

Tips To Help Avoid Global Warming

1. Reuse Your Bags - Paper or plastic? Neither — bring a reusable bag. According to 'An Inconvenient Truth,' it takes 12 million barrels of oil to produce the plastic bags Americans use each year. In addition, about 15 million trees are cut down to produce paper for paper bags.

2. Pay Bills Online - Start paying your bills online to help reduce the amount of fuel needed to ship mail and save trees. According to a recent TIME magazine article, if every American household paid bills online, it would reduce solid waste by 1.6 billion pounds and cut greenhouse gas emissions by 2.1 million tons each year.

3. Get An Energy Audit - An energy audit will tell you how much energy your home uses each year, and provide tips on how to reduce your consumption. The average American family can cut its CO2 emissions by 1,000 pounds each year. As usual, the best things in life are free — most utility providers will audit your home free of charge.

4. Get More MPGs - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help stop global warming by getting more miles per gallon. Switching to a car that gets 10 more miles to the gallon can save over \$1,000 dollars a year! Hybrid vehicles like the Toyota Prius get an estimated 60 highway miles to the gallon: Properly inflate your tires, drive 55 mph on the highway and change your air filter regularly. Driving 55 mph can save you over 20 percent on your gas bill.

5. Change Your Lights - Replacing your old incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) will help increase your energy efficiency. Replacing one old bulb with a CFL can save you up to \$30 per year. CFLs use two thirds less energy, give off 70 percent less heat and last up to 10 times as long as conventional bulbs.

6. Efficient Appliances - Your inefficient appliances are costing you more than you think. The typical household spends \$1,900 a year on energy bills. By upgrading to Energy Star qualified appliances, you can save 30 percent, or more than \$600 per year. Replacing your refrigerator alone can make a big difference because they use more energy than any other appliance. Energy Star qualified fridges use 40 percent less energy than models produced before 2001.

7. Control The Temperature - Up to 20 percent of heating and cooling energy is lost due to poorly sealed or insulated ducts in your home. Make sure your ducts are properly insulated and install weather stripping around windows and doors for a better seal. Tax credits on efficiency-increasing heating and cooling equipment make now a great time to upgrade. Get a \$300 credit on central air conditioning units and up to 30 percent on solar water heaters.

8. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle - Reducing your garbage by 25 percent will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 1,000 pounds per year. Recycling aluminum cans, glass bottles, plastic, cardboard and newspapers can reduce your home's impact by 850 pounds of carbon dioxide per year. Decreasing carbon dioxide emissions can help stop global warming.

10. Conserve Water - Purifying and distributing water takes lots of energy. You can make simple changes to reduce the amount of water you use. Replacing an older toilet can save about 7,500 gallons of water a year. Fixing a leak in a toilet can save as much as 200 gallons a day. Use low-flow shower heads and turn your water heater thermostat down to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. These steps can add up to serious savings on your water and energy bills.