

Conservation Tips

How to save money and help with the country's climate stabilization efforts --- all at the same time.

1. *Recycle! Its easy...*

Glass/Plastic/Metal bottles and cans - all glass, bi-metal, aluminum, steel, plastic containers, or other plastics that have either a 1 or 2 in the middle of the recycling triangle can be recycled. Just rinse the container so it is clean and free of chemicals, and drop it in your blue recycling bin. Somerset County offers recycling pick-up at your curb, and the pickup schedule can be found at www.co.somerset.nj.us/recycle.htm.

Newsprint – Recyclers will also pick up your newsprint right from your curb. Bundle up all of your newspapers, and you can even include the newspaper inserts, with twine and leave them next to your recycle bins for pick up. If you are a real forward thinker, you may even consider subscribing to the online addition of your favorite paper, and pocket the fees you would otherwise spend on delivery.

Miscellaneous Paper – Along with newsprint, almost any other kind of paper can be recycled as well! Try to use both sides of your paper, whether it be copy or notebook paper, before recycling it. Shredded paper, envelopes, paper giftwrap, phone books, any paperback books, magazines, and used printer paper can all be recycled as well. Collect waste paper in paper bags and add the bags to your collection of curb side recyclables. Corrugated cardboard (like the kind large brown cardboard boxes are made of) can also be recycled, if cut down into newspaper size pieces and bound with twine.

Cloth/Textiles – Whoever thought their old curtains, shoes, belts, pajamas, purses, and stuffed animals could be recycled as well? These too can be recycled, if tied up in white or clear plastic bags, clearly marked textiles, and put out on the curb with the rest of your recycling. It is important that the goods are clean and fit to be used because the textiles collected are often purchased from recyclers and redistributed to underprivileged individuals who can use them. In Somerset county collected textiles are often bought by an organization called Planet Aid. For more information visit www.planetaid.org.

Batteries – Dry cell batteries can also be recycled through your curb side recycling system if you seal them in a plastic zip top bag and place them in your blue recycling bin. When recycling a 9 volt battery be sure to put strong tape over the connectors because they have the potential to combust if they come in contact with another battery.

Fluorescent Lights – Since they contain small amounts of mercury, they should not be disposed of as if they were trash, as this chemical is very toxic and has the potential to pollute groundwater if put in a landfill. Although the county does not offer curbside pickup for this item, they can be safely disposed of on a hazardous waste day, the dates of which and drop off location indicated on the Somerset County website at www.co.somerset.nj.us/planweb/hazwasteday.htm.

Organic Waste -- All organic material like plant clippings, leaves, grass, vegetable peelings, and most kitchen waste can be collected into piles and composted. Compost serves a dual purpose of eliminating organic waste and producing a nutrient enriched eco-friendly fertilizer for your plants. Find information on creating your own backyard compost pile at the United States Environmental Protection Agency website: www.epa.gov/compost/by_compost.htm.

Recycling is great but Reuse is even better! Get connected with others who need the item you want to get rid of! Check out Somerset County Freecycle! Navigate through the Somerset County website or jump to your local freecycle network at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/somersetfreecycle/> and help keep your waste out of landfills!

Precycling – This means get in the habit of planning how you will reuse an item even before you buy it. For example, try to buy items like shampoos or juices that are marked with a recycling logo that has a 1 or 2 stamped in the middle since those items are the ones recycled in our county. Try not to buy an item that is bigger or more than you need if the excess will end up in the trash. If you know you will eventually throw an item away, try to buy its paper or other biodegradable counterpart.

2. Short out your electric bill - simple steps to save \$\$ and !

At home –

Remember to turn lights off when leaving a room, make sure your refrigerator door is shut and tightly sealed, and try to avoid using appliances that require electricity whenever feasible. Avoid charging cell phones overnight. Not only is overnight and excessive charging bad for the life of your cell phone battery, but you burn excess energy in the process. Try to charge all chargeable electronics only until they are fully charged, and do not leave their charges plugged in when not in use, since the powerful transformers these charges have burn energy even when the appliance to be

meter. charged is not plugged in. In fact, any appliance left plugged in all the time is running your
meter. Shutting down little used appliances into power strips, and
shutting the strips down when you don't need the power from them, cutting the problem off at the source.
energy You can also find significant savings by converting the lighting in your household to more
burn efficient methods like florescent light bulbs. Florescent bulbs tend to have longer lifespans and
far less energy than your average incandescent.

If you are investing in new appliances, try to pick ones with the Energy Star logo.
Explore the possibility of installing a ceiling fan as an alternative to costly air conditioning.

have a If you want find ways to collect on energy savings but are still skeptical about how to proceed,
is professional come into your home and perform a home energy audit, to determine where energy
wasted and what changed you can make that will make the biggest difference in your energy
consumption.

In addition, energy suppliers usually charge a higher rate for the energy we consume during
"peak hours", usually during the hours 9-5. Avoid running your energy burning household appliances
during these hours, like the washer, dryer, and dishwasher to collect on the savings of off peak hour
rates.

When doing the wash, try to wait for a full load before running the machine. You can also save
electricity by setting the washer to use cold water instead of warm.

investing in If you have a pool with an electric heater, you could greatly decrease your electric bill by
solar pool heating.

At the office –

trying to Offices soak up a ton of resources every day. Do your part to conserve by powering your
use up computer down at the end of the work day, shutting off your monitor when its not in use, and
of use both sides of a sheet of paper before retiring it in the recycling bin. Also, many electronics
the electricity when they are plugged in, even if they are not turned on. You can minimize this waste
power by plugging your office electronics into a power strip that can be turned off at the end of
workday and before the weekend.

Not Also, if you have an office with access to natural light, open the blinds and turn the lights off!
only are you saving energy, natural light is better for you!

Future Alternative Energy Sources – Solar, wind, and hydrothermal are among
several emerging technologies that make up the face of sustainable power. And you don't have to install any of
them on your own properties to invest in and support this transition. Visit www.njcleanpower.com to
find out how you can invest in clean energy through your current energy provider.

3. Wipeout the water bill -

In and around the house -

The first step would be to make sure none of your sinks, toilets, or other appliances are leaking, as a leak dripping day and night can waste a substantial amount of water.

If you are updating your shower or building a new house, opt for a low-flow shower head, low flow toilets, and front loading washer machines as all of these use less water than the standard models.

One of the biggest users of water is landscaping. Not to say you can't water your plants, but if you do, do so sparingly. Also, the best way to water is to dampen the roots only, and to water in either the early morning or evening when the most water can be absorbed instead of evaporating off at times when the sun is out. Also, mulch around the roots helps to hold moisture in.

Even if you have a well and your water is essentially free, you should not use your water irresponsibly. Exhausting the resources of a well can lead to contaminated water being pulled into and mingling with the water in the water table that feeds your well, especially if you or your neighbors have a septic system.

Instead of hosing the sidewalk or deck off to eliminate debris, use a broom and sweep it off.

Greening Landscaping –

Help with the effort to keep hazardous chemicals out of the water supply! As sleek a manicured lawn

looks, it often means laying down powerful fertilizers and insecticides to keep it that way.

These

chemicals often leach into the ground through rainwater and watering, adding pollutants to the water

table and nearby streams. Reduce the amount of chemicals added to the environment by ignoring the

directions on the bag and distributing these products as infrequently as possible. Not only will this

have a gentler effect on the natural ecosystem, it'll stretch the life of your bag of fertilizer. Also, the

next time you need to stock up on plant food, look for something natural and eco-friendly. You may

even consider composting or buying compost.

4. Stretch mileage out of your heat -

Hot Water -

The Get the most out of the gas you burn by investing in a blanket to wrap your hot water heater in. blanket will act as insulation, reducing the work your water heater has to do to get and stay warm.

Insulating the pipes running away from the heater that head to your shower and faucets will have the same effect and keep the heat in during transport. Save additional resources by cranking the dial down on your water heater down to 120°.

If you have a gas water heater for your pool, save money in the summer months by switching to solar pool heating.

Trim those winter heating bills -

home
it
Shave dollars off the top of your gas bill by making sure your home is properly insulated. The insulation on your exterior walls should be thick to help retain heat. If you are building a new or making improvements on an old one consider insulating your walls with cotton insulation, as holds heat in the best.

heat
thinned
If you are purchasing new windows consider purchasing double paned windows, as they hold in better than single paned. If you spend more than should be necessary to heat your home, old, drafty windows may be at the root of your problem. When updating windows be sure the edges around your windows are properly sealed and insulated as well.

5. Gas it up less frequently -

to get
just
get.
go
There is a lot of buzz nowadays about hybrid vehicles, but your car does not need to be a hybrid good gas mileage. You can maximize the gas mileage of your current car by keeping it tuned – make sure to change the engine oil about once every 3,000 miles, the air pressure of your tires is as the owners manual says it should be, and also by making sure you are not carrying any excess weight around in your car, because the heavier the load, the less gas mileage your vehicle will get. Many gas stations have air pumps where you can fill your tires, and many of them are free so do it periodically. Also, driving the speed limit is shown to increase gas mileage, whereas stop and type driving, and aggressive acceleration require more gas. Moderate speeds and steady acceleration win the gas-mileage race.

6. Other tips and tricks -

- Get a handle on your consumption of plastics!

one of
years in
is
glove
in
use
It's
cheaper, too.
Avoid buying disposable plastic plates, cups, and utensils. If you must use them, try to recycle them. If you must buy disposable tableware, opt for the paper plates and cups.

Many US cities like San Francisco or Boston are staging motions to control and minimize the distribution of plastic bags by local food and drugstores. Plastic, a byproduct of oil, is not only the products we depend on foreign oil for, but also has a reputation for spending hundreds of US landfills without decaying. Do your part by:

- _Refusing plastic bags when shopping, and instead bring your own bags from home. This made easier if you carry a small bag inside your purse, or leave one in the trunk or compartment of your car.
- _Outfit the trash bins in your home that you expect to contain mostly dry items, like tissues in your bathroom garbage bin, with paper bags.
- _Try to use items like plastic baggies sparingly, instead packing your lunch in washable, reusable containers.
- _Get off the bottle! Water bottle, that is. Even if you are recycling them after you use them, not using them is the best option of all. Instead switch to carrying your water in a portable container that can be washed and reused. If you are worried about water quality use a water filter system that you can attach to your tap or even a jug that has one built in.

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- Buy quality items! - Aside from looking nicer, performing better, and likely being an overall better make than the cheapest model, they are also less likely to need repair, more likely to come with a stellar warranty, and less likely to end up at the bottom of your trash can.

- Plant a tree – CO2 is Public Enemy #1 when it comes to Global Warming, and its also what trees take in to survive and grow. As a byproduct, trees and all foliage put out oxygen, what we need to survive and grow. So plant a tree to reduce CO2 emissions and increase oxygen at the same time!
Also, if you live in an area prone to flooding you may be interested in planting along the river banks, as these plants can act as the front line in stopping rising waters from making their way to your home.

- Use what you have - There is no doubt that stretching the mileage out of the things you already own is essential for decreasing your impact on the environment. Every new item you buy, even if it is made from recycled material, is made of some resource, consumed energy to manufacture, and was likely shipped to your local store from a distance away. Maintain the things you have to stretch their lifetime, and keep the dollars in your pocket that it would otherwise cost for you to buy a new one.

- Homegrown – Pay attention to where your items are made and coming from, and if you can help it, opt for the item that was produced locally. Sticking to items like foods and flowers that are grown locally not only supports the local economy, but allows you to avoid purchasing an item that was likely flown in from overseas, contributing to the burning of lots of fossil fuels along the way. Help keep it local by shopping at the farmer's market near you! Find the nearest market at www.njskylands.com/fmmarkets.htm and www.state.nj.us/jerseyfresh/.