Eco-tips

- ***Energy:*** The average home spends about $2,000 on energy bills every year. By changing to appliances that have earned the Energy Star, you can save $75 a year in energy costs (Energy Star). Energy Star rated appliances use 10-50% less energy and water than standard models over their lifetime, making a big difference for the environment and your budget: http://www.energystar.gov/
  Eco-tip provided by GreenFaith: www.greenfaith.org

- ***Energy:*** The United Nations estimates that by 2050 there will be more refugees from climate change than from war. To fight climate change and reduce your carbon footprint (and your energy bills), complete a home energy audit: http://hes.lbl.gov/
  Eco-tip provided by GreenFaith: www.greenfaith.org

- ***Energy:*** As much as half of the energy used in your home goes towards heating and cooling. Start saving money and energy immediately by adjusting your thermostat—in winter, be sure to lower the thermostat by at least 10 degrees when you are not at home or are sleeping (vice-versa for summer). Use 7 day programmable thermostats, which adjusts the temperature automatically according to the time settings you program into it.
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- ***Energy:*** If every US household replaced just one incandescent light bulb with an Energy Star rated compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL), it would prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of more than 800,000 cars. A CFL uses ¼ of the energy of an incandescent light bulb and will pay for itself within 6 months (Energy Star). Start small by installing Energy Star rated CFLs when a light blows out, or make a big change by installing CFLs in all of your lights.
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- ***Energy:*** The average US home has enough air leaks to equal an open window. Sealing and insulating your home can save you up to 20% on heating and cooling costs, and upwards of 10% on your total energy bill (Energy Star). Find an experienced certified contractor, or follow Energy Star's do-it-yourself guide to sealing and insulating: http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=diy.diy_index
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- ***Toxics:*** Many cleaning products contain chemicals that are bad for your health and the environment, and have not been adequately tested for their harmful effects. Clean safely by making your own green cleaners. Follow this simple recipe for an all-purpose cleaner:

  4 cups warm water
  2 Tablespoons of vinegar or lemon juice

1 teaspoon baking soda
2 Tablespoons of natural liquid soap (such as Dr. Bronnor's orange scented)
10 drops of essential oil (Lavender, Pine or Tea Tree)—optional, but helps disinfect and adds a good smell

Mix water, vinegar and baking soda first, then add the soap and essential oil.
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- ***Toxics:*** Pesticides are designed to be harmful, and have been linked to many severe illnesses in both humans and wildlife (Beyond Pesticides). Children are especially susceptible to these chemicals since they are frequently touching surfaces, and they breathe more air per pound of body weight than adults. Search for the least toxic methods for controlling pests in your home: http://www.beyondpesticides.org/alternatives/factsheets/index.htm
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- ***Food:*** Worldwide meat production releases more greenhouse gas emissions than the entire transportation sector combined (Source: UN Environment Programme). Start small by eliminating meat one day per week, or challenge yourself by taking a week-long vegetarian pledge. See www.meatlessmonday.org or www.vegetariantimes.com for good recipes and more information.
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- ***Food:*** A typical carrot travels 1,838 miles to reach your dinner table (Sustainable Table). Support your farmers close to home and reduce your carbon footprint by visiting farmers' markets or participating in Community Supported Agriculture: www.localharvest.org
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- ***Food:*** Nearly 70% of commercial fishing grounds are depleted or recovering from overfishing (Source: UN Food and Agriculture Organization). Before ordering seafood, reach for your Seafood Watch pocket guide: www.seafoodwatch.org which will give you the 'red' light or 'green' when deciding what to choose.
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- ***Food:*** As much as forty percent of the energy used in the food system goes towards the production of chemical fertilizers and pesticides (Sustainable Table). Can't afford to eat everything organically? Some fruits and vegetables are sprayed with more pesticides than others, and cannot be cleaned of pesticide residues as easily—start small by choosing organic for these 'Dirty Dozen' fruits and vegetables that fit this category: peach, apple, bell pepper, celery, nectarine, strawberries, cherries, kale, lettuce, grapes (imported), carrot, and pears. http://www.foodnews.org/
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- ***Food:*** In our ever-expanding global economy, goods are often produced without the environment or workers in mind. Your dollar is your vote; vote for fair wages and a healthier environment by choosing products that are Fair Trade Certified. This certification ensures that the workers making the products were given a fair wage, and that the item was crafted sustainably. Look for Fair Trade coffee, chocolate, teas and other artisan products: http://www.transfairusa.org/
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- ***Transportation:*** 10 seconds of idling uses more fuel than turning the engine on and off (NJDEP). Turn your engine off when you are sitting for more than 10 seconds, especially near children and in urban areas where pollution levels are already high.
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- ***Transportation:*** The U.S. is responsible for 45% of the world's total global warming pollution from vehicles (Environmental Defense). Purchasing a fuel-efficient car is one of the most effective environmental choices you can make. When it comes time to purchase a vehicle, aim for one that is rated at 35 miles per gallon or higher: http://www.fueleconomy.gov/
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- ***Transportation:*** $6,251: Amount the average two-worker household saves annually by taking public transportation instead of driving a car (Source: Environmental Defense). Have you checked out the mass transit routes near your home, and do you use mass transit as often as possible? Where mass transit is infeasible try other sustainable methods of transportation: walking, riding a bike or carpooling.
  Eco-tip provided by GreenFaith: www.greenfaith.org

- ***General*:** The U.S. has 5% of the world's population but uses 25% of its natural resources (Source: US EPA). How many earths would be needed if everyone on the planet used the same amount of resources as you? Find out by taking an ecological footprint quiz: www.myfootprint.org
  Eco-tip provided by GreenFaith: www.greenfaith.org

- ***Waste Reduction*:** The average American creates 4.5 lbs. of garbage each day (Source: Story of Stuff), much of which is food waste. Starting an indoor or outdoor compost bin is easy, smell-free, and turns food waste into nutrient-rich soil. Learn how easy it is at: www.howtocompost.org . Contact your township—often, townships will provide compost bins for free or at a discount. In a small space or urban area? See this composting guide for New York City: http://www.nyccompost.org/how/index.html and look into this electronic, hassle-free indoor composter by NatureMill: http://www.naturemill.com/
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- ***Waste Reduction:*** Your waste will outlive you—plastic can take up to 600 years to break down in a landfill, and Styrofoam never breaks down. When planning parties and events, keep the environment in mind by using reusable dinnerware. Start small with reusable utensils, since they can be easily collected and washed, supplemented with recycled-content paper and/or biocompostable dinnerware: www.worldcentric.org .
  Eco-tip provided by GreenFaith: www.greenfaith.org

- ***Waste Reduction:*** Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a TV for 3 hours. Save energy and resources by recycling your glass, aluminum, plastic and paper. Check your city's recycling guide to find out what materials are recyclable in your area, and whether or not your recyclables should be separated or co-mingled.
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- ***Waste Reduction:*** Individual households receive thousands of pieces of junk mail each year, most of which is printed on virgin paper and is not recycled. Reduce your junk mail by 90% in one easy step: www.41pounds.org . For a small fee, this organization will remove you from junk mailing lists and make a donation to a charity of your choice.
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- ***Water:*** Only 1% of the water on Earth is drinkable, with more and more water sources drying up each day (UN Environment Programme). Reduce your water usage and your water bill immediately by installing a low-flow showerhead and aerators on all water faucets. Look for devices that are EPA Water Sense labeled: http://www.epa.gov/WaterSense/
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- ***Water:*** Fill a plastic water bottle ¼ of the way full with oil—this is how much oil is required to make the typical bottle of water. The numbers are staggering—adding up the plastic used, the energy required to collect and clean the water, and the fuel it takes to ship the bottles to stores, equates to millions of barrels of oil each year (Sierra Club). Kick the bottled water habit by installing a water filter on your faucet and purchasing a reusable water bottle. Aim for a water bottle that does not leach chemicals, by looking for 'BPA Free' labels, or by choosing stainless steel.
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- ***Grounds Maintenance:*** Did you ever notice those small white warning flags on nearby lawns? Those warnings indicate that a lawn has been sprayed with pesticides that are harmful to children and pets. Reduce your exposure, and improve the environment, by eliminating chemicals on your lawn and encouraging your neighbors to do the same. See www.safelawns.org for more information. If you use a lawn care provider, choose one that specializes in natural lawn care, such as NaturaLawn: http://www.nl-amer.com/

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- ***Grounds Maintenance***: One of the biggest threats to local wildlife is development—as homes go up, habitat is destroyed, and wildlife is unable to find places to feed, live, and raise young. Make your property as wildlife-friendly as possible by certifying your backyard as a wildlife habitat. See National Wildlife Federation's Certified Wildlife Habitat™ program: http://www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife/
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