



GreenHomeCheck Homeowner Interview

Section One: These actions cost little or nothing at all

1. Have I installed water saving showerheads?

Doing so may cost as little as \$5.00 and save as much as \$250 per year.

2. In winter, do I keep the thermostat lower than before and wear an extra layer of clothing?

If you lower the thermostat from 70°F to an average of 66°F and the average winter temperature is 40°F, you will use approximately 13% less energy than before.

3. Do I recycle newspapers, metals and plastic?

Recycling saves your tax money because your community can sell the recyclables and it costs less to dispose of its solid wastes.

4. Do I regularly replace furnace filters and clean refrigerator condenser coils?

Regularly changing filters with higher efficiency ones keeps the air cleaner in your home and makes equipment more efficient while cleaning your refrigerator coils twice a year contributes to lower operating costs.

5. Have I replaced your inefficient incandescent lighting with compact fluorescent bulbs?

A compact fluorescent bulb (cfl) typically outlasts 13 incandescent bulbs and each cfl saves 8 to 12 times its cost.

6. Do I run water only when necessary?

You can save water by not letting it run while showering (wet down, soap, up, rinse off), shaving, hand washing dishes or brushing teeth.

7. Have I lowered the temperature of my hot water heater as close to 120°F as is comfortable?

For each 10°F reduction, you may save 3-5% in energy costs.

8. Do I wash only full loads in the dishwasher and washing machine?

Running your dishwasher uses both electricity and hot water, so the less you run it, the more you will save on both your electricity and water heating bills.

9. Do I use a microwave rather than a regular oven?

Using a gas or electric oven is four to five times more expensive than using a microwave and slower too.

10. Do I use environment-friendly cleaning supplies?

They are free of harsh, irritating chemicals and are more economical than commercial products.

Section Two: These actions have greater long term and community impact

1. Do I buy locally-grown and/or organic foods?

Transporting food shorter distances saves money. Organic foods are healthier for you because they have no pesticides or other additives. Find a local resource or build your own greenhouse.

2. Have I located and eliminated drafts around the house?

Finding and eliminating drafts may save you up to 25% of your heating bill.

3. Have I increased my use of public transportation?

Traveling by car, especially alone, has more of a negative impact on the environment than riding a bus or train or subway.

4. Have I insulated my exposed hot water pipes?

Reducing heat loss from exposed pipes allows you to reduce the temperature setting of your hot water heater.

5. Have I replaced dual faucets with single-action ones?

With single-action faucets, you can turn water on and off without losing the desired water temperature.

6. Have I replaced conventional thermostats with programmable ones?

The use of programmable thermostats will enable the operating temperature of the home to be changed when the home is typically unoccupied. In addition, many programmable thermostats have a re-circulate feature that can allow for temperature to be kept constant when significant differences in temperature exist on different levels.

7. Have I asked my power company to install load monitoring/shedding devices?

You can check with your utility provider to see if you qualify to have device(s) installed that allow them to monitor and adjust your electrical consumption.

8. Do I employ a lawn service that uses minimal quantities of chemicals?

Environmentally friendly lawn care practices include integrated pest management (IPM). This involves using biological methods to control pests before using pesticides. Organic fertilizers reduce the impact on local watersheds.

9. Do you use composting to reduce waste disposal?

One of the several benefits of composting is that the amount of biodegradable matter sent to landfills is significantly reduced. Other benefits include use of composted material as fertilizer, thus reducing the need for chemical fertilizers.

10. Have I replaced appliances in my home with Energy Star rated replacements?

Replacing appliances that utilize electricity and/or water with ones that have met Energy Star requirements will drastically reduce the operating impact of each device.

Section Three: These actions require greater input, but have even greater impact

1. Do I drive or intend to buy a vehicle that gets better gas mileage than the one I currently drive?

If you need to drive a personal vehicle, there are a number of options to consider if you wish to reduce your environmental impact. Hybrid vehicles using established technologies and smaller, lighter vehicles are available.

2. Have I replaced my furnace with a more efficient one or with a system that uses an alternative energy source?

You can save hundreds of dollars per year by replacing an inefficient system. This savings represents a substantial return of an investment of \$2000 or so on a new system.

3. Have I replaced my windows with ones designed to severely limit heat outflow?

One source estimated that if your old windows are single pane with storm windows and your new windows are triple pane; your savings would be 46%.

4. Have I upgraded the insulation wherever necessary throughout my home?

According to a Harvard study, if all 45 million under-insulated homes were insulated to 2000 standards, 800 trillion BTUs (heat units) could be saved!

5. Have I replaced my toilets with low-flow and double action models or with a no-water system?

Low-flow toilets use only 1.6 gallons per flush, compared with 3.5 gallons per flush for pre-1994 models. The savings can be as much as 22,000 gallons of water per year for a family of four.

6. Have I installed a system to re-use gray water (water that can be used twice)?

If local health codes allow it, using gray water can save 25-40% of drinkable water and reduce the burden on treatment facilities.

7. Have I landscaped my yard to maximize solar conditioning and water efficiency?

Well-placed plantings can significantly moderate the local climate around your home. This can result in big savings in heating and cooling costs and water use over time.

8. Have I installed an in-ground sprinkler system that runs at the best times and is zones to water different elements appropriately?

Watering (where zero water designs are not possible) should be tailored to the appropriate types of sprinklers and run times necessary for each different aspect of a landscape. Use of a gray water system is best.

9. Have I installed skylights to make the greatest use of natural lighting?

Skylights and related devices bring light into areas without windows and save on lighting expenses. Skylights are constructed with the same insulation benefits as today's windows and do not leak!

10. Do I speak to neighbors or civic groups about my efforts to live sustainably?

Answering yes to many of the questions in this audit provide savings, comfort and a feeling that you are participating in efforts to maintain the Earth's abilities to support its biosphere. However, unless you share your enthusiasm and experience with your community, the effects of your efforts will not be multiplied by many others who follow your lead. Support and frequent other businesses and facilities that share your global outlook!