

Ways to Save Money by Going Green

By Stephanie Lo

There are a multitude of reasons why people want or need to conserve money. Whether one is saving up for something special or choosing to follow a more frugal lifestyle, there are many ways to cut costs. One of these ways is to become more environmentally friendly. It can be surprising how going green can translate into amazing savings when done properly. These green choices can be in the form of minor or major changes to how one lives and the choices that they make.

Buy used or borrow

Buying items new is costly and contributes to the consumption of resources. Save money while being an eco-conscious consumer by purchasing gently used items such as clothing, shoes or even jewelry from secondhand stores. Furniture such as chairs, tables, desks and mirrors can also be found in thrift stores at extremely low prices. Borrow books from the local library or buy them from used bookstores to help save paper and ink. Items ranging from carpet cleaners to power tools may be rented for short-term use.

Adjust water usage

Reducing the daily amount of water used is a way to conserve this natural resource, save energy and ultimately cut the cost of heating and water bills. To adjust water usage, start in the shower by using a low-flow shower head and shortening the time it takes to clean up. When brushing one's teeth, the water should be turned off until ready to rinse. Water usage may also be adjusted when cleaning dishes or clothing. When washing dishes, do so using a dishwasher that is fully loaded. For cleaning clothes, use the right water level for the amount of clothing being washed. Additionally, most clothes may be effectively washed using cold water, with the exception of items such as undergarments and towels, for example.

Use energy-efficient lights

There are a number of different types of energy-efficient light bulbs available. To save energy and money, switch out standard incandescent light bulbs for Energy Star-certified bulbs. These bulbs last at least 15 times longer, use between 70 to 90 percent less energy and can save up to \$80 over the lifetime of the bulb¹.

Energy-efficient light options include light-emitting diodes (LEDs) and compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs).

Fix water leaks around the house

Leaks around the house can waste a substantial amount of money per year. In the average home, minor leaks can add up to gallons of water lost daily². To determine if there is a leak, look at the water meter over a two-hour period when the water is not in use. When there are no leaks, the meter will not change; however, if the meter changes, there is likely a leak somewhere in the home. Common areas to check for leaks include toilets, shower heads, faucets and irrigation systems.

Hang clothing to dry

The clothes dryer uses a significant amount of energy but natural ventilation and the heat of the sun can be an effective way of drying most items. A clothesline can drastically reduce energy consumption, and because air and sunlight are free, it can also save money. Hanging clothes also extends the life of one's clothing, as it is more gentle than a dryer. A clothesline may be hung outdoors, in a laundry room or even in a garage that has good ventilation. Hanging outdoors can impart a fresh, clean scent to clothing as well.

Use energy star-certified appliances

When buying appliances, look for the blue Energy Star label. The Energy Star program is a voluntary program that is designed to save energy to protect the environment and consequently saves consumers money. Items that receive the Energy Star certification must meet certain standards of performance and energy-efficiency. Items are tested by a third party before receiving certification.

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