

DIY Guide to saving money through conservation and efficiency

(Use less, pay less)

There are a number of ways to save money around the home in auto by using fewer resources, without necessarily limiting activities. It's a case of using resources wisely and efficiently. This guide attempts to address the various ways we use energy and how to use less of it, and use it more efficiently. Sections will be divided by usage area. Dive right in, and find ways to save energy, and save money!

This guide is a free resource brought to you by <http://www.green-trust.org>

A donation is appreciated, but not necessary. Please forward this (unaltered) guide to as many people as possible. The free discussion group with updated versions of this guide is found at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/resource_conservation/

Transportation

- Avoid excess idling which wastes gas.
- Avoid premium grades of gasoline unless your vehicle manual explicitly requires it.
- Keep your engine properly tuned and running at its peak performance.
- Check and replace air filters on a regular basis to prevent clogging which reduces gas mileage.
- Keep the tires properly inflated to help insure most efficient gas mileage.
- Use cruise control to help save gas by maintaining a constant speed.
- Speeding is a very expensive and wasteful habit. Driving fast may get you there quicker - but you're wasting precious fossil fuel and spending more time and money at the gas pump.
- Use the recommended grade of motor oil to improve gas mileage.
- If you own more than one vehicle, drive the one that gets the best gas mileage whenever possible.
- If possible, take advantage of carpools, ride-share programs and public transportation.
- Walk or ride a bike for near-by errands, and combine all errands into one trip if you must drive.
- Avoid carrying unneeded items, especially heavy ones. An extra 100 lbs in the trunk reduces a typical car's fuel economy by 1-2 percent.
- Luggage racks increase vehicle drag and rob you of gas mileage. Remove them when not in use to increase energy efficiency
- Over 45 mph, use ac instead of opening a window. Use the flow through vents as much as possible, and park in the shade to reduce interior temperatures.
- Avoid rush hour traffic if you can. Not only is stop-and-go traffic stressful and annoying, it's bad for your car's gas mileage.

Additional resources:

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2008/11/19/6727/5290/685/663434>

<http://www.globalstewards.org/town.htm>

Electricity

- Install energy-efficient compact fluorescent bulbs. They give off less heat and use as much as 75 percent less energy than regular bulbs.
- Use low wattage task lights instead of lighting the whole room up.
- Read near a window instead of turning on a light.
- Turn lights off when you leave a room.
- Put phantom loads like TVs, satellite or cable boxes, internet routers and stereos on switched power strips. Anything with an inline or plug in transformer (Wal-Mart) used for powering or charging phones, laptops, etc., uses power even when the item is not being used.
- Use a clothes line to reduce your dryer usage. In summer we hang clothes outdoors, in winter, indoors near the wood stove.
- Buy Energy Star appliances, products and lights. This uses electricity more efficiently, needing less of it to do the job.
- Set computers, monitors, printers, copiers and other business equipment to their energy saving feature and turn them off at the end of the day.

Additional resources:

<http://earth911.com/location/california/flex-your-power/>

<http://www.burbankwaterandpower.com/index.php/electric-saving-tips/electric-saving-tips>

Heating (and cooling)

- If you have a fireplace, be sure it is fitted with a tight sealing damper that is closed when the fireplace is not in use. If the fireplace is used infrequently, use a chimney block to eliminate heat loss.
- Caulk foundation cracks and openings. Make sure kitchen and bathroom vent dampers close properly.
- Install automatic setback thermostats that adjust the heat to your schedule.
- Insulate attics (especially attics with less than seven inches of insulation), walls, and flooring over unheated crawl spaces or basements.
- Install exterior storm windows, including cellar storm windows. For windows that are rarely opened, consider installing interior storm windows.
- Replace standard curtains with tight sealing, insulated or quilted window coverings.
- Caulk or weather strip windows and doors.
- A mudroom or entry "airlock" keeps indoor and outdoor air from mixing quickly.

- Use ceiling fans to move heat or cool around the house. Keeps heat from congregating at ceiling level.
- In the winter, turn your thermostats down to 68 degrees or below. Reduce the setting to 55 degrees before going to sleep or when leaving for the day. (For each 1 degree you turn down the thermostat in the winter, you'll save up to 5% on your heating costs.)

Additional resources:

<http://www.lclwd.com/littleton-electric-department-leld/tips.shtml>

http://www.dom.com/news/summer_tips.jsp

Trash Removal

- Buy products that are recyclable or biodegradable. This goes for the packaging the items come in as well.
- Compost food scraps instead of throwing it in the trash. Have a garbage disposal? Get rid of it. You are losing valuable nutrients for the garden, and prematurely clogging your pipes and septic system.
- Reduce (your volume of products and packaging), reuse (items instead of tossing them), recycle (old materials into new materials), repair (instead of tossing unless the item is extremely inefficient and an energy waster), and refuse (to be a wasteful consumer, having to have all the latest toys and gadgets, wrapped in "forever" trash).
- Use a "resource" hauler who will recycle your resources, not toss them in a landfill. Recycle what you can personally.

Additional resources:

<http://www.freecycle.org>

<http://www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/recycling/consumer.shtml>

<http://www.origin.popularmechanics.com/wastefootprint/>

Water

- Take a shower instead of filling the tub and taking a bath. Showers usually use less water than tub baths.
- Install a low-flow shower head which restricts the quantity of flow at 60 psi to no more than 3.0 gallons per minute.
- Take short showers and install a cutoff valve or turn the water off while soaping and back on again only to rinse.

- Do not use hot water when cold will do. Water and energy can be saved by washing hands with soap and cold water; hot water should only be added when hands are especially dirty.
- Reduce the level of the water being used in a bath tub by one or two inches if a shower is not available.
- Turn water off when brushing teeth until it is time to rinse.
- Do not let water run when washing hands. Instead, hands should be wet, and water should be turned off while soaping and scrubbing and turned on again to rinse. A cutoff valve may also be installed on the faucet.
- Shampoo hair in the shower. Shampooing in the shower takes only a little more water than is used to shampoo hair during a bath and much less than shampooing and bathing separately.
- Hold hot water in the basin when shaving instead of letting the faucet continue to run.
- Test toilets for leaks. To test for a leak, a few drops of food coloring can be added to the water in the tank. The toilet should not be flushed. The customer can then watch to see if the coloring appears in the bowl within a few minutes. If it does, the fixture needs adjustment or repair.
- Use a toilet tank displacement device. A one-gallon plastic milk bottle can be filled with stones or with water, recapped, and placed in the toilet tank. This will reduce the amount of water in the tank but still provide enough for flushing. (Bricks, which some people use for this purpose, are not recommended, since they crumble eventually and could damage the working mechanism.) Displacement devices should never be used with new low-volume flush toilets.
- Install faucet aerators to reduce water consumption.
- Never use the toilet to dispose of cleaning tissues, cigarette butts, or other trash. This can waste a great deal of water and also places an unnecessary load on the wastewater treatment plant (or clogs your septic system).
- Install a new low-volume toilet that uses 1.6 gallons or less per flush when building a new home or remodeling a bathroom.
- Use a good water filter instead of buying spring or filtered water at the store.

Additional resources:

<http://www.springvalleytx.com/residents/wsg/conservation/>

<http://www.berkeywater.com/start.main.html>

<http://www.monolake.org/about/waterconservation>

<http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/>

Food

- Grow as much of your own food as possible, as organically as possible (you know what's in it).

- Locally raised and produced food has been called “the new organic” — better tasting, better for the environment, better for local economies, and better for your health. From reviving the family farm to reconnecting with the seasons, the local foods movement is turning good eating into a revolution (much store bought food traveled 3000+ miles to get to you).
- Reduce carb intake, and exercise more.
- Reduce your consumption of packed and prepared foods. It’s more expensive, and not good for you.
- Reduce your visits to restaurants. Do you really think there is \$20 worth of meat in that steak? Raise a goat.

Additional resources:

<http://100milediet.org/faqs>

<http://www.eatlocalchallenge.com/>

<http://web.missouri.edu/~ikerdj/papers/Alabama-Eat%20Local.htm>

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