

# Green Living Guide

## for Apartment Residents



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## Why Go Green?

“Going green” is a small phrase that can have a big impact on the environment and your wallet. But, what does it mean to “go green” and why do it? “Going green” refers to the personal habits and choices of an individual to consciously lessen negative effects on the environment.

This Green Living Guide is full of no-cost and low-cost ways YOU can go green. The tips are specific and easy ways to save energy, conserve water, limit your waste, improve your surroundings and reduce your impact on nature.

By following these tips, you can save money, enhance your quality of life and help save the earth.

*Remember, small contributions make a big difference when everyone participates.*

# Energy Efficiency

Decreasing your energy use reduces greenhouse gas emissions and can save you money.



## Heating & Air Conditioning

- Keep windows closed when the heater or air conditioner is running.
- Make sure furniture is not blocking any vents.
- Use solar power:
  - In the winter, downward slanting blinds permit sunlight to enter the room and increase warmth.
  - In the summer, close the blinds (with the slats in the up position) as tightly as possible. This will reflect light and heat and create a pocket of air that will serve as an excellent insulator.
- In the winter, switch the ceiling fans to spin in reverse to circulate warm air downward (the fan will turn clockwise when looking at the fan from below).
- Place a draft stopper under exterior doors.
- Layer clothing in the winter. The Department of Energy calculates that your energy bill will go up 3% for each degree you raise the thermostat.
- If you have a programmable thermostat, set the temperature so heating/cooling is minimized when you are at work or away for an extended period.



## The Kitchen

- Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator before cooking to reduce cooking time.
- Minimize the number of times the oven door is opened during baking. Each opening can reduce the oven's temperature by 25° F.
- When possible, use smaller appliances like toaster ovens or microwaves to cook. They use much less energy than a regular oven.
- Cover pots and pans when cooking. This decreases cooking time, which reduces the amount of energy used by an electric or gas stovetop.
- Cooking with a modern pressure cooker can reduce a stove's energy consumption by 70%.
- Keep the refrigerator temperature set between 36° F to 40° F and the freezer at 0° F. These temperatures help ensure food safety; lowering these temperatures further wastes power.
- Don't overcrowd the fridge or freezer; freezers should not be more than two-thirds full.
- Keep the freezer and refrigerator organized to reduce the amount of time the door is open.
- Turn off the drying function of the dishwasher. Leave the door open overnight to air-dry dishes instead.



## Lighting

- Turn off lights in unoccupied rooms.
- Take advantage of natural daylight.
- When working or reading, use task lighting (such as desk lamps) rather than lighting the entire room.
- Dust lamps and light fixtures to remove layers of dust, which obstruct light emission.
- Switch to CFLs (compact fluorescent lamps) on at least the five most used light sources.
- Use LED lights for decorative lighting.



## Electronics

- Some electronics draw electricity when they are plugged into an outlet. Plug electronics into surge protectors and turn off power strips when electronics are not in use. This prevents "phantom" electricity use that occurs when electronics continuously draw electricity. EXCEPTION: If you have pay-TV services, particularly pay-per-view, you will want to keep your cable television converter powered up at all times; otherwise, the cable company's system may have to reset your account as a pay-user each time you power up the converter.
- A laptop uses just 25% of the power required by a desktop computer.
- Save an average of \$90 a year by shutting down a home computer if you don't expect to use it for the next two hours. Turn off the monitor if the computer is not going to be used within the next 20 minutes.
- As you replace equipment, look for ENERGY STAR®-labeled products that save energy.

Saving water will not only decrease your water bill but will also conserve energy used to treat and deliver the water. It can help protect wildlife habitats by reducing the need for new water sources, which can disturb the ecosystem.

# Water Conservation



## The Kitchen

- If your sink is equipped with a sprayer, use the sprayer to rinse your dishes and don't leave the water running continuously.
- Load the dishwasher to capacity. A full load will save water, energy and detergent.
- Don't rinse dishes unnecessarily before loading them in the dishwasher.
- Select the short cycle option on your dishwasher.
- Keep drinking water in the refrigerator instead of letting the tap run while you wait for the water to cool.
- Keep pitchers or basins around to collect water that runs while you adjust the water temperature. You can use this as drinking water or reuse the water to rinse dishes, to fill pet bowls or to water your plants.
- Wash your fruits and vegetables in a pan of water instead of washing them with water running continuously from the tap.
- Soak pots and pans instead of letting the water run while you scrape them clean.
- If you accidentally drop ice cubes when filling your glass from the freezer, don't throw them in the sink. Drop them in a house plant instead.
- Designate one glass for your drinking water each day or refill a reusable water bottle. This will cut down on the number of glasses to wash.
- Don't use running water to thaw food. Defrost food in the refrigerator for water efficiency and food safety.
- Limit use of your garbage disposal.



*Report all water leaks and dripping faucets to property management. Even the smallest leak can lead to huge water waste or a potential emergency.*



## The Bathroom

- Report any malfunctioning toilets to property management.
- Put your tissues in the trash rather than flushing them down the toilet.
- Take short showers; aim for five minutes or less.
- Don't leave the water running when washing your face or brushing your teeth.
- When running a bath, plug the tub before turning on the water; then adjust the temperature as the tub fills.
- Use cooled bath water to water house plants.
- Fill the sink with just enough water to rinse your razor before you shave instead of running the water while shaving.



## Laundry

- Make sure to take advantage of the partial load setting on your washer if you are not doing a full load of laundry.
- Washing dark clothes in cold water saves both water and energy while it helps your clothes keep their colors.
- Choose biodegradable detergents over traditional, synthetic detergents made from petrochemicals.
- Use an eco-friendly dry cleaner that does not use perchloroethylene ("perc"), a chemical that can be harmful to humans.



## Irrigation

- Please report to the Management Office any irrigation breaks, broken sprinkler heads, suspected leaks in the system, or any areas where you notice the irrigation system may not be watering on a regular schedule.

# Reduce & Reuse

Source reduction is the best way to conserve resources and reduce pollution. You can't throw away what isn't there! Challenge yourself to find ways to either go without or reuse.



## Paper

- Stop junk mail by registering at [www.dmachoice.org](http://www.dmachoice.org).
- Unsubscribe from catalogues you never read by going to [www.catalogchoice.org](http://www.catalogchoice.org).
- Opt out of receiving insurance and credit card offers at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/alerts/alt063.shtm>.
- Utilize email and pay bills online.
- Use electronic notes and to-do lists on smartphones, where they are much less likely to get lost.
- Reuse as note paper any paper that has been printed on only one side.
- Use a white board or dry erase marker on mirrors to write reminders and notes.
- Avoid buying wrapping paper – reuse gift bags, magazines or newspaper.
- Buy in bulk to reduce packaging, which is typically made from cardboard or plastic.



## Fix First

- Favorite pair of jeans ripped? Take them to a tailor for repair for likely less than the price of a new pair.
- Take worn or damaged shoes and leather goods to a cobbler – shoe heels are easily fixed and leather straps easily reattached.
- Use electrical tape or Sugru to mend headphones and laptop chargers with exposed wires.
- Cracked cell phone screens can often be fixed without replacing the whole phone, and typically at a much lower price.
- Drop your phone in the pool and or wash it with your clothes? Quickly disassemble it as much as possible and bury all parts, including the battery, in a bowl of dry, uncooked rice for at least a day in order to absorb all the water.
- For scratched CDs, DVDs and video game discs, get them refinished instead of buying new ones. AuralTech is one such company that does this. See [www.auraltch.com/](http://www.auraltch.com/).



## Printing

- Always review a document in Print Preview to find and correct mistakes before printing.
- Only print when necessary.
- If your printer duplexes (double-sided printing), use that setting.
- When printing a webpage, copy and paste the link into [www.printwhatyoulike.com](http://www.printwhatyoulike.com) to optimize the webpage for printing (for free).
- Use software such as GreenPrint ([www.printgreener.com](http://www.printgreener.com)), which analyzes documents looking for ways to reduce waste.
- Use EcoFont, a free downloadable font found at [www.ecofont.com/en/products/green/font/download-the-ink-saving-font.html](http://www.ecofont.com/en/products/green/font/download-the-ink-saving-font.html) that saves as much as 20% of ink used by perforating the text with tiny, unnoticeable holes.



## Reuse

- Utilize reusable coffee filters. Some are even made from renewable resources such as hemp or organic cotton.
- Keep reusable shopping and produce bags in your car so you will have them on hand when you shop.
- Avoid buying water in disposable plastic bottles; instead, use reusable BPA-free water bottles.
- Reusable mugs and insulated cups keep coffee hot longer, keep some Styrofoam from entering the landfill and get you a discount at Starbucks.
- Pack your lunch in a lunchbox and use reusable sandwich bags.
- Use cloth napkins instead of paper napkins.

Recycling allows individuals to decrease the negative impact of the waste they produce by conserving natural resources, saving landfill space and reducing water and air pollution.

# Recycling



## Electronic "E"-Waste

- Used cell phones and PDAs are accepted at most major phone retailers.
- Because cell phones have more value than other e-waste, many non-profit organizations raise money through cell phone recycling programs.
- Most large national electronics stores offer recycling drop off for TVs, DVD players, computers and appliances. Some retailers even offer a pick-up service.
- Send old iPods, iPhones, mobile phones, Macs or PCs to Apple for free where they will recycle it for you and maybe even give you an Apple gift card if the item has monetary value. See [www.apple.com/recycling/](http://www.apple.com/recycling/).

## Batteries

- Recycle your old general-use phone and laptop batteries at a local drop-off center.
- Most major auto parts stores accept used car batteries for recycling.



## Light Bulbs

Handle compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) safely and dispose of them responsibly. CFLs contain a small amount of mercury and recycling these bulbs prevents the release of mercury into the environment. Check with your area home improvement store about disposal.

## Grease



- DO NOT pour your used cooking oil down the sink. This practice can back up your sink and cause problems throughout the sanitary sewer system.
- More and more cities are offering recycling drop-off points for used cooking oils. Check with your municipality.
- If you must throw grease away, allow the oil to completely cool and place it in a sealable container, such as a peanut butter jar.

## Recycling Everything Else



- Check with your property manager for guidance on recycling of plastic, paper, aluminum and glass. Go to [www.earth911.com](http://www.earth911.com) for recycling locations of other items.
- Donate or sell to charity thrift stores or resale shops. Charity thrift stores accept all types of items from furniture to dishes to books.
- Recycle shoes at Soles4Souls. Find locations at <http://www.soles4souls.org/about/locations.html>.
- Take extra clothes hangers to your dry cleaner or charity thrift store.
- Recycle old eyeglasses at the nearest Lions Club-sponsored collection boxes, the local Lions Club or by mail. See <http://www.lionsclubs.org/EN/our-work/sight-programs/eyeglass-recycling/how-you-can-help.php>.
- Reuse Styrofoam packing peanuts or take them to a UPS store.
- Freecycle is a grassroots, nonprofit movement of people who are giving and getting stuff for free within their neighborhoods. It encourages reuse and keeps items out of landfills. Each local group is moderated by local volunteers and membership is free. Freecycle helps people find recipients for things they were going to toss, such as old furniture or bikes. The website is: [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org).

## Ink/Toner Cartridges



- Most major office supply stores offer rebate programs on used ink and toner cartridges.



# Purchasing

Buying “green” has positive impacts on your health, the environment, the local economy and your wallet.



## General

- Buy second hand when possible.
- Choose items made from rapidly renewable resources, such as cotton, wool, hemp, soy, bamboo and cork.
- Avoid excess packaging by choosing larger sizes/quantities instead of smaller, individually packaged items.
- Buy products in reusable containers.
- Purchase products that can eventually be recycled.
- Shop local whenever possible.
- Support small businesses.
- Avoid impulse buys.



## For the Home

- Paper products with a high post-consumer recycled content take 60% less energy to manufacture than those made from new materials. Paper made from virgin material contributes to deforestation and global warming.
- Conventional light bulbs use much more energy than compact fluorescents (aka “twisty bulbs”).
- Most batteries end up in landfills despite being hazardous waste. Rechargeable batteries will save you money and help prevent toxic waste from entering landfills.
- Read cleaning product labels carefully before purchasing. If a product has a warning label because it contains known hazardous chemicals, consider one of the alternatives in the Green Cleaning Section of this guide.
- Purchase recyclable plastic pump-spray bottles instead of aerosol cans.

## Food



- Purchase local, in-season produce to support your local community and limit the distance produce travels to your kitchen. Some communities have farmer’s markets which often sell organic foods, produce and natural products.

- Look for Fair Trade-certified coffee.
- Local, organic free-range eggs are generally higher in vitamins and minerals than mass-produced eggs.
- Join the “Meatless Monday” trend.
- Choose dairy products with no artificial hormones or antibiotics.
- Learn about the “Slow Food” movement.
- Buy organic fruit and vegetables if possible. The top 3 foods contaminated with the highest amount of pesticides are apples, celery and bell peppers.\*
- Avoid buying plastic-coated boxed foods like juice boxes, boxed broths or soups and juice pouches as they cannot be recycled.

*\*Source: Environmental Working Group from compiled USDA data.*



## Clothing and Personal Care

- Have a clothes swap with friends.
- Shop resale shops. Often you can find new items that still have tags.
- When buying new clothing, look for items made from renewable materials such as cotton or hemp.
- Choose petroleum-free cosmetic products that do not contain mineral oil, paraffin or propylene glycol. See Environmental Working Group’s Skin Deep® database for toxicity ratings of common cosmetic products ([www.ewg.org/skindeep/](http://www.ewg.org/skindeep/)).
- Look for certified organic personal-care products such as those with USDA Organic or ECOCERT® labels.
- Use aluminum-free deodorants.

Green cleaning keeps toxins and chemicals out of the air, water and soil, and can save you money.

# Cleaning



## Green Cleaning Practices

- Notify the property management office immediately regarding any leaks or water stains.
- Activities within the home, such as cooking and bathing, produce large amounts of moisture. Use ventilation when cooking and bathing.
- Many vacuums disperse small bits of dust. Look for vacuums with HEPA filters (high-efficiency filters that catch tiny particles) and dirt sensors that signal when a carpet is clean.
- Plain water on a cloth works great for the vast majority of dusting chores. If something more powerful is necessary, choose the least-toxic product for the job at hand.
- Contaminants are tracked into homes on the soles of shoes. Consider becoming a shoe-free household. Clever designs for shoe storage near the front door can keep entries clutter-free and your indoor air cleaner at the same time.
- Consider natural alternatives such as vinegar and baking soda over chemical cleaners whenever possible.



## Baking Soda Uses

- A box or small bowl of baking soda in the refrigerator, freezer or any cupboard will absorb unpleasant odors.
- Sprinkle baking soda in the bottom of an empty kitchen trash bag before you fill it with trash.
- Sprinkle baking soda over grease splatters in the kitchen to clean without smearing.
- A paste of baking soda and water will make stainless steel appliances shine.
- Sprinkle baking soda into a wet toilet bowl or white sink; allow to sit for 10-15 minutes and then scrub.
- To create a tub-scum cleaner, mix baking soda and a "green" liquid soap to a honey-thick consistency. Apply it with a little elbow grease and perhaps a splash of white vinegar.
- To remove scuff marks or grease spills from the floor, sprinkle with baking soda and then wipe with a warm, damp cloth. This procedure is even safe for no-wax floors.
- To remove odors from carpets, sprinkle with baking soda. Let stand for at least 15 minutes, and then vacuum. Repeat as needed.
- To help remove spills, blot as much as possible, then clean as you normally would. When finished, sprinkle with baking soda and then vacuum. This can decrease the chance that the spill could cause unpleasant odors later.



## Vinegar Uses

- Choose white vinegar, as brown vinegar will typically stain porous surfaces.
- Some air fresheners use harsh chemicals. Instead, lightly spritz your space with vinegar.
- Vinegar will clean out deposits clogging a steam iron or coffeemaker.
- Add a 1/4 cup of vinegar to the washer for towels and sheets to remove any mildew smell.
- A cup of vinegar will clean a washing machine. Run it through a regular cycle, but not with clothes.
- Deodorize and clean the garbage disposal with white distilled vinegar ice cubes (freeze full-strength white distilled vinegar in an ice cube tray). Run several cubes down the disposal while flushing with cold water.
- Clean the microwave by mixing 1/2 cup white distilled vinegar and 1/2 cup water in a microwave-safe bowl. Heat inside the microwave. Baked-on food will be loosened, and odors will disappear. Wipe clean.



## Removing Stubborn Clothing Stains

Treat stains before washing instead of buying specific heavy-duty chemical products.

- Blood - soak in cold water or club soda.
- Coffee/Tea - soak in a solution of warm water and borax.
- Grass - rub with glycerine.
- Perspiration - rub with white vinegar.
- Tar - rub with eucalyptus oil.

Source: "The Eco-Friendly Home, Living the Natural Life"



# Transportation

Making better choices about how you get from place to place reduces dependency on fossil fuels and decreases your impact on the environment.



## Walk or Use Alternative Transit

- Check out **www.walkscore.com** to find shops, restaurants and activities within walking distance.
- View your area's public transit system to find convenient ways of getting around your town.
- Check out online transit trip planners such as **www.google.com/transit** that provide a map, step-by-step instructions and photos to help you get where you want to go, whether you are traveling or at home.



## Work from Home

- Consider telecommuting (working from home) one day a week instead of driving. Benefits include saving on parking costs and increased productivity. Telecommuting allows you to spend less time on the road and more time working or doing things you enjoy.
- Encourage your workplace to set up telecommuting policies and find direction at **www.fypower.org**.
- Save travel expenses by choosing to utilize teleconferencing technologies like Skype.®
- Move information virtually. Discover web services such as **https://docs.google.com** and **www.dropbox.com** for virtual document sharing.



## Bike

- Bicycling is a completely clean form of transportation.
- Be sure to take appropriate precautions for safety:
  - Always wear a helmet.
  - Ride with traffic, not against it.
  - Be visible, especially when riding at night. Wear bright colors and use flashing lights and reflectors.
  - Do not weave through traffic.
  - Use bike lanes, if available.
- Regularly maintain your bike. It is essential to maintain adequate tire air pressure and working brakes.
- Be aware of local laws that apply to bicycle riders.
- Always ensure your bike is secure:
  - Register your bike at **www.nationalbikeregistry.com**.
  - Use an appropriately sized U-lock such as those made by Kryptonite.®
  - Lock your bike in visible, well-lit areas and to a permanent fixture that cannot be easily cut or broken. Lock your tires to the bike frame so they are not stolen.
  - Put a RenunitelT® by LoJack® sticker on your bike to deter thieves.
  - Keep a current picture of your bike to give to authorities if necessary.
- Verify that your renter's insurance covers your bike; it likely does.

## Reduce Air Travel

- Consider vacationing closer to home or taking the train to your destination.
- Utilize economical work practices and limit your need to travel.
- Use video conferencing instead of excessive or unnecessary business travel.



## Your Car

- Purchase fuel-efficient cars such as cars with a minimum score of 40 in the ACEEE annual vehicle rating guide (**www.greenercars.org**).
- Use a transportation calculator to determine how much your auto travel affects the atmosphere.
- Aggressive driving (speeding, accelerating rapidly and braking erratically) wastes gas. Save money and get where you are going by driving sensibly.
- Use cruise control on the highway to maintain consistent speed and save gas.
- Turn off your engine when your vehicle is parked to avoid excessive idling.
- Keep your tires properly inflated for optimum gas mileage.
- Consider carpooling.

## Green Living Resources

<http://coolclimate.berkeley.edu/>

[www.electronicrecycling.org](http://www.electronicrecycling.org)

[www.epa.gov/cfl/CFL\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/cfl/CFL_brochure.pdf)

[www.epa.gov/osw/partnerships/plugin/cellphone](http://www.epa.gov/osw/partnerships/plugin/cellphone)

[www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov)

[www.goodguide.com](http://www.goodguide.com)

[www.greenamerica.org/programs/shopunshop/buyinggreen](http://www.greenamerica.org/programs/shopunshop/buyinggreen)

[www.greenpages.org](http://www.greenpages.org)

[www.lamprecycle.org](http://www.lamprecycle.org)

[www.meatlessmonday.com](http://www.meatlessmonday.com)

[www.sierraclubgreenhome.com](http://www.sierraclubgreenhome.com)

[www.slowfood.com](http://www.slowfood.com)

[www.vinegartips.com](http://www.vinegartips.com)

[www.wateruseitwisely.com](http://www.wateruseitwisely.com)

