



Going Green: 5 Easy Tips for the Home

By Bella Babot

I find it fascinating how simple, everyday things are so important for caring for the planet. And it's also a good reminder that "going green" really isn't all that hard.

The thing I love most about practicing green alternatives in my home is that nine times out of ten, being environmentally friendly is not only good economics but more importantly, it's good for our health as well as our pets health!

There are many little things we can do in our homes to play a small part in reducing landfill waste, cleaning the air and preserving the natural landscape.

Here are some small, easy, green choices we can make in our homes. Choose just one that you're not already doing and make a point to do it this year. Perhaps it'll become a habit.

1. Low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators. While energy savings are at the top of the list for anyone going green, conserving water is equally if not more important. Through green technology like low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators, you can quickly save 50 percent on water use throughout the home. Costing only \$5 to \$50 each, this is an easy way at going green while saving on your water bill. Also, energy costs for heating water for showers also gets cut in half for additional savings.

2. Door seals and weather stripping. Cracks around doors and windows in the home can lead to big energy losses. In fact, a 1/8-inch gap



beneath a door is the equivalent of a two-inch hole in the wall. Sealing doors with weather stripping or sweeps is an easy green technology that nearly anyone can install. Treating windows is even easier with stick-on stripping saving nearly 15 percent of heating energy. Other spots to apply this green technology include basements, utility rooms and attics.

3. Programmable thermostat. Summer is here and with the advent of warmer days, many people enjoy coming home to a cool home. But anyone going green realizes it doesn't have to stay 72 degrees all the time. With the simple green technology of a programmable thermostat, anyone with forced air heating and cooling can keep it as cool or warm as they need it. And if you're a techie, the Nest™ is for you! This is what the creators of this highly personalized system have to say: "Most people leave the house at one temperature and forget to change it. So Nest learns your schedule, programs itself and can be controlled from your

phone. Teach it well and Nest can lower your heating and cooling bills up to 20%."

On the road or coming home early? You can use the Nest® Mobile app to connect to your thermostat from a smartphone. Did you decide to extend your vacation? You can change the temperature miles from home in minutes. For more information about Nest®, go to: www.nest.com/living-with-nest.

4. UC Verde Buffalograss.

Landscaping is another area where there are many opportunities and options to conserve water, lower your maintenance costs yet still enjoy the look of luscious green grass. Traditional grass requires a significant amount of water, possibly the use of pesticides for weed maintenance, thus not making it a great choice. One new option might be the UC Verde Buffalograss®. It requires 75% less water than most grasses and is the only native grass grown in California. For more information about this green option for your garden, go to: www.ucverde.com.

5. Enjoy and embrace a simpler life. Plant an herb garden. Shop at your local Farmer's market and patronize restaurants who source their food from local (less than 100 miles away) farms and ranches. Join a Community Supported Agricultural group or even better, be the drop-off point for one. Spend one weekend a month acting as if you live in Europe and stroll or bike everywhere. Turn off lights when you leave the room or even better, don't turn on any lights at all for as long as you can. Open your curtains and enjoy the natural light. Install light switches with motion sensors and you can stop worrying about turning off lights in areas like walk in closets, hallways or rooms where you come and go quickly.

There are many things you can do but making small incremental changes will keep you and our planet healthy for a very long time.

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