

Top 9 Green New Year Resolutions



Change your light bulbs.

While you can buy the four-pack of the standard bulbs for \$2 -- compact fluorescent bulbs use two-thirds less energy and last 10 times longer. If all Americans replaced just one bulb in their home, it would prevent an amount of greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of 800,000 cars in a year.

Cut back on disposables.

Bring your own mug to Starbucks or your local coffee house. You could get a discount (10% at Starbucks), and it's one less disposable cup that will end up in a landfill. Switch to reusable cups and dishes at home and work too.

Save water.

Run the dishwasher and washing machine only when they are full. Take shorter showers and look into a low-flow showerhead. They still have great pressure but conserve gallons of water from each shower. You'll save hundreds of pounds of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere and save on your utility bills too.

Turn off your computer.

When in standby mode, your PC is still using energy. In fact, a significant portion of the electricity used in your home comes from electronics that are turned off. Try plugging your computer into a power strip and shutting it down completely at the end of the day. Remove your iPod, digital camera, and phone chargers from outlets when not in use. Turning off a 75-watt monitor for 40 hours a week cuts carbon emissions by 750 pounds and 450 fewer pounds of coal are burned each year.

Stop junk mail.

Most of us receive a steady flow of unsolicited junk mail, catalogs, and magazines. Call 888-5-OPTOUT or get off mailing lists at www.NewDream.org. Make sure to recycle what you do receive. Find out where to recycle in your area at www.KansasBirr.com. Less energy will be spent on creating paper and less trash will be created.

Rethink plastic bags.

Reuse plastic bags. Americans throw away 100 billion plastic sacks a year. Try and get a second, third use out of them. Tote your lunch to work or your groceries home, or at least use them as garbage bags. Better yet, next time you shop, try a reusable bag. Learn how at www.ReusableBags.com. You will reduce pollution. The amount of oil it would takes to make just 14 plastic bags would run your car for one mile.

Green your car.

The next time you're in the market for a new car, check out an eco option like a smaller car or even a hybrid model. In the meantime, take care of your current ride with regular tune-ups and properly inflated tires. Getting regular tune-ups, maintenance, and having clean air filters will help you burn less gas and produce less pollution. Nation-wide, properly inflated tires could save around 2 billion gallons of gas each year.

Use recycled paper.

Use recycled paper, even in the bathroom. The alternatives are made from trees, which absorb carbon dioxide. If every household in America replaced one roll of toilet paper with a recycled post-consumer roll, we would save 424,000 trees. Look for recycled content paper towels and napkins too.

Buy energy-efficient appliances.

Replace old appliances with Energy Star appliances (www.EnergyStar.gov) and you'll use at least 15 percent less energy and water in your home. It might be a little pricier to buy, but you'll save money on your utility bills and help the environment.

Source: MSN

