

## Living “Green”

There are many pertinent reasons to pay close attention to the way we live, such as the preservation of your pocketbook and the environment. Implementing even minor changes helps.

Here are some suggestions you may want to incorporate:

- **Recycle wisely:** Fortunately, Santa Cruz County has a curbside [recycling program](#) in place which you can read about. Not sure what you can and cannot recycle? Mixed materials? Pizza boxes? Watch this [video](#).
- **Turn off the tap:** Be sure to turn off the water while brushing your teeth or shaving. The average faucet releases three gallons of water per minute.
- **Install a better showerhead:** A high-efficiency showerhead is a good investment. It will reduce the flow of water while retaining enough pressure to take a good shower. Save the current showerhead and replace it when you move out.
- **Clean up your cleaning:** Use biodegradable and plant-based dishwashing powders, liquids, and cleaning supplies without bleach and phosphates. There are many ecologically sound types on the market. Be inventive. Baking soda mixed with water is an efficient homemade cleaner.
- **Reuse what you can:** Think twice before throwing anything away. A lot of energy is expended on making unnecessary products. You can give away and get used items on [freecycle.org](#).
- **Use glass instead of plastic:** Glass, unlike plastic, can be reused often without posing any health risks and can be recycled when needed to be replaced.
- **Drink from the tap instead of plastic bottles:** Using tap water reduces the use of plastic bottles, reducing your total waste production. If you feel it necessary, invest in a water filter or Brita type filtered water pitcher.
- **Compost:** If you have a backyard, create a compost pile, or if you live in an apartment, start a compost bin, and start adding and maintaining the organic waste thrown into the pile. By composting, you can reduce the total amount of waste sent to landfills as well as improve your garden with the organic byproduct.
- **Some appliances are better than others:** An electric kettle uses less energy than a stovetop kettle, and a toaster oven uses up to half the energy of a conventional electric oven.
- **Burning candles:** Replace paraffin candles made from crude oil with cleaner-burning soy or beeswax candles.
- **Throw away:** Look for biodegradable or high recycled consumer content trash bags.
- **Purchasing paper products:** Choose recycled or high post consumer waste content products.
- **A helpful site:** [EcoCruz.org](#) - A gateway to green organizations, events and volunteer sites in Santa Cruz County.

## Easy ways to save:

All electronics that are plugged into your outlets are costing you money and wasting energy, even when they are not turned “on” or in use. Unplug all sources not in use, such as cell phone chargers, DVD players, stereos, toasters, hairdryers, etc.

***Saves 5 percent on your electricity bill.***

Instead of letting your computer/laptop sit idle while your away, turn it completely off!

***Saves around 60 dollars a year.***

To save electricity and money use the microwave to defrost food rather than the stove/oven.

***Saves a fifth of the amount of energy by cooking in the microwave rather than on the stove/oven.***

A quarter of a home’s energy comes from appliances and lighting fixtures; you can cut down on the amount of energy used by switching to LED or compact fluorescent lights. LEDs use 90 percent less energy than incandescent light bulbs and CFLs use up to 80 percent less energy. Incandescent bulbs will be phased out over the next few years, ending with the complete termination of all incandescent bulbs by 2015.

***Saves about 44 dollars a year.***

When you do laundry, run full loads, preferably in cold water. You still need to wash sheets and towels in hot water for good hygiene. If clothes are clean enough after wearing, don’t wash them. Air them out.

***You could save a load a week, using much less water and soap.***

Clean out your dryer’s lint filter after every load. A dirty lint filter requires 30 percent more energy to dry a load of laundry than a clean one. It is also a fire hazard.

***A clothes line or stand uses 100 percent less energy.***

Purchase a programmable thermostat which starts as low as 20 dollars and is easy to install. It allows you to control the temperature and allow the correct amount of heat/cooling in your home.

***The correct use of a programmable thermostat may save an average of 180 dollars a year.***

### Household Products with Dual Uses!

Vinegar: Cuts grease & deodorizes  
Lemon Oil: Removes stains, deodorizes & shines  
Alcohol: Disinfects, cleans glass & granite  
Hydrogen Peroxide: Cuts mold & bleaches

### Top Websites for Living Green!

GreenLivingOnline.com  
GreenLivingTips.com  
PaysToLiveGreen.com  
SustainLane.com

Sources: Real Simple, April 2007, Better Homes and Gardens, August 2007 and Live Green, September 2009