

Tips for Saving Energy in Your Homes

Environmental tip:

Nearly 1/3 of all air pollution is caused by conventional power plants fueled by non-renewable resources like oil, natural gas and coal. These resources will not last forever and are major contributors of pollution.

<http://www.geocities.com/donnagw/envirotips.html>

Energy

Heating

- Turn your central heating thermostat down to between 18°C and 22°C. Turning it down by 1% can save as much as 10% from fuel bills.
- Heavy curtains keep out draughts, especially if they have a thick lining, reach the floor or window sill and have a number of folds. Don't hang curtains in front of radiators though!

Cooking

- Only heat the amount of water you need.
- Use boiled water immediately rather than leaving it and then reboiling.
- Put well-fitting lids on pans.
- Keep heat on the base of the saucepan, do not let flames lick the sides of the pan.

Fridges/Freezers

- Door seals should be able to grip a piece of paper tightly.
- Keep your fridge temperature at 2 to 3°C and freezer at -15°C. Check the fridge is not near a cooker or any other heat sources.
- Defrost your fridge and freezer regularly.
- Use old newspaper to fill gaps in the freezer when you are not storing much food - this improves efficiency.

Washing

- Use low temperature washes whenever possible.
- Try to dry clothes naturally.

Appliances

- Turn televisions and other appliances off at the mains. Leaving appliances on standby still uses energy.
- Turn off your home computer when it is not in use.
- Lagging pipes can save £5 to £10 from heating bills.
- Energy efficient light bulbs are more expensive than standard bulbs but they will last up to 10 times longer which conserves significant energy. They are most effective when used for lights that are left switched on for long periods of time

- Try placing foil behind radiators. Household foil will do, although it is possible to buy foil for this purpose from DIY stores.
- Don't put furniture in front of radiators, but if appropriate, fit shelves above them as this deflects heat into the middle of the room.
- Investigate further draught proofing of windows and doors.
- Look into cavity wall insulation, condensing boilers and loft insulation, all of which could save energy or money.
- If possible, buy the most energy efficient products possible. Ask retailers and manufacturers for information, and look out for the **Energy Efficiency Recommended** Logo.

Water

- Check for and fix dripping taps.
- Turn off taps if you do not need them, for example when cleaning your teeth.
- Have a shower instead of a bath when possible.
- Keeping cool water in the fridge means you won't have to run a tap continually to get cold water.
- Think about how much bleach and household cleaner is flushed down the loo. The chemicals do affect the water course.
- A washing machine can use as much as 95 litres water per cycle. Using a full load uses less energy, water and costs less overall than washing half loads. The same can be applied to dishwashers.
- Flushing the loo can use around 15 litres of water. Placing a brick in the cistern or using a hippo from the water company can lead to considerable savings. Toilet cisterns manufactured after 1993 usually use less water per flush.
- Think of ways to use 'grey water', from cooking or fish tanks. This water can often be used in the garden and for watering household plants.

Waste

- Each year Woking residents produce over 24,000 tonnes of household waste which goes to landfill. Much of this could be reused, recycled or composted.
- Recycling saves the earth's resources. Every tonne of recycled glass saves over a tonne of raw materials.
- Recycling saves energy. Recycling aluminium cans saves 95% of the energy required to extract natural resources and make a new can.
- Recycling helps conserve the environment as it reduces the need to mine raw materials, limiting the impacts of mineral extraction on the landscape.
- Woking Borough Council provides a range of recycling services, including recycling sites and kerbside collections. Facilities are available for the recycling of paper, glass, cans, textiles, shoes, plastic bottles, cardboard, and oil.
- Remember the 3R's and apply them to your own waste before disposing of it - **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**.
- Try not to make a special trip for recycling. Where possible, visit recycling sites when making a trip to the local shops.

Some Tips

- Plan your shopping. Surplus food is often thrown away, think whether you really need everything you buy.
- Avoid buying products which are over-packaged.
- As much as 20% of what is thrown away could be compostable. Have you got a composter or can someone help you compost?
- Reduce unwanted junk mail by joining the Mailing Preference Service.
- Take your own reusable bag with you to the supermarket.
- Try to use returnable or reusable containers.
- Buy goods in refillable containers.
- Avoid disposable goods where not necessary.
- Can it be repaired? Think before you bin!
- Donate unwanted items to charity shops or jumble sales.
- For detailed information about **how to reduce, reuse and recycle waste**, the web site www.recycling-guide.org.uk contains a range of useful suggestions. The guide also contains articles about how different items are recycled.

Transport

There is no doubt the car has revolutionized our lives and many of us see it as a necessity. However, cars carry a significant environmental impact through consumption of fossil fuels and by causing harmful emissions. Here are some green transport tips:

- Consider using public transport, walking, or cycling for your journey.
- Drive with consideration for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Turn off your car engine if in a traffic jam or are stationary for more than 2 minutes.
- Keep the car engine properly serviced and maintained. By ensuring maximum efficiency, you can save fuel and decrease emissions.
- Ensure tyres are correctly inflated.
- Don't drive too fast as exhaust emissions rise dramatically in cars travelling over 55 mph.
- Car share if possible and only undertake necessary journeys.

<http://www.woking.gov.uk/environment/tips.html>