



# Going Green Made Easy

by [Earth911](#) [www.Earth911.com](http://www.Earth911.com)

How can you go green at home? Here are 10 simple steps to green up your life and change the planet.

## 1. Buy Only What You Need

- Plain and simple—don't over purchase.
- However, when buying items that you use daily or in large quantities, consider buying in bulk. You will save money and packaging. Consider splitting bulk purchases with neighbors or friends to get that savings but not the full quantity of the purchase. Sometimes we can't always use 50 rolls of toilet paper!

It's just a couple of steps away! Going green doesn't have to require a ton of money or time. Simple changes to your daily routine can make all the difference.

## 2. Recycle, Recycle, Recycle!

- Earth911 offers recycling, reuse and proper disposal options for more than 250 different materials, everything from plastic bags to construction materials.
- Remodeling? Don't forget to look for recycling and reuse programs for your household items—windows, doors, tile, etc. New technology has enabled some companies to recycle old porcelain toilets and tubs into beautiful counter tops and tile.
- Don't forget the last step in the recycling loop—buy recycled! In order for recycling to be sustainable, we need to purchase recycled-content materials! Look for and purchase post-consumer recycled content packaging and products whenever possible.

## 3. Change a Light, Change the World

- When your incandescent light bulbs stop working, replace them with the new, energy efficient [compact fluorescent light bulbs \(CFLs\)](#). According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) CFLs use 2/3 less energy than

traditional incandescent light bulbs and last 10 times longer. Making this switch will save you money and energy.

- Some incandescent light bulbs may contain mercury, so remember to dispose of both properly at your local household hazardous waste facility.
- Take the U.S. EPA's [ENERGY STAR pledge](#) to save energy and help reduce the risks of global climate change by replacing at least one light in your home with an ENERGY STAR qualified one.

## 4. Bag It Up the Green Way

- Plastic bags are getting the “thumbs down” in several communities around the country because of litter problems. When going to the store, consider bagging your own groceries in cloth, reusable bags. Many stores sell reusable bags and charge to provide plastic grocery bags.
- When walking your dog and cleaning up after then, use a biodegradable bag rather than a plastic bag.
- If you decide to use plastic bags, remember to recycle them. Thousands of [locations](#) are available across the country.

## 5. Green Your Gadgets

Electronics become “outdated” so much more quickly than 10 or 20 years ago. To insure you are responsible with your gadgets, consider doing the following:

- Resist the urge to upgrade every time a “newer” or “cooler” gadget comes out. Reduce at the source—you save money and the time (and frustration) to learn how to operate and program the new gadget.
- Donate working electronics to charities or school programs resell or refurbish them.
- Completely broken? Recycle! Electronics are the new “hot” item being recycled across the country.
- Refill or recycle your inkjet or toner cartridges.
- Close the recycling loop and buy recycled, post-consumer content paper for your printer. Most local office supply stores, such as Staples, offer a growing selection of environmentally friendly papers.
- Keep in mind even computer game equipment and iPods now have reuse and recycling programs available. G4 TV offers a [new campaign](#) encouraging e-gadget reuse and recycling.

## 6. Make Every Drop Count

Even though 70 percent of the world is covered by water, we should conserve all that we can. Here are some quick tips to save that last drop:

- Turn off the water faucet when brushing your teeth.

- Use your dishwasher and washing machine only when they are full. Try to avoid small, partial loads.
- Compost food scraps instead of using your garbage disposal. You'll save gallons of water every time and have a great soil amendment for your garden.
- Clean your driveway or sidewalk with a broom instead of hosing it down with water. You'll save at least 80 gallons of water every time.
- Don't use running water to thaw food.

## **7. Turn Up the Savings**

- A few degrees can make all the difference in your energy savings and your wallet. In the summer raise your thermostat two degrees. In the winter lower your thermostat two degrees. You probably won't notice the difference, at least until your utility bill arrives!
- Use a ceiling fan to cool off a room or house. It consumes as little energy as a 60-watt bulb, which is about 98 percent less energy than most central air conditioners.
- Install a programmable thermostat to better regulate the temperature in your house through the day and night. Remember to recycle your old, mercury containing thermostats.
- When replacing an appliance, be sure to look for one that is more energy efficient. Always look for the ENERGY STAR symbol and compare water and energy usage to ensure you get the best product and environmental savings to suit your needs.

## **8. Clear the Air**

- Carpool, ride the bus, use public transportation or bike to work
- Telecommute. Employee productivity will increase.
- Trip chain! Save fuel and time by planning ahead and consolidating trips into one trip. Also, vow to only go to certain, far away stores less frequently.
- Keep your tires inflated to the appropriate air pressure level. This will extend the life of your tires and give you better gas mileage.
- Drive the speed limit.
- Service your car on a regular basis per the manufacturer guidelines.
- In the market for a new car? Consider one of the new hybrid or fuel efficient vehicles.

## **9. Save A Tree**

- Save paper, time and postage, and pay your bills online.
- As the price of paper cards and postage increases, consider e-mailing e-cards.
- When printing documents, print on both sides of paper. You can cut your paper consumption almost in half.
- E-mail documents and information instead of printing and mailing them.

- Save documents on your computer or on a disk instead of in a print copy in your filing cabinet. You'll free up lots of space.

## **10. Home Sweet Home**

- Clotheslines are making a comeback. Dry your clothes on the line instead of in the dryer. They will smell better, and you will save money.
- Use cloth napkins instead of paper napkins. They can be used over and over again and thrown in with your weekly load of towels.
- Make your own less toxic cleaning alternatives using baking soda, soap and vinegar.
- When repainting a room, be sure to look for paint that is low VOC (volatile organic compounds). Several manufacturers now offer VOC paints and they don't leave that paint fume smell.
- Open the doors and windows to let the fresh air in! Indoor air quality is often times worse than the air outside. Open doors and windows daily to circulate fresh air in and germs and smells out.