



# 12 Ways to Live Green and Conserve Energy in your Home

## 1. Control Your Heating Costs

- Set thermostat to 68 degrees when home, and turn down to 55 to 60 degrees when gone for more than 3 hours or sleeping.
- Check the accuracy of your thermostat with a standard room thermometer.
- For every degree you turn your heat down, you save about \$5 per month.
- Change your furnace filters every month during the heating season. Pleated filters should be replaced every three months. Reusable filters are now available for most furnaces and need cleaning on a monthly basis.

## 2. Control Hot Water Costs

- Set water heater to 120 degrees. Always turn off the heater before adjusting the thermostat.
- Turn your water heater off at the breaker (for an electric tank) or set to "Vacation" (for a gas tank) when you will be gone for a day or more.
- Insulate your *electric* water heater with a tank wrap if it is in an unheated space.  
***\*Remember that your water tank is constantly running, using a significant amount of power. Regulate your usage of hot water carefully so that you are not paying for un-used heat.***

## 3. Control the Flow of Your Water

- Install low flow showerheads and sink aerators.
- A ten-minute shower uses less water than a bath. A five-minute shower...even less!
- Fix any leaky faucets, toilets, or water pipes, especially for hot water. A leaky faucet that drips one drop per second amounts to 8.6 gallons at the end of the day!

## 4. Plug Air Leaks in Ceiling, Walls and Floors

- Install door sweeps, weather stripping and caulking around doors and doorframes.
- Seal cracked glass, caulk, or glaze around edges, seal pulley holes in windows. You can buy special weather stripping for sliding glass doors.
- Install shrink-to-fit plastic over your windows on the inside of your home.
- Cover and seal off fireplaces when not in use.
- Fill & cover large holes, and caulk or foam seal small holes at the plumbing breaks.
- Seal electric outlets and light switches (on perimeter walls) with foam gaskets.
- Caulk baseboard trim on perimeter walls.
- Cover & seal any other holes with insulation or crumpled plastic bags covered with cardboard and sealed with duct tape.

## 5. Refrigerators

- Keep refrigerator at 38 degrees (check manually with a thermometer).
- Clean the coils once/month with a long-handled bristle brush or vacuum (unplug fridge first).
- Keep freezer between 0 and 10 degrees and defrost when needed.
- Keep refrigerator full for optimal use of energy.



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## 6. Use Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs

- CFLs (compact fluorescent lamps) typically use one fourth of the amount of energy as equivalent incandescent bulbs, and last 7-10 times as long. Replacing all of your incandescent bulbs with CFLs is one of the easiest ways to conserve energy and save money in your home.

## 7. Laundry and Dishwashing

- Wash full loads of laundry with cold water – washing clothes in hot water costs about 20 to 40 cents per load and does not sterilize clothing.
- Line dry whenever possible. The sun is the ideal stain remover, after soaking stains in lemon juice or washing soda as needed. Turn clothes inside out to prevent color fading.
- Make sure dishwasher holds a full load before using & air-dry the dishes by propping the door open and use energy saving settings.
- Use non-toxic soaps & alternative cleaners.

## 8. Use Non-toxic Cleaning Alternatives in Your Home

- See "Is Your Home Healthy?" and "Basic Recipes".  
***\*We do not have to suddenly rid our houses of all cleaners to be non-toxic immediately. However, if you implement one or two of these things into your daily routines it can make your home a much healthier place for less money.***

## 9. Reduce, Reuse & Recycle

- Use your blue recycle bin to recycle magazines, newspapers, glass, and plastic. (See recycling handout for further information on what and where you can recycle.)
- Reuse plastic containers and spray bottles for homemade non-toxic cleaners.
- "Pre-cycle" by opting for items you know are recyclable or reusable.
- Buy in bulk (lessens packaging that ends up in the trash).
- Remove yourself from junk mail lists. (www.newdream.org; www.optoutprescreen.com)  
***\*Recycling also includes buying products that are recycled. This is called "closing the loop", and is an essential component of creating a market for recycled goods.***

## 10. Compost (see composting brochures for instructions)

- Start a composting bin outside for your food & yard waste.
- Start a worm bin with newspaper and other paper products.  
***\* Saves water and energy as an alternative to the garbage disposal.***  
***\*Use compost in your garden to keep water in the soil, (which means less watering and less chemical fertilizer, decreasing polluted runoff).***  
***\* Composting reduces waste and saves money on garbage costs, electricity, and water.***

## 11. Replace Paper and Plastic Disposable Products with Reusable Products

- Use recycled, non-chlorine bleached paper when possible.
- Use cheesecloth or old towels and cloths instead of paper towels.
- Use Tupperware containers instead of plastic wrap, plastic baggies or aluminum foil when storing food.  
***\*This is about making less garbage and less waste. We throw things away because it is easy. However, anytime we replace a paper product with a reusable product we make a difference.***

## 12. Take Your Own Bags to the Store

- Canvas bags work well and are durable and long lasting. If you use plastic or paper bags, use them until they wear out. Most stores will give you 5 cents off the total for each bag you supply.



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