

10 Tips for Greening Your Home



1. **Recycle** Take advantage of the recycling services offered in West Michigan. Recycle your old computers, printers, and electronics. Most Goodwill locations will take computers at no cost. Recycle batteries, plastic bags and even your tires. All of this will reduce your trash bill and reduce landfill waste.
2. **Buy fair trade / organic coffee** Drink it at home for the same reasons you drink it at work. It's better for the soil, tastes better and frees workers from the dangers of chemicals. It also enables farmers to earn a living wage while avoiding deforestation, soil erosion, and the increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide that comes from other coffee farming practices.
3. **Unplug** Turn off electrical devices that aren't being used. Five to ten percent of the average American electric bill comes from "phantom power", powering devices that aren't being used.
4. **Reduce your water consumption** While only one percent of all the water in the world is drinkable, the average American consumes approximately 100 gallons each day. Install low-flow showerheads, turn the water off when you brush your teeth and water your lawn every other day.
5. **Replace your incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lights** Do this today! The new, improved CFLs cost about \$3 and use $\frac{1}{4}$ of the energy of a \$1 bulb while lasting five times longer. Don't forget to recycle the CFLs in 2012 when they burn out!
6. **Carpool / bike** Use alternative forms of transportation whenever possible. Frequent nearby shops, plan efficient routes and drive during 'off hours'.
7. **Shop local** The blueberries you ate on your breakfast cereal might have traveled 1500 miles to get to your bowl. Buying locally grown produce from a greenmarket, a farm stand, or a conscientious supermarket, conserves energy, reduces pollution and supports your local economy.
8. **Consider composting** Use a composter or wormery to turn organic and kitchen waste into a great natural fertilizer for your lawn or garden. This also reduces the greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) from landfills caused by the anaerobic decomposition of wet, biodegradable materials (primarily vegetation and food).
9. **Calculate your footprint** Check out your carbon footprint at Ecofoot.org and find additional ways to go green. According to the Living Planet Report of 2006, if everyone in the world lived like the average American, we would need approximately seven globes to sustain life.
10. **Educate, spread the word!** Reduce, reuse, and recycle!