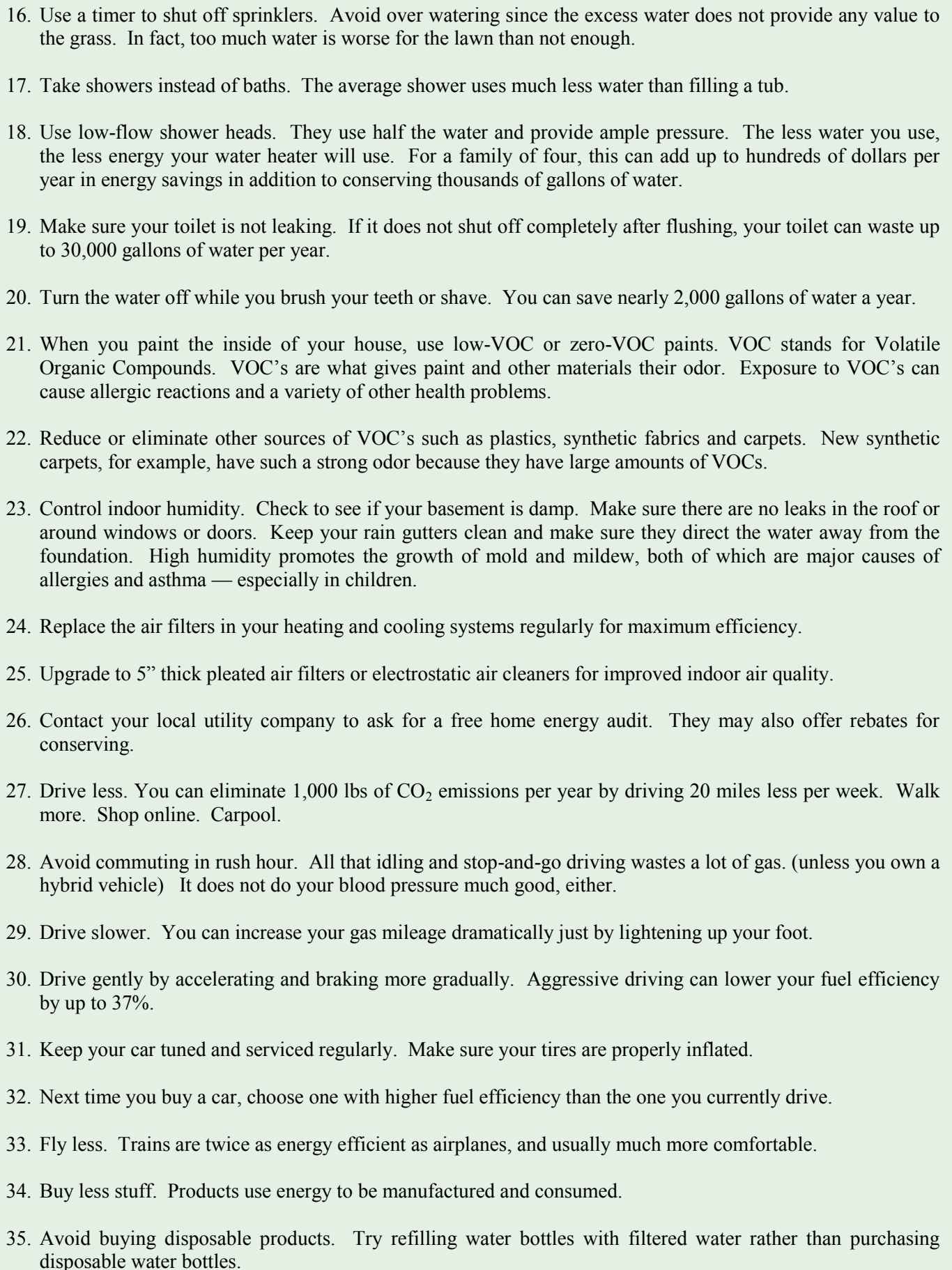




51 simple things you can do to make your home greener, conserve energy, and help save our planet

1. Wrap your water heater in an insulation blanket. You can save 1,000 pounds of carbon dioxide (CO₂) a year.
2. Set your water heater no higher than 120°F. You can save another 550 lbs CO₂ per year.
3. Replace your light bulbs with compact fluorescent lights (CFL's). A 15-watt CFL produces as much light as a standard 60-watt bulb. Though CFL's are more expensive than regular bulbs, they last up to ten times longer. CFL's also save energy because they produce much less heat than standard bulbs. Incandescent bulbs are only 10% efficient — that means only 10% of the electricity they burn produces light — the other 90% produces only heat. CFL's convert 50% to 60% of the electricity they use into light. Switching to CFL's will also mean your air conditioner will not have to work as hard to keep the house cool. If every household in the US replaced one standard light bulb with a CFL, it would reduce CO₂ emissions as much as removing one million cars from the road.
4. Do not leave lights on in rooms you are not using. Get in the habit of turning off the lights whenever you leave a room.
5. Install motion sensing switches that will turn off lights in a room that is unoccupied for more than a specified amount of time.
6. Control bathroom fans with timers.
7. Replace your old refrigerator. New energy-efficient refrigerators will save enough electricity to pay for themselves in less than two years. Your electric company may pay you to discard your old refrigerator.
8. When you buy new appliances, choose models with the EnergyStar label. They consume much less energy and water than standard appliances.
9. Reduce standby power waste. Many appliances, including your television, DVD player, stereo, cell phone charger, and computer consume as much as 25% of their energy when they are not in use. In fact, the energy used just to keep display clocks lit and memory chips working accounts for 5 percent of total domestic energy consumption and spews 18 million tons of carbon into the atmosphere every year. You can conserve this electricity by plugging them into power strips that can be switched off when you're not using them.
10. Improve your home's insulation, and contact your local electric company for possible rebates.
11. Check for air leaks around windows, electrical switches and outlets. Numerous small air leaks around your house can lose as much heat as leaving a window open. Seal the leaks with caulk.
12. Set your thermostats two degrees lower in the winter. If you feel cold, put on a sweater rather than turning up the heat.
13. Use programmable thermostats to turn down the heat by at least five degrees at night and while you are at work or school.
14. Use less air conditioning in the summer. Open the windows and use an electric fan if needed. Try to use the AC only on extremely hot days, and set the thermostat a couple of degrees higher than usual. Plant a tree by windows where the sun heats up the house.
15. Water your lawn in the early morning and never in the middle of the day. Less of the water will evaporate before it gets to the roots; therefore you will not need to water as often.

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16. Use a timer to shut off sprinklers. Avoid over watering since the excess water does not provide any value to the grass. In fact, too much water is worse for the lawn than not enough.
 17. Take showers instead of baths. The average shower uses much less water than filling a tub.
 18. Use low-flow shower heads. They use half the water and provide ample pressure. The less water you use, the less energy your water heater will use. For a family of four, this can add up to hundreds of dollars per year in energy savings in addition to conserving thousands of gallons of water.
 19. Make sure your toilet is not leaking. If it does not shut off completely after flushing, your toilet can waste up to 30,000 gallons of water per year.
 20. Turn the water off while you brush your teeth or shave. You can save nearly 2,000 gallons of water a year.
 21. When you paint the inside of your house, use low-VOC or zero-VOC paints. VOC stands for Volatile Organic Compounds. VOC's are what gives paint and other materials their odor. Exposure to VOC's can cause allergic reactions and a variety of other health problems.
 22. Reduce or eliminate other sources of VOC's such as plastics, synthetic fabrics and carpets. New synthetic carpets, for example, have such a strong odor because they have large amounts of VOCs.
 23. Control indoor humidity. Check to see if your basement is damp. Make sure there are no leaks in the roof or around windows or doors. Keep your rain gutters clean and make sure they direct the water away from the foundation. High humidity promotes the growth of mold and mildew, both of which are major causes of allergies and asthma — especially in children.
 24. Replace the air filters in your heating and cooling systems regularly for maximum efficiency.
 25. Upgrade to 5" thick pleated air filters or electrostatic air cleaners for improved indoor air quality.
 26. Contact your local utility company to ask for a free home energy audit. They may also offer rebates for conserving.
 27. Drive less. You can eliminate 1,000 lbs of CO₂ emissions per year by driving 20 miles less per week. Walk more. Shop online. Carpool.
 28. Avoid commuting in rush hour. All that idling and stop-and-go driving wastes a lot of gas. (unless you own a hybrid vehicle) It does not do your blood pressure much good, either.
 29. Drive slower. You can increase your gas mileage dramatically just by lightening up your foot.
 30. Drive gently by accelerating and braking more gradually. Aggressive driving can lower your fuel efficiency by up to 37%.
 31. Keep your car tuned and serviced regularly. Make sure your tires are properly inflated.
 32. Next time you buy a car, choose one with higher fuel efficiency than the one you currently drive.
 33. Fly less. Trains are twice as energy efficient as airplanes, and usually much more comfortable.
 34. Buy less stuff. Products use energy to be manufactured and consumed.
 35. Avoid buying disposable products. Try refilling water bottles with filtered water rather than purchasing disposable water bottles.

36. Recycle often. Pre-cycle with possible. Here are ways to pre-cycle:

1. **Bring reusable cloth or paper bags to the store with you.**
2. **Buy Large Quantities.** If you buy products in bulk or in large sizes, you can put them in smaller containers as needed.
3. **Buy products with the least amount of packaging or none at all.**
4. **Buy products packed in recycled packaging. (Important: make sure you look for the recycled symbol)**
5. **Don't buy disposable items** (plates cups, pens, diapers, batteries, etc.)
6. **Buy less paper towels and napkins or none at all.** Use cloth ones!
7. **Buy long life and concentrated items (batteries, bulbs, etc)** This saves on packaging as well as product.
8. **Don't purchase styrofoam. It contains polystyrene, and is the most difficult material to break down in our landfills.**
9. **Buy items in cardboard, aluminum, steel, glass, and plastic containers marked 1 and 2** (These recycle more easily)
10. **Read labels for ingredients.** Stay away from chemicals that harm our plant and animal life and poison our land.

37. Bring your own reusable bags to the grocery store. It takes more than 10 million barrels of oil and 15 million trees per year to produce all of the paper and plastic grocery bags that end up our landfills. If your grocery store does not offer reusable non-plastic bags, ask the store manager why not and request that they do so.

38. Buy locally produced food. Trucks will use less gasoline delivering the products.

39. Plant a vegetable garden.

40. Plant trees and give trees as gifts. (<http://www.arboday.org>)

41. Mow your lawn with a push-mower. Gas lawn mowers spew all sorts of pollutants into the air and into your lungs. You'll breathe easier, pollute less, save money, and get some exercise in the bargain. Keep your lawn at a decent length which will keep the lawn moist and conserve water.

42. Use a gas barbecue instead of a charcoal grill. It's healthier, much less polluting, and saves rainforest trees that are cut down to produce charcoal.

43. Eat less meat. Beef production uses a large amount of water and is energy-intensive. Livestock produces 20% of the methane in the atmosphere. (the second most common greenhouse gas)

44. Buy re-usable mesh coffee filters instead of disposable paper filters.

45. Wash your clothes in cold or warm water. Avoid the hot-water setting on your washing machine.

46. Air-dry some of your laundry. Clothes dryers consume huge amounts of energy.

47. Run your dishwasher only when full and don't bother rinsing dishes in the sink. The dishwasher will work just as well and you'll save thousands of gallons of water per year.

48. Generate some of your own electricity with solar panels. Many states will pay for up to half the cost of residential solar-electric systems. Federal tax rebates further reduce the cost.

49. Buy the rest of your electricity from clean energy sources. Go to www.gocleanenergy.com where for pennies per day you can sign up to buy either 50% or 100% of your electricity from clean energy providers who generate electricity with wind, solar, hydro-electric plants, and landfill gas — all renewable resources.

50. If you're in the market for a new computer, consider a laptop. Laptop computers use only 10% as much of the electricity as desktop computer.

51. Turn off the television and read a book. Start with a book on the environment!

Thank you to ... **BARRY KATZ HOMEBUILDING** (Westport, Connecticut)