

Going Home, Going Green



Green Resources

Learn more about CFL usage at: www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr_cfls.

See the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Web site for more information on water efficiency: <http://epa.gov/watersense/>.

More than 50 types of products can earn the ENERGY STAR® rating, including appliances, lighting, home electronics, and home office equipment. Find out which appliances qualify at www.energystar.gov.

The California Energy Center provides more great ideas for homeowners at www.consumerenergycenter.org.

There's a movement under way to lessen the impact that homes have on the environment, and both new and existing homeowners alike are doing their part by taking simple steps in the right direction. Here are several ways to make your own home a little greener right now:

Switch to CFLs

▶▶ Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) not only last longer, but, as a consequence, also reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions created by your home's power needs. A CFL bulb uses 75 percent less energy than a standard incandescent bulb, generates 450 fewer pounds of greenhouse gases from power plants, and lasts 10 times longer than its incandescent cousin.

Use ENERGY STAR®

▶▶ When it comes time to replace or upgrade that refrigerator or washer, select only ENERGY STAR®-qualified products, which cost 10 to 30 percent less in operating costs to run. Consumers using ENERGY STAR® products saved enough energy last year to avoid greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those emitted from 25 million cars—all while saving \$14 billion on their utility bills.

Avoid VOC-Based Paints

▶▶ Volatile organic compounds or "VOCs" have been a key component of the composition of oil-based paint, and can also be found in traditional latex-based paints. Exposure to VOCs in paint can trigger asthma attacks, eye irritation, respiratory problems, nausea, and dizziness among other symptoms. Prolonged exposure has been linked to kidney and liver disease and even cancer. Find out more

about your healthier options at: http://eartheasy.com/live_nontoxic_paints.htm.

Be Water Efficient

▶▶ Every inch of rain translates into nearly 600 gallons of water for every 1,000 square feet of roof. That's why environmentally conscious homeowners are using rainwater harvesting systems that are installed on a home's roof. The Rainwater Harvesting Community offers more details: www.harvesth2o.com/.

You also can cut water waste by installing low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators—both of which help save resources without sacrificing water pressure—using front-end-loading washing machines, and installing dual-flush commodes, which use a variable amount of water, depending on how much water is needed.

Tune Up Your Home

▶▶ A professional HVAC (heating, ventilating, and air conditioning) checkup costs about \$100 and can save you 5 to 10 percent on heating and cooling bills, while also cutting down on the carbon dioxide emissions coming out of your home. Don't forget to clean or replace your filters monthly. Upgrade your windows and doors with energy-efficient models and improve their efficiency by replacing old weather-stripping. Finally, make sure your home's walls and attic are well insulated; if not, then enlist a contractor who will use a "blown-in" insulation technique to fill in any voids that may be causing hot or cool air to escape. ♦

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