



## Green Your Current Home - Low upfront cost (under \$50)

- ❖ **Buy local products.** By choosing products that are harvested or made locally you are not only helping the local economy, but you're helping the environment because these products take less energy to transport.
- ❖ **Wash and rinse clothes in cold water, and do full loads.** Save \$30 to \$40 per year in water heating costs by washing and rinsing clothes in cold water. You can also save 3,400 gallons of water per year by doing full loads instead of partial loads.
- ❖ **Reduce clothes drying times.** Save as much as \$34 per year by operating your clothes dryer 15 minutes less each cycle. Some new dryers do this automatically, but older ones do not.
- ❖ **Clean your clothes dryer's lint trap before every load.** Saves energy by increasing air circulation and cutting down on drying time
- ❖ **Use human-powered appliances.** Manual can openers, carpet sweepers, and whisks replace automatic can openers, vacuums and electric mixers. Unplug those items and put them away.
- ❖ **Let the sun shine in.** On cold sunny days, let the sun in to warm your home. On hot days, close window coverings on the south and west sides to keep your home cooler.
- ❖ **Get the sun off of the refrigerator.** Your refrigerator has to work harder to keep cool if it's in direct sunlight or next to a hot oven. Relocate it to a cooler, darker area if possible or close window coverings to keep the sun's rays off of the 'fridge.
- ❖ **Remove window A/C units in the winter.** Window units are a major source of cold drafts in the winter, so remove them and close the window or use a tight-fitting A/C cover, available at most local home improvement stores.
- ❖ **Let your computer sleep or turn it off.** Save \$25 to \$75 a year in electric costs by setting your computer and monitor to sleep mode when not in use. Turn off computers and peripherals at night or when not in use for long periods.
- ❖ **Recycle your old batteries and cell phones.** Batteries are in everything these days from computers and power tools to cameras and laptops, and they're not good for the environment when they go in a landfill
- ❖ **Reduce outside lights at night.** Put outdoor lights on motion sensors, photocell controls or timers so outdoor lights are only on when needed. Reduce light pollution and keep the night sky darker by using light fixtures that direct light downward.
- ❖ **Wipe your feet or take off your shoes before entering.** Indoor air quality is an important part of healthy living. The Washington Toxics Coalition reports that using entryway mats can reduce the amount of pesticide residue on carpets by 25% and the amount of dust on carpets by 33%. In homes where shoes are removed at the door, there is 10 times less dust than in homes where shoes are worn.
- ❖ **Use low- or zero-VOC paints.** If you're planning on painting the interior of your home, make sure to use paint that puts off low or zero volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Many manufacturers make these type of paints now and they don't cost more than regular paints.
- ❖ **Make your own compost from food scraps.** In addition to having great compost for your plants, you'll help reduce the amount of methane-generating food scraps in landfills. Methane gas is 23 times more potent than carbon monoxide. Tip: don't compost meat products.
- ❖ **Seal all cracks and leaks.** If you feel a draft in your home, then you feel a waste of energy and money. Install weather-stripping around doors and caulk cracks around windows. Check ductwork to make sure joints are connected and well sealed.
- ❖ While you've got the weather-stripping and caulk out, **make sure the door between your living space and your attached garage seals up well.** You don't want harmful chemicals following you in the house.
- ❖ Furthermore, don't fall victim to the silent killer – carbon monoxide. This colorless, odorless gas can be emitted from fuel-burning appliances such as a gas stove, furnace, water heater or fireplace. **Install a UL-listed carbon monoxide detector on each floor.**

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**Here's some more options for greening up your home.** These cost more upfront than items listed on the other side, but they could save you lots more down the line. Review your options and see what makes the most sense for your home and the way you live.

#### **Medium upfront cost (\$50 - \$500)**

- ❖ **Get a home energy audit.** Assess how your home uses energy and prioritizes actions you can take to make it more efficient and comfortable. See [www.columbiagreenbuilders.com](http://www.columbiagreenbuilders.com) for a local auditor.
- ❖ **Use ventilation fans.** Keep mold away by using your bathroom and kitchen ventilation fans. They should be vented to the outdoors. Energy Star rated models are more efficient, quieter and last longer, so they're well worth the cost.
- ❖ **Programmable thermostat.** A programmable thermostat that adjusts the temperature when you leave the house or go to sleep can reduce your energy bill by as much as \$150 each year.
- ❖ **Collect rainwater for irrigation.** Rainwater harvesting systems direct rainwater from the roof into barrels or above- or underground tanks.
- ❖ **Use antique or vintage furnishings and materials.** Buying new furniture, doors, trim, fixtures and the like is a big drain on resources and creates more transportation issues. Choose salvaged, secondhand or antique items instead, but stay away from single-pane windows, old toilets and used appliances that waste energy or water compared to the newer versions.
- ❖ **Add natural light with tubular skylights.** Got a dark hallway or small room in your house? Let in daylight with a tubular skylight. They let in light without the heat and are not too expensive.
- ❖ **Use bamboo products.** Sure forests are renewable, but bamboo is the champ thanks to how fast it can grow. Many products are made from bamboo such as floors, cabinets, built-ins, furniture and even bed sheets.
- ❖ **Smart irrigation systems save water.** You don't have to have rocks and dirt in your frontyard in order to save water. New irrigation products such as bubblers and drip hoses coupled with smart controllers that determine when and how much water is in the ground and other sensors are the smart way to go.
- ❖ **Plant trees to block the summer sun from hitting west- or south- facing windows.** Again, heat from sunlight in your home in the summer is counter productive. Carefully placed trees can help reduce your energy bill. (Awnings and shades can do the trick, too.)
- ❖ **Solar-powered attic fans help reduce the heat in your attic by venting hot air.** This helps keep the rest of your home cooler in the summer. A plus is that no wiring is necessary, so installation is much simpler.
- ❖ **Save water and money (up to \$90 per year) with a WaterSense-labeled toilet** if you replace an old 3.5 gallon per flush model.

#### **High upfront cost (\$500 or higher)**

- ❖ **Repurpose graywater.** Water that has been used in sinks, tubs clotheswashers and showers can be used again in certain applications. Graywater systems can make it possible in your home.
- ❖ **Update the old storage-freezer.** If you have an old freezer or refrigerator used for storage, it could be costing you as much as \$100 per year. Update the appliance to a new, Energy Star rated appliance.
- ❖ **Add a radiant barrier to your roofline.** Attic radiant barriers can help keep homes comfortable and reduce cooling bills as much as 8% to 12%. Made of reflective foil, radiant barriers block the transfer of radiant heat from a hot roof into the attic.
- ❖ **Add radiant floor heating to your home.** Warm water circulates under the floor in flexible tubing and heat radiates up through the floor providing quiet, even warmth while using less energy. Plus, it doesn't use fans like a forced-air system and that reduces the amount of dust and other allergens in the air.
- ❖ **Replace your wood burning stove with a fireplace insert.** Although classic, a woodburning stove pollutes and wastes energy. A better alternative is an EPA-certified fireplace insert.
- ❖ **Replace your roof.** Cool roof products are available in a variety of materials and colors including ceramic or concrete tiles, and metal or synthetic membranes. They reflect more of the sun's heat and lower the temperature of the roof up to 100 degrees F.
- ❖ **Install solar panels for electricity and water.** Offset or eliminate your energy bill by making power and hot water using the power of the sun. Check for state and federal tax credits to help ease the large upfront costs.

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