

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: GO GREEN



Whether you are a business, a homeowner, or a community, these 10 tips are great ways to keep green in your wallet while saving energy. Make a resolution to become more energy efficient.



Shine the light on energy efficiency. Lighting is an essential part of everyday life. Why not switch out incandescent bulbs around your home for compact fluorescents or LED lighting? Compact fluorescents can save \$50 in energy costs over the life of the bulb. LED bulbs will not only last 10 times longer, on average, but they also cost a lot less than their incandescent counterpart. The lifetime electricity cost of an LED bulb is \$60 vs. a lifetime electricity cost of \$540 for an incandescent bulb.



Cook up some energy savings. Your oven may be accounting for 4.5 percent of your home's energy use. If you factor in the rest of your kitchen appliances, the energy use can rise to as much as 15 percent. Using the right-sized pots and pans on stove burners, can result in savings of \$36 annually for an electric range or \$18 for gas. Remember, constantly opening the oven door to check on your goodies releases valuable heat, and causes your oven to work extra hard to get back to the appropriate temperature.



Follow that star! Thinking about buying some new electronics next year? Keep an eye out for the ENERGY STAR® rating while you're shopping. A computer that has earned an ENERGY STAR can save 30 to 65 percent more energy compared to a computer without the designation. Consider rechargeable batteries with an ENERGY STAR charger. In the U.S. alone, energy-efficient battery chargers could save families more than \$170 million annually.



Plug into energy savings. There may be a vampire lurking around your household or business. These vampires hang around electronics – from lights to the CD player – and draw small amounts of energy even when these items are plugged in but not in use. These are called vampire loads and can cost an average of \$100 a year for most American households. But don't get out the garlic just yet. These vampires can be stopped with a power strip that can be turned off when the items are not in use.



On your mark. Get set. Timer. Set your programmable thermostat to conserve the energy used to heat your home. Set it back if you're not going to be home and when you go to bed. Lowering your thermostat 10 to 15 degrees for eight hours can save five to 15 percent a year on heating bills. Why pay for warm air that you can't enjoy?



Drive home energy savings. You log a lot of miles in the car throughout the year and all that driving means more fuel costs! One simple way to save at the pump is by emptying the junk in the trunk before each trip. Added weight in a vehicle requires additional fuel, and an extra 100 pounds in your car could increase gas costs by up to eight cents a gallon!



Let the sunshine in. Get your windows ready for the winter season by using caulk or weatherstripping around drafty windows. Then, on cold days open the curtains, blinds, etc. on your windows and let the natural warmth of the sun in your home. Be sure to close your window coverings at night, though, to keep the heat inside.



Let energy savings flow. Keep air vents clear of obstructions including furniture and decor. It takes up to 25 percent more energy to circulate air into a room if the vents are blocked. A yearly tune-up of your heating and cooling system can also improve efficiency.



Cozy up to energy savings. If your fireplace has been properly maintained it can provide a low-cost way to heat your home. Before starting a fire, make sure your fireplace flue damper is sealed and the hearth is caulked. That will keep the energy from going up in smoke.



Mom was right, turn off that light! Turn out lights and ceiling fans in rooms when they are not occupied. Shutting off one fan and turning off one light can save you more than \$7 a month on your electric bill. And don't forget the TV!