

Big Green Purse: How to Afford Going Green

Want to go green but think it's too expensive? Think again. You can actually SAVE \$20-\$50 every month by choosing products and services that protect the planet. Here's how:

Buy reusables. Compare a cloth rag to a roll of paper towels. One cloth rag may cost as little as \$.99. A roll of paper towels runs around \$1.99. But one cloth rag lasts as long as 20 rolls + of paper towels. You could save as much as \$40 in paper towels before you have to throw the rag away. Purchase 7-10 rags and use a fresh one every day. Wash with your normal laundry.

Switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs. The CFLs may cost \$2-4 more than the incandescent bulb you're used to. But the CFL uses 66% less energy and lasts ten times as long. So over the course of the lifetime of the bulb, you can save as much as \$30-\$50 on electricity. Plus - think of all the time you're saving changing light bulbs. (NOTE: Choose Energy Star-rated bulbs and don't turn them on and off frequently to make them last longest.)

Forget bottled water. When you buy bottled water, you're buying a plastic bottle, a label, the energy to transport the bottle to your store, a bottle cap, and the water inside the bottle -- which, almost half the time, is actually tap water! And even though water is very cheap when it flows out of your tap, it can cost as much as 10,000 times more when it's served in a bottle. Buy a reusable water bottle and fill it up at your own tap. If you're worried about water quality, use the money you save on bottled water to buy a filter for your faucet.

Save gas. This sounds like a "no brainer," but you'd be surprised how many people waste gas - and money. Pump up your car tires to improve fuel efficiency by 3.3%. Use cruise control for as much as a 14% fuel efficiency gain. Go to Gas Buddy to find the cheapest gas in your driving range. Car pool to share driving costs with others. Consider these other tips.

Buy in bulk. You pay nearly twice the price for the same weight when you buy small, individually wrapped servings of a product rather than the bulk size. Laundry detergent, fabric softener, dishwasher detergent, shampoo, soap, conditioner, snacks, soft drinks and many other items offer a bulk or 'economy' size. Even buying a half-gallon container of juice is cheaper than buying individual juice boxes.

Connecting People to Preserve Our Planet

1959 N Peace Haven Rd., #257 Winston-Salem, NC 27106 • www.peaNC.org



Plug into a power strip. 40 percent of the energy used to power consumer electronics is devoured when the devices are turned off. That's nearly 5 percent of the total electricity American homes consume. A power strip lets you plug several appliances or lots of office equipment into one larger outlet that you can turn off with minimal hassle, automatically cutting power to all devices that are plugged into it.

Take a tax credit. New fuel-efficient hybrid vehicles save gas and earn you tax credits, too. The amount, as determined by the IRS, ranges from \$250 to \$3150. There may also be tax credits available for weatherizing your home and purchasing Energy Star appliances. Consult a tax advisor.

Buy gently used. Use Craig's List or Freecycle. Before you pay full price for furniture, appliances, sporting equipment or lawn and garden tools, go "shopping" online - at clearinghouses that help you acquire the goods you need at no or low cost. In the same vein, get books from libraries, or swap bought books with friends. Trade in your gently worn clothes at thrift stores, and pocket the savings or apply to the purchase of something equally thrifty.

Donate. Giving your used clothing and household goods to the Salvation Army, your local church, or a local charity for veterans lightens the load at the landfill and earns you a tax write-off for your charitable donations.

Choose quality over quantity. Simplify your needs overall. Then, buy clothes, jewelry, toys, tools, furniture and other commodities that are made to last. You may spend a few more dollars up front but save money in the long run when you don't need to replace items that break or wear out quickly.

For more ideas on how to "Go Green," visit <http://www.peanc.org/education> and <http://www.biggreenpurse.com>

Source: <http://www.biggreenpurse.com>

Connecting People to Preserve Our Planet

1959 N Peace Haven Rd., #257 Winston-Salem, NC 27106 • www.peaNC.org

