



Save Energy, Save Money, Save the Planet

Top 10 New Year's Resolutions for Sustainable Living

I resolve to reduce my reliance on plastic bags.

Did you know that Americans consumed over 100 billion plastic shopping bags? Most people by now have started to kick the habit of using plastic bags when they go to the grocery store. Many grocery stores even give a discount for using reusable bags. Now try to take it one step further by taking reusable bags with you whenever you go shopping, for food, clothes or just anything! Tip: Leave a few reusable bags in the trunk of your car so it is readily available.

I resolve to reduce my dependency on plastic.

Did you know that Americans consumed over 50 billion plastic bottles? Buy a reusable water bottle and fill it with water from your home or office. If tap water isn't to your liking, then use a water filtration pitcher or system. Remember to recycle your plastic ware at work and at home, and reuse those plastic food take-out containers instead of buying new ones. Tip: the bottled water that you have purchased IS NOT better than water from your tap!

I resolve to support local growers and local economy.

Who wouldn't want to buy groceries without pesticides? Help support your local economy by shopping at local farmer's markets or the organic sections in grocery stores. This is a win-win situation! You eat healthier food, benefit local economy, and lessen the amount of CO2 produced by transporting the food. Tip: Don't forget to pay attention to labels such as locally grown produce signs and labels, USDA Organic, and Fair Trade.

I resolve to reduce, recycle and reuse my paper consumption.

The easiest thing to do is to cut down on printing documents. For example, print a document if it is absolutely necessary, use "print preview" to be certain it is what you want, only print those pages you need, and if your printer supports double-sided printing, USE IT! Next, recycle paper for everything, including junk mail, not just at home but at work as well. Tip: Why not try switching to online banking and paperless statements?

I resolve to kick my "junk mail" craving.

Did you know that the average American adult receives 41 lbs of junk mail a year? Or that junk mail produces more greenhouse gas emissions than 2.8 million cars annually? Now that the holiday season has passed, call up those catalog companies that mail you and ask to be taken off their mailing lists. Tip: You can also stop receiving junk mail using a free service like Catalog Choice, <http://www.catalogchoice.org/>, or paid services like 41pounds, <http://www.41pounds.org/>, or Green Dimes, <http://www.greendimes.com/>.

I resolve to reduce my reliance on energy.

Start with the easy one first, replace your light bulbs with florescent bulbs. Next, turn off the lights and TV when no one is watching or in the room. Did you know that standby power (phantom load or vampire electricity) accounts for an estimated 7-11% of average U.S. household electric use? So go and unplug appliances and electronic devices that are not in use right now. For your entertainment, media or computer areas, it may be easier to just plug everything into a single power strip and turn it on and off that way. Smart strips allow you to keep power to cable boxes, modems, etc., while cutting off power to other appliances (<https://www.earthaidkit.com/buy/cat-smartstrips.php>). Remember to have your heating system checked once a year by a professional and replace filters as recommended. Tip: Conduct a whole-house energy audit to find the problem areas and fix them!



I resolve to reduce my water consumption.

Again, go with the easiest one first, turn off the faucet when you are brushing your teeth and take shorter showers. Next, install low flow showerheads, replace with low flow fixtures, like a toilet, whenever it needs to be replaced, and fix any leaky water fixtures. If you have a water filtration system in your home, don't forget to conduct your annual maintenance check. Check your sprinkler in the yard to be sure that it is watering your lawn or plants. Only run your clothes washer when you have a full load and remember to use cold water, or very least warm water, to cut down on the energy needed to heat up the water. *Tip: Still washing those dishes by hand instead of using the dishwasher? STOP! Washing a full load of dishes in the dishwasher uses less water and saves more money than if you washed them by hand!*

I resolve to cut back on my car usage.

Okay this is probably the most difficult one out of all of the resolutions. Again, let's start with the easiest step and try car pool - don't limit it just to going to work. You can car pool to the grocery store, the shopping mall, to drop off kids at school, to church or synagogue, etc. What about walking or biking to town? Or even take public transportation once a week to work? Who needs road rage anyway! *Tip: Plan out your day and consolidate your errands so that you spend less time driving and wasting gas.*

I resolve to make an effort to "de-clutter" my home.

Are there items, like books, furniture, clothes, or toys, in your home that you can donate to your local thrift shops? What about lightly used or reusable items that a local charity could use? If you have not started a recycling program at home, New Year is the perfect time to start one. Keep in mind that the excuse of "my town doesn't pick up", "I don't have to in my condo association", or "it is too much of a hassle" are just to cover up for our laziness. Learn about local recycling programs, and encourage their use in your community. *Tip: You can find local recycling centers in the United States at Earth911.com.*

I resolve to be informed about Conservation and Sustainability.

If you care about the environment;

If you care about the world we are leaving behind for our children and their children;

If you care about the air we breath outdoors and indoors;

If you care about eliminating the chemicals we congest with our food products;

If you care about any one of the above items, then **get informed** about conservation and sustainability and how your contribution does **make a difference**, no matter how big or small!

For additional information, contact **Green Living Solutions** at:

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