



**Doing Your Part**



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Want to make some cost-saving environmental improvements for your home? Here are 10 easy, high-impact ways to make a difference. These are just a few of the steps you can take toward creating a "Smart Choice" home right now – one that will reward your efforts with savings and comfort for years to come.

### 1. Don't Wait to Insulate

Upgrading your insulation to a higher R-value can lower energy costs dramatically. Start with insulating the attic and unheated crawl spaces. Sealing ducts, caulking and weather-stripping reduce energy loss even more.

### 2. Lower the Flow

Your old shower head probably delivers a lot more water than you really need. Reduce that to 2.0 gallons a minute or less with today's standard shower head – it can make a difference in your water bill. For even greater savings, replace your old toilets with today's standard low flush models that use 1.6 gallons or less per flush.

### 3. Reduce the Runoff

Soaker hoses and drip irrigation systems can lower your water bills by delivering water directly where you need it. By reducing or eliminating runoff, you also reduce the burden of fertilizers and pesticides on our lakes, streams, and oceans and still have a gorgeous garden or lawn.

### 4. Keep Your Cool

Ceiling fans can make the air feel up to six degrees cooler while reducing air conditioning costs. In winter, they can help save on heating costs by circulating warm air from the ceiling to the floor where you can enjoy it. Learn more about [reducing your energy bills](#).

### 5. Try Branching Out

For an all-around environmental boost, plant a tree. According to the [U.S. Department of Energy](#), effectively placing as little as three trees around the home can save you \$100 – 250 a year. They also help cool your community and make your home even more enjoyable.

### 6. Look for the Energy Star Label

Replace your old, inefficient appliances with Energy Star qualified appliances and save energy and money.

### 7. Something Bugging You?

Stay in control by starting with nature's own methods to beat the bugs. Attract birds with birdhouses, feeders, and natural backyard wildlife habitats to help reduce pests. Bug lights, screening, citronella candles, and insecticidal soaps are other less-toxic alternatives.



**8. Clear the Air**

Tune up your systems to make your family more comfortable while you save on heating and cooling costs. Upgrading and properly maintaining your home air filters is easy and helps improve indoor air quality. Vented range hoods and room exhaust fans also help remove smoke, moisture, airborne bacteria, and other indoor air pollutants.

**9. Get the Lead Out**

In the U.S. and Canada, over 58 million homes built before 1978 contain lead-based paints. To reduce lead hazards in your home and protect your family during any home renovation, ask our Paint Department for the free information sheet "Reducing Lead Hazards When Remodeling Your Home."

**10. Make Your Own Mulch**

Composting is the smart way to dispose of leaves, yard clippings, selected food scraps, and other organic wastes. Instead of burdening landfills, you'll produce rich nutrients to fertilize your garden the natural way. And it's free. Make it a habit to recycle your glass, cans, cardboard, and newspapers, too.

Learn more about what you can do to [reduce your energy bills](#).