



Greener living tips for home

Considering the environment can lead to personal rewards - be energy efficient at home to reduce your energy bills and your carbon footprint. This guidance document will provide you with the knowledge you need to reduce your environmental impact at home.

Energy wastage

Electrical equipment

- Switch all electrical appliances off at the plug instead of using the 'standby' function. During standby the appliances are still using electricity.
- Use a Savaplug. These replace the usual plug at the back of the fridge and will cut energy use from the appliance by 20%.
- Don't waste energy when using computers. Make use of power saving modes, turn off peripherals when they're not in use and make sure you switch everything off completely when you are finished.
- Buy electrical equipment with a high energy efficiency rating and low electrical consumption level.
- Use an electricity monitor to see how much you are using – most utility supplier provide these for free.

Heating

- Turn the heating thermostat down by 1°C and it could cut your heating bills by up to 10%.
- Dress appropriately for the season – a sleeveless top in December won't keep you warm.
- Many radiators have valves that allow you to alter the heating in your room.
- When the heating is turned on, keep doors and windows closed to prevent wasting heat - Do not open windows to control the temperature.
- Block any draughts below external doors with a draught excluder.
- Close curtains / blinds at dusk to stop heat escaping overnight.
- Insulate your loft and cavity walls to reduce heat escaping.

Lighting

- Maximise the use of daylight - open blinds and keep window ledges clear of clutter.
- Switch off unnecessary lighting.
- Use energy saving light bulbs. They use 1/5 of the electricity used by the old type of bulbs.

In the kitchen

- Only boil the amount of water you really need in your kettle, and, if you're using an electric kettle, make sure you cover the elements. Jug-type kettles need less water as they have smaller elements.
- Turn your microwave off at the wall when not in use, especially overnight / over the weekend.
- Defrost your fridge and freezer regularly to keep them running efficiently and cheaply - if they frost up quickly, check the door seal. If your fridge is next to a cooker or boiler, leave a good gap between them.
- Only use your dishwasher when it is full. Or even better, wash the dishes by hand.

Water consumption

- Water does not need to be heated to a scalding temperature; for most people, setting the cylinder thermostat at around 60°C should be adequate for bathing and washing.
- Turn off tap while cleaning your teeth, shaving or washing your face. You can waste up to 9 litres a minute by just letting the water pour down the sink.
- Taking a short shower rather than a bath could save you up to 400 litres a week. If you do have baths, just half fill them.
- Only use the washing machine when you can put on a full load. It wastes both water and energy to run only a half full machine.

Waste reduction

Remember to *reduce, reuse, recycle* your waste;

- Adopt a 'little and often' policy for food shopping, so you only buy what you need. On average, £600 worth of food per family is thrown away each year. Only buy and cook the food you really need by making a shopping list and weighing out the correct portions.
- Buy fruit and vegetables loose; it's cheaper and less packaging means less waste!
- Consider buying products that can be reused, such as rechargeable batteries, and try not to use disposable items, such as razors, plastic cups and plates.
- Over 290 carrier bags per person go to landfill every year and the plastic bag is used for an average of 7 minutes before it's thrown away. Try a hessian or cotton bag instead – they are stronger and last longer. If you do get a carrier bag, be sure to reuse it.
- Stop all that unwanted junk mail by signing up to the Mail Preference Service at www.mpsonline.org.uk, email mps@dma.org.uk or call 0207 291 3310.
- Contact your local council to find out what you can recycle in your local council's kerbside recycling scheme – usually items include glass, plastics, paper, card and tin cans.
- Buy a home composter, great for your garden waste, vegetable waste and cardboard.
- Don't throw away your unwanted items. One man's waste is another man's treasure – pass it on to friends, charity shops or hold a car boot sale to make some extra cash!

A few other ideas to try...

- Buy locally sourced food, to reduce transport miles.
- Walk or cycle to work to cut your carbon footprint, get fit and save cash.
- Set your printer to print on both sides of the page, to save paper, and print in draft format, to reduce ink.
- Eat organic food, to cut the use of pesticides.
- Don't buy bottled water as each bottle needs ¼ of its volume in oil to produce it – try a reusable bottle instead, and refill it with tap water or your favourite drinks (saving you money too!).
- Send e-cards instead of paper cards.
- Look for concentrated, refillable and bigger value packs. They last longer, have less packaging and save you money too!
- Consider sustainable transport options - get the bus / tram instead of driving, to reduce pollution. If you need to drive, remember to car share.