



Five Green Savings and Healthy Living Ideas

1. Change out your dead light bulbs with Compact Fluorescents and save!

Making this change will help to use less electricity at home. Lighting accounts for close to 20 percent of the average home's electric bill. Qualified CFLs use up to 75 percent less electricity than incandescent light bulbs, last up to 10 times longer, cost little up front, and provide a quick return on investment. If every home in America replaced just one incandescent light bulb with a qualified CFL, in one year it would save enough energy to light more than 3 million homes.

2. Install Low-Flow Fixtures to save water and money.

Low-flow shower heads use about 2½ gallons of water per minute compared to between four and five gallons per minute used by conventional heads. Every day, three billion gallons of water flow through showerheads in the United States—half of it unnecessarily. For an investment of \$10 or less you can save \$50 to \$75 per year on water bills and \$20 to \$50 or more per year on energy bills. Low-flow faucet aerators are very inexpensive and can cut the water usage of faucets by as much as 40% from 4 gallons per minute to 2½.

3. Install a programmable thermostat and cut your energy costs.

The average American's energy bill is \$1,900 per year. You can save between 1% and 3% for each degree the thermostat is set above 72 degrees. Programmable thermostats allow you to budget your heating and cooling to the times they are really needed. Set it and forget it. Using ceiling or room fans also allows you to set the thermostat higher because the air movement will help cool the room further...but if you're not in the room, shut them off.

4. Breathe a sigh of relief – don't bring VOC's into your home.

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are emitted by a wide array of products such as paints and lacquers, cleaning supplies, air fresheners, pesticides, building materials and furnishings, craft materials including glues, adhesives and permanent markers and even cosmetics. They can cause eye, nose and throat irritation and exacerbate some breathing conditions. The good news is that you can purchase new versions of many of these products that contain low or no VOCs. Another helpful solution is to get an air cleaner with activated charcoal filtration designed to remove chemicals from the air.

Check into discounts and rebates from your utility companies.

Chances are that your local utility company is more than willing to help you reduce your energy costs. Go online and check it out. You may find programs to help you identify and purchase (with a discount) a more efficient heating and cooling for your home. Other discounts could include programs to help defray the cost of adding additional ceiling insulation, and duct work system inspections and repairs. By some accounts, leaky duct work can add 25% to your heating and cooling bills.