy, resources, and valuable landfill space.