



Simple Tips to Green Your Home

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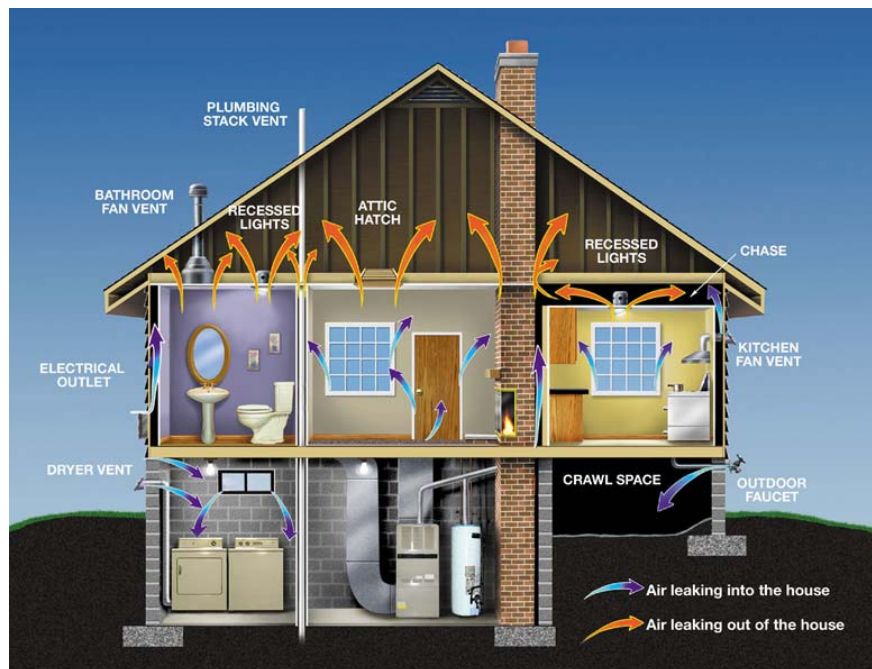
Energy



Lighting accounts for about 20% of the electric bill in the average U.S. home.

If every American home replaced just one light bulb with an ENERGY STAR qualified bulb, we would save **enough energy to light more than 3 million homes for a year**, more than **\$600 million in annual energy costs**, and prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of more than **800,000 cars**.

1. Swap out conventional bulbs for Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL); you'll use 75% less energy and save about \$30 per bulb. CFLs last about 10 times longer.
2. LED lights are excellent for use in recessed cans, under cabinet lights, & porch lights. While prices for LEDs have come down, they are still relatively expensive.
3. Check for air gaps around the "envelope" or "shell" of your home. Energy Star estimates a well sealed and insulated home can save up to 20% on heating and cooling costs (or up to 10% on their total annual energy bill).



Source: <http://www.energystar.gov>

4. Choose Energy Star Appliances and save 30% on total energy bills. Check for rebate offers through your local utility at www.dsireusa.org and save hundreds of dollars!
5. Perform regular equipment maintenance: clean refrigerator condenser coils and replace furnace air filters regularly to cut energy bills and save from costly repairs.

Water



Water covers 70% of the Earth's surface and is one of the most abundant resources on the planet. However, only 2.5% of the planet's water is fresh and less than 1% is actually available for drinking because some of the fresh water is stored in the form of icebergs.

A typical family of four in America uses 400 gallons of water every day. With a few simple adjustments we can save water for future generations without sacrificing comfort and performance.

1. Repair all leaks – a leaky toilet can waste 200 gallons a day.
2. Install low-flow aerators, shower heads, and toilets; you'll save over 20,000 gallons per year. Ask your local water utility if they provide free efficiency replacements.



Low-flow 0.5gpm faucet aerator



Low-flow 1.75gpm shower head

3. Choose Energy Star washers – and cut water costs by more than 50%.
4. Turn off water while shaving and brushing and save hundreds of gallons every month.
5. Water the lawn only as needed - Step on your lawn. If the grass springs back up when you remove pressure, it doesn't need watering. Water your lawn once every three days. Check sprinkler timers to reduce water time if necessary.

Waste



Want not, waste not. The best way to reduce waste is to reduce consumption. Given the average lifecycle of a product from factory to landfill takes just 6 weeks, thinking twice before buying the next must-have gadget or accessory can save precious natural resources for future generations while preventing toxic chemicals from entering landfills.

1. Consume less 😊...and save money on purchases and storage costs.
2. Start recycling and composting – and help divert more than 50% waste from landfills while saving up to 23% off monthly waste bill.
3. Purchase permanent products – the average lifespan of products from factory to landfill is 6 weeks.
4. Sign up for a free tour of your local waste processing plant to see what happens to waste, from sorting recyclables to landfilling, long after curbside pickup. If available, visit an “Artist in Residence” program to see how artists turn “junk” into art.



Recycling in action

Source: www.sfreycling.com



Artist In Residence – Sculpture Garden

Source: www.sfreycling.com

5. Close the loop - purchase recycled products and products that use recycled packaging.

Chemicals



The EPA estimates that indoor air can be up to 10-times worse than the air outside due to mold, asbestos, radon, volatile organic compounds, and other sources. According to the National Safety Council, our exposure to these toxins can add up to allergies, asthma, and worse. About 23 million Americans, including 6.8 million children, have asthma and 12 million Americans report having an asthma attack in the past year. Below are tips on how to reduce your exposure to some of these indoor toxins.

1. Purchase Green Certified (e.g., Green Seal) cleaners
2. Make your own non-toxic cleaner using household items such as baking soda, lemon juice, salt, and toothpaste. Visit <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Prairie/8088/clngrn.html> for ideas and tips
3. Replace multiple cleaners with an all-purpose green cleaner when possible
4. Purchase paint with low/zero Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) content; paints with low/zero VOC content substitute traditional petroleum-based ingredients with non-toxic ingredients such as milk protein, soy, citrus, and plant pigments. Take time to research low/zero VOC paints as some may still emit relatively high amounts of certain VOCs and some are limited to specific applications. More product information on low/zero VOC paints can be found at: www.greenseal.org
5. Air-out new cars – that desirable “new car” smell is likely composed of hazardous volatile chemicals used in adhesives and sealers. Scientists have found the chemicals included the carcinogen benzene, two other possible carcinogens cyclohexanone and styrene, and several other toxic chemicals.