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Local Green Irene Eco-Consultant

How Can I Save Money By Going Green?

If you are looking a painless way to save money, here's the simplest, and most cost-effective, solution you'll find anywhere: go green. When you're using less water, electricity and fossil fuel, you aren't just generating fewer greenhouse gases; you're also saving money on your utility bills. To help you get started, we can help you target simple, affordable eco-options that fit your needs and budget. Changes make an immediate difference to the planet and your utility costs. When you start seeing your savings, you'll build confidence, and will want to do more! Below are just a few examples of the savings you can achieve right now.



Reduce your water usage (and the energy to heat the water)

There are several steps you can take to keep your money from going down the drain, and none of these will make you feel like your family is "sacrificing". Consider switching to a low-flow showerhead, which can cut your hot water usage by 50%. Once your shower is in check, add faucet aerators to your bathroom and kitchen faucets, reducing the water flow to .5-1.5 gallons per minute (GPM), down from the standard 2.2 GPM or higher.

Green Your Lighting

Lighting represents about 25% of home energy costs, and a small change here can make a big difference. Replacing just one incandescent light bulb with an Energy Star compact fluorescent (CFL) bulb, for example, can yield savings anywhere from \$30 to more than \$50 over the 10,000+ hour life of one CFL.

Light-emitting diode bulbs (LEDs) are increasingly more available, and new uses, shapes and sizes are emerging. This is great news if you like saving money, as these bulbs use 80% less energy than comparable incandescent bulbs, and last 25 times longer. If you've got night lights, chandeliers, or other decorative lighting, you should definitely think about making a switch to LEDs.

Let's shed some light on the bigger picture. If you replace 44 wasteful incandescent bulbs (the average for a medium-sized home) with money-saving CFLs and LEDs, you can save well over \$2,300 over the life of the first set of bulbs (based on a 10 cents per kilowatt hour electric rate which is in line with what our local providers charge per kwh if you have a standard residential meter).

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Your toilet wastes water with every flush. Install a toilet tank bag (which displaces about a gallon of water in your tank, so each flush uses less water) and/or a simple-to-install fill cycle diverter (which saves .5 gallons per flush) in each of your toilets. And don't forget to check your toilet for leaks. Detect leaks in your toilet by adding a few drops of food coloring to the tank. If, within 15 minutes, the color shows up in the bowl, you have a leak, and you might need to replace the inexpensive flapper. Finally, limit your showers to five minutes each. If you take all of these steps in a two-bedroom home, the reduction in energy used to heat water and lower water consumption will impact your utility bill to the tune of more than \$1,000 in savings each year.

Green your heating and cooling

With heating and cooling accounting for up to 50% of your home's energy use, cutting this expense involves a two-step process: stopping warm or cold air from escaping your home; and boosting the efficiency of your HVAC system.

Even with insulation, your home can leak energy. Consider installing a doorsweep, available for only a few dollars, to prohibit air from entering or escaping under your front and back doors. Magnetic vent covers, also available for only a few dollars, help direct air flow to distribute are better. If a room isn't being utilized regularly, close vents which effortlessly block heating or cooling from entering. Air also leaks through power outlets and light switch plates. For pennies you can install insulation gaskets, which will help combat these hidden drafts.

To boost efficiency, a programmable thermostat can set your HVAC system to deliver peak heating or cooling for the hours when your home is occupied, cutting back when everybody is out or asleep. Costing from \$30 to \$100, programmable thermostats can return your investment by more than 100% in the first year.

Simple solution that lower bills and stress!

Don't get overwhelmed by a marketplace full of pricey green technology options: it doesn't take a big expense to achieve a big impact for the planet, or for your budget. You can start by taking simple, smart, and easy steps—and watch your energy costs shrink! †

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