

Home Checklist



**Simple steps to saving money
and reducing your impact
in the home environment**

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Table of Contents

1. GreenPower	1	12. To repair / reuse or not to repair / reuse?	20
2. Cooling / Heating	1	13. Cleaning	21
3. Hot water system	3	14. Recycling	22
4. Shopping	4	15. Gardening	23
5. Bottled Water	7	15.1 Plants	24
6. Lighting	8	15.2 Reducing water use in the garden.....	24
7. Bathroom and toilet	9	16. Swimming Pool/Spa	27
7.1 Toilet.....	9	17. Transport	28
7.2 Bathroom faucets.....	9	18. Eco-Driving	28
7.3 Other	10	19. Air Travel	30
8. Kitchen	11	20. Outdoors	31
8.1 Fridge and Freezer	11	21. General Wastage.....	32
8.2 Stove, oven and microwave...	12	22. Miscellaneous	33
8.3 Dishwasher and cleaning	14	23. Doing that extra bit for the environment	35
8.4 Food Packaging.....	15	24. Top 5 Ways to save money at home	36
8.5 Other	16		
9. Laundry	17		
9.1 Ironing	18		
10. Home Entertainment	18		
11. Appliances.....	19		
11.1 Computer and Laptops	19		



Home Checklist

This checklist has been provided to you by GreenBizCheck and gives you a comprehensive list of simple measures you may wish to implement in your quest to make your household become more sustainable. It is intended solely as a guide and GreenBizCheck accepts no liability with regards to the suggestions contained in this checklist.

This document was prepared and published by Melissa Parish, Nicholas Bernhardt and Tony Hall of www.greenbizcheck.com.



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1. Green Power

- **Have you switched to 100% Green Power?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Switch to Green Power! It's easy. All you have to do is contact your current electricity supplier and tell them you want to buy your electricity through an approved Green Power program. Or, you can shop around and compare prices from other suppliers.

- **Do you need more info on GreenPower?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Check out: www.greenbizcheck.com/fact-sheets/green-power-suppliers

- **Have you considered installing solar panels?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

To find out if you are eligible for government rebates visit your local government website

2. Cooling / Heating

Cooling and heating consumes about 25% of a home's energy.

Heating and cooling energy use and costs can be controlled by: 1) minimising the need for heating and cooling, and 2) providing any heating and cooling which is required cost-effectively and efficiently.

- **Do you have roof/ceiling insulation?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Insulating in your ceilings can cut your energy costs by 30%. To find out if you are eligible for government rebates visit your local government website

- **Do you have wall insulation?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Insulate outside walls: Insulated walls can save 15% of your heating / cooling cost. To find out if you are eligible for government rebates visit your local government website.

- **If you have central heating or an air con system, do you keep the thermostat low in the winter (19 – 20°C/66-68°F) and high in the summer (24 – 26°C/75-79°F)?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Reduce or increase temperatures: A 1°C/34°F increase in temperature in the summer (1°C/34°F decrease in winter) can save around 10% of your cooling / heating bill.

- **Do you try to use ceiling fans rather than energy-hungry air-conditioners?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Install ceiling fans; they can be an effective way to cool rooms and use far less energy than air-conditioners.

- **Are all windows, shutters, curtains and doors closed when you heat or cool your house?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Close all your doors and windows when you have the heating or air-conditioner on.



- **In the summer: Do you minimise usage of air-conditioners?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Wear loose and cool clothes at home and try to minimise your usage of air-con – if you do have to cool the house: Try to set the temperature at 26°C/79°F or higher. Most houses are very badly insulated making it even more inefficient to cool / heat the house.

- **Have you located and eliminated drafts around the house?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Finding and eliminating drafts may save you up to 25% of your heating / cooling bill.

- **Have you used light coloured paint on siding and roofing?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Painting your roof: Using light coloured paint on siding and roofing will help reduce heat in your home.

- **Have you chosen the right size appliance for the area you want to cool or heat?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Get a specialist to assess your cooling / heating requirements at home. Using inappropriately large air-con or heating systems waste energy, whilst small heaters or low capacity air-conditioners on a maximum setting will struggle to heat / cool your room.

- **When cooling your house, do you keep doors to 'warm' rooms (like bathrooms and laundries) closed?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Shut doors to rooms that are not being cooled / heated. Leaving doors or windows open whilst cooling or heating your house can lead to up to 75% of total heat or cooling loss from a home.

- **Do you have double glazed windows?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Install double glazed windows: This will improve efficiency over hot and cold months while maintaining the view and cutting noise intrusion from outside.

- **Do you have organic natural fibre carpets or rugs to increase insulation?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Organic fibre carpets can add to the overall insulation of a house.

- **In the summer: Are blinds and curtains closed during the day to block out heat, and opened at night to cool the house and vice-versa in winter?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Open the house to the elements when it is cooler allowing the natural breeze to cool your house; close curtains and blinds to keep out the heat during the day.

- **Have you replaced high energy consuming radiators or fan heaters with natural gas or reverse-cycle air-conditioners?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Stop using high energy consuming radiators or fan heaters: Reverse air-conditioners are much more efficient than energy hogs such as radiators or fan heaters.

- **Have you replaced conventional thermostats with programmable alternatives?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

The use of programmable thermostats will enable the temperature of the home to be changed when the home is unoccupied. In addition, many programmable thermostats have a re-circulate feature that can allow for the temperature to be kept constant when significant differences in temperature exist on different levels of the house.

- **Have you asked your power company to install load monitoring devices?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Get a smart meter – contact your electrician! You can check with your utility provider to see if you qualify to have a smart meter installed that allows you to monitor and adjust your electrical consumption.

- **Have you planted trees and shrubs to shade windows from direct sun?**
☐ YES ☐ NO

Deciduous trees will provide shade in summer and act as insulation in winter to preserve warmth.

- **Do you rug up in winter, rather than rely on artificial heating?**
☐ YES ☐ NO

Turn down the heating! Turn your heating thermostat down a couple of degrees (say to 20°C/68°F) and wear a jumper in winter. Every degree over 22°C/72°F adds about 10% to your heating bill!

- **Do you use a hot water bottle and blanket while watching TV rather than using a heater?**
☐ YES ☐ NO

Say no to fan heaters (they may be cheap to buy but they are very costly to run). It costs less than US\$ 2c to boil a kettle of water and a hot water bottle will stay warmer for longer without using any electricity.

- **Do you switch off heaters and electric blankets before going to bed?**
☐ YES ☐ NO

Switch off electric blankets and heating or lower temperature during the night.

3. Hot water system

The average household spends up to 50% of total energy costs on hot water. With an energy-efficient water heater and thoughtful use of hot water, you can reduce emissions and cut your hot water costs by 45%.

- **Have you installed a solar water/efficient heat pump hot water system?**
☐ YES ☐ NO

Install a solar hot water system: They can reduce your household hot water bill by around 65%. Solar hot water systems also conserve our natural resources and the environment.

- **Or have you installed a natural gas high efficiency water heater?**
☐ YES ☐ NO

Install a natural gas high efficiency water heater: They produce around two-thirds lower greenhouse emissions than electric heaters and can save you hundreds of dollars in energy bills over the lifetime of the system.

- **If you have an electric hot water system, does it have a high energy efficiency rating?**
☐ YES ☐ NO

Better still consider switching to solar hot water or natural gas water heaters when it comes to replacing your electric hot water boiler.

- **Have you insulated any exposed hot water pipes?**
☐ YES ☐ NO

Insulate exposed hot water pipes: Reducing heat loss from exposed pipes allows you to reduce the temperature setting of your hot water heater.

- **Have you lowered the temperature of your hot water heater as close to 50°C/122°F as is comfortable?**
☐ YES ☐ NO

Set a lower water temperature on your hot water boiler.

- **Do you switch off your electric hot water unit if you are planning on going away for an extended period of time?**
☐ YES ☐ NO

Switch off electric hot water unit when not in use: Do you know the average home using an electric hot water heater produces just under eight tonnes of greenhouse gas each year? So why not reduce your emission by turning off your hot water system when not in use.

- **If you have small children, have you set your bathroom hot water temperature to 50-55°C/122-131°F to decrease the risk of scalding?**
☐ YES ☐ NO

Reduce water temperature: Heating bath or shower water to near boiling point is very inefficient as the water is subsequently mixed with cold water. Only heat water to the temperature you need for baths / showers.

- **Have you fixed leaking hot water taps?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Fix dripping taps: A hot water tap dripping at the rate of 1 drip per second can waste up to US\$20 worth of hot water in a year; wasting 12,000 litres/3,170 gallons of hot water in the process.

- **Do you drain 4 litres/1 gallon of water from your hot water heater each year?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Each year drain 4 litres/1gallon of water from you hot water heater: Doing so will remove sediment and improve efficiency.

4. Shopping

All goods have embedded energy and resources, have been transported, and at some stage will need to be recycled or disposed of. All of these phases of a product's life cycle consume scarce natural services, and current practices are simply not sustainable. To force companies to improve the sustainability of their product offerings, we need to buy from the environmentally conscious and innovative companies:

1. Buy products that are durable and last a lifetime.
2. Buy local and buy less – saves money twice.

- **Do you shop online?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Shop online rather than visit your local store: Not only do you save time by avoiding long lines and packed parking lots, but shopping online can also save you money by allowing you to compare prices with greater ease. Shopping online is also more environmentally friendly: most e-commerce warehouses use only 1/16th of the energy used to operate retail stores and overnight air shipping uses 40% less fuel than the average car trip to the store.

- **Do you purchase locally produced food?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Buy locally produced food! Transporting products from around the world contributes to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Buying locally made products is a great way to reduce adverse environmental impacts while supporting local economies.

- **Do you predominantly buy organic produce?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Buying organic food ensures your food is not exposed to harsh chemicals, which is healthier for both you and the environment.

- **Do you purchase fruit and vegetables that are in season?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Buy fruit and vegetable that is in season: If you eat out-of-season fruits and vegetables, their nutrient value might be less, they will probably cost more and their production and transportation may have a greater financial and environmental cost. Visit the Eco-labels center to learn about eco-label programs and find products which are produced in the most environmentally friendly manner.

- **Do you purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, instead of jarred, canned or frozen ones?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Reduce food packaging: - Purchase fresh fruit and vegetables rather than the packaged often highly processed (tinned or frozen) variety.

- **Do you avoid consuming endangered animals?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Eat sustainably: Every day we consume tonnes of endangered fish. If you purchase seafood, consult a seafood choices chart to select environmentally sustainable seafood.

- **Do you only purchase free-range chicken and eggs?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Buy free range chicken and eggs: Free-range chickens are not only kept in much better conditions compared to battery hens, but eggs produced by free-range chickens are actually much healthier too.



- **Do you purchase soy or beeswax candles, instead of paraffin candles?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Buy soy or beeswax candles: Eventually the production of paraffin wax will likely disappear (or become very cost prohibitive) as we deplete the world's oil reserves. Soy wax is a sustainable and renewable resource, thereby helping our environment.

- **Do you purchase products which were produced in an environmentally sustainable way?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Buy environmentally friendly products: Compare price, quality and environmental impact of different brands. If the environmentally friendly alternative does cost a little extra, consider whether it's worth buying it for the sake of preserving our environment.

- **Do you purchase environmentally friendly and cruelty free cosmetics and body products?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Buy environmentally friendly and cruelty-free cosmetics and body products: Buy from manufacturers with a good environmental track record and check product labels for environmental certification. Caring Consumer (www.caringconsumer.com/resources_companies.asp) provides a list of cruelty-free products and companies.

- **Do you purchase aluminium-free antiperspirant and deodorant?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Ditch your conventional antiperspirant and deodorant. They use aluminium compounds which block sweat from being released and have also been known to have associated health issues, including cancer.

- **If possible, do you try to buy products with less packaging?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Buy products that are not packaging intense! If there is a product you really cannot live without but it is packaged in a very environmentally unfriendly manner – tell the manufacturer: write to the company or call them.

- **Do you buy groceries in bulk, to reduce both packaging and the number of trips you make to the grocer?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Buy in bulk: A family of four can save around US\$1,600 a year in the supermarket by choosing large sizes instead of individual serving sizes.

- **Do you only purchase recycled and unbleached paper?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Buy recycled and unbleached paper: Many paper products, including some made from recycled fibers, are bleached with chlorine. The bleaching process can create harmful byproducts, including dioxins, which accumulate in our air, water and soil over time.

- **Do you purchase products made from recyclable materials?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Purchase products made from recycled materials: Recycling your old materials is only half the battle. Choose products made from recycled materials such as paper, cardboard, aluminium, steel and plastic. Avoid hazardous materials.

- **Do you avoid purchasing clothes that require dry cleaning?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Dry cleaning not only costs you significant amounts of money, but can also have negative effects on the environment and human health. Some dry cleaners use "perchloroethylene" in their cleaning process. This chemical can cause fertility problems, menstrual irregularities and spontaneous abortions among women who work in the industry. Furthermore, the residue from Perchloroethylene processes can also seep into drinking water and many believe exposure can cause liver or kidney damage.

- **Do you avoid purchasing air-fresheners which require energy and water to produce and can contain harmful chemicals?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Grow your natural air-fresheners: Commercial air-fresheners are normally loaded with synthetic and unhealthy perfumes. Try growing plants with beautiful scents near doors and windows so they naturally enhance your living areas.

- **When purchasing cleaning products, do you read labels carefully?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Read product labels: Look for DANGER, WARNING and CAUTION as signal words and buy the least-toxic products. Of the three signal words, products labelled CAUTION contain the least toxic ingredients. Chemicals to avoid include: petroleum distillates, chlorinated compounds, formaldehyde and phenols.

- **Do you only buy rechargeable batteries?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Buy rechargeable batteries: You can save around US\$160 a year by using rechargeable batteries instead of disposables in one CD/MP3 player used two hours a day.

- **Do you purchase eco-friendly furniture?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Buy sustainable furniture: With a focus on sustainable forestry, it's now possible to buy eco-

friendly furniture made from sustainable sources of timber. Companies producing timber from sustainably managed forests (e.g. FSC certified) need to abide by strict rules to ensure the environment is not negatively impacted by the repeated harvesting of wood raw materials.

- **Do you purchase eco-friendly stuffed toys?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Make sure you don't buy toxic toys for your children! Many stuffed animals are created in factories and made with petroleum based fake furs and fabrics. They are then stuffed with a plastic-based filling. The eyes are usually made from a plastic material and the thread is again, made of polyester. Consumers can seek natural alternatives by moving away from the petroleum based products we are all accustomed to.

- **Do you only use reusable 'green' shopping bags?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use reusable 'green' shopping bags: Single use plastic bags are one of the most environmentally unfriendly products out there. Bring your own reusable shopping bag or say no at the check-out counter when offered a plastic bag. If we all purchased a set of reusable bags, and used them exclusively, we could save 5.5 billion paper and plastic bags this year and in turn save 700,000 trees and 600,000 barrels of oil. See www.poconorecord.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080506/MULTIMEDIA02/80505016 to learn more about the dangers of plastic bags and what countries around the world are doing about it.

- **Do you try to reduce your trips by car to the shopping centre by doing a number of errands at one time (avoiding many trips)?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Shop once a week! Let's assume that you live 10 kilometres (6.25 miles) from the nearest shopping centre and you buy groceries there 5 days a week – you will accumulate over 5,000 kilometres (3,120 miles) a year; costing you roughly US\$2,500 – if you only go to the shopping centre once a week you will only drive just over 1,000 kilometres (625 miles) a year, saving you almost US\$2,000.

- **If possible, do you purchase products (e.g. clothing, bed sheets) made from eco-friendly fabrics?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Buy organic, eco-friendly clothes and linen - opt for bamboo, soya and other exotic self-sustaining plants.

- **Do you avoid microwave ready-meals?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Microwave ready-meals not only contain a lot of packaging, but are also poor in nutritional value due to the over-cooking and freezing process.

See www.dailynecotips.com/tip-23-avoid-microwave-ready-meals

- **Do you try to reduce the volume of consumables that you purchase by reusing or repairing things that are broken?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

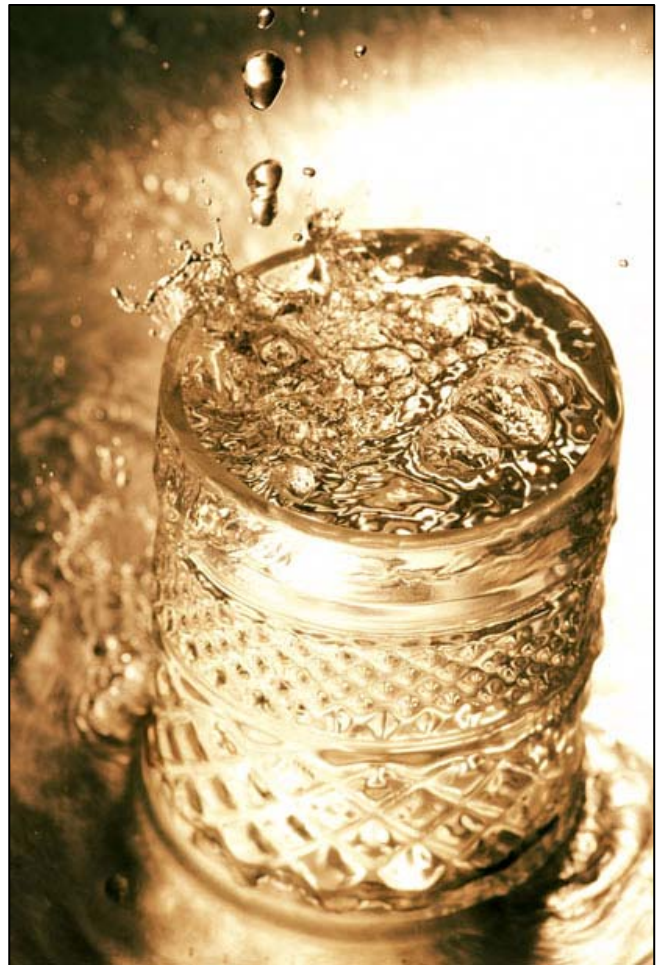
- **Do you try to buy high quality products, which may cost you more in the short term but will last a lot longer than cheaper alternatives?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

5. Bottled Water

Bottled water is several thousand times more expensive than tap water (roughly 10,000 times). Plastic bottles are harmful to the environment due to their inability to break down in a sensible time frame, not to mention the huge energy costs in production and shipping of water bottles. So why use bottled water? In most western countries, tap water quality is exceptionally high and therefore there is no real reason to drink bottled water!

SAY NO TO BOTTLED WATER!



- **Have you stopped supporting the biggest scam in history, i.e. have you stopped buying bottled water?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Stop supporting the biggest marketing scam in history! Don't waste money on bottled water! Bottled water is without a shadow of doubt the biggest scam ever – it costs between 8 – 10,000 times more than tap water and each plastic bottle is made of petroleum based PET or plastic (each bottle 'consumes' about one third of its contents in oil to manufacture and transport to its destination).

- **Do you use reusable bottles to quench your thirst?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Fill up your reusable water bottle with tap water: You will save roughly US\$650 per year! (Assumption: you purchase 5 water bottles (US\$2 per bottle) per week).

6. Lighting

In 2003 lighting provision represented over 8.9% of total global energy consumption. The resulting Carbon Dioxide emissions equated to 1.9 billion tonnes worldwide, an amount equal to over 80% of the combined emissions of Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Italy. Household lighting is responsible for almost one third of this total, mainly due to its extremely low energy efficiency. For example, the average efficiency of lighting in the industrial sector (80 lm/W), or the commercial sector (50 lm/W) is much greater than the 16.8 lm/W estimated for the residential sector. This demonstrates an enormous potential for energy savings within households.

- **Have you replaced all incandescent light bulbs and switched to energy efficient light bulbs?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Replace all inefficient bulbs with efficient bulbs: Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs (CFLs) use 66% less energy than a standard incandescent bulb and last up to 10 times longer.

- **Do you turn off all lights when not in use?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Turn off lights when no-one is in a room! Light pollution obscures the stars in the night sky for city dwellers, wastes energy and contributes to climate change, interferes with astronomical observations, disrupts ecosystems and has adverse effects on human health.

- **Do you use the lowest wattage bulb required to meet each room's lighting needs?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Choose the lowest wattage bulb for each room: Work with your lighting consultant to choose energy saving lighting.

- **Do you choose light fittings that allow most of the light through so a lower wattage lamp can be used?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Choose light fittings that amplify light: Some light fittings can block 50% or more of the light, especially those with coloured glass.

- **Do you keep lights and fittings clean?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Clean lights and light fittings: Believe it or not, up to 50% of light reduction on fixtures and lamps can be caused by dust. Establish a cleaning schedule of lights to ensure that all lights operate at an optimum level.

- **Do you use dimmers in rooms that do not need much lighting?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Install light dimmers: New dimmer controls minimise light output and extend lamp life, reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Ask an electrician if dimmer controls are compatible with your current light fittings.

- **Do you have timer controls and daylight / motion sensors that switch off lights automatically?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

To reduce light usage, install motion sensors or timer switches in areas which you do not frequent often such as garden lights.

- **Do you take advantage of natural light?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Remove objects that are blocking windows to ensure you maximise optimal lighting. Why not open the blinds and curtains and let the sunlight shine?

- **Have you installed skylights to make the greatest use of natural lighting?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Install skylights: Skylights and related devices bring light into areas without windows and save on lighting expenses.

- **Do you regularly clean your windows?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Clean your windows regularly: Doing so will prevent the need for switching lights on in the early morning.

7. Bathroom and toilet

The toilet is responsible for about one third of all water used in an average household – billions of litres/gallons of drinking quality water is flushed down the nation's toilets every year! In addition, the cost of supplying this water and disposing of it is enormous. By simply converting to a water efficient dual flush toilet, water use can be reduced by around 30,000 to 40,000 litres per household per year.

Normal showerheads use 15-25 litres / 4-7 gallons of water every minute; water efficient showerheads can save up to 40%.

7.1 Toilet

- **Have you switched to a water efficient dual-flush system?** ☐ ☐
Dual flush toilets use only 6 litres/1.6gallons per flush, compared to 13 litres/3.4gallons per flush for pre-1994 models.

- **If not, have you adjusted your float valve to admit less water into the toilet's tank?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Fit a float valve on non-dual flush toilet systems: A float valve can reduce your toilet water consumption by around 50%.

- **Have you fixed any toilet leaks?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Fix toilet leaks: To determine whether your toilet is leaking, add food colouring to the tank water and let it sit 15 minutes. If it appears in the bowl, there's a leak.

- **Do you use recycled, unbleached toilet paper?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Only purchase recycled toilet paper: It is perfectly safe and normally consists of office paper waste. Worldwide about 270,000 trees are flushed down the toilet every day in the form of toilet paper.

- **Do you avoid using the toilet as a dustbin?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Many objects such as razors and cotton buds are dispensed down the toilet. These objects can cause many problems for the treatment works as they are not designed for such objects.

- **Do you use grey water (waste water than does not contain human excrement) to flush the toilet or to water the garden instead of fresh water?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use grey water to flush the toilet and water the garden: Using grey water to flush the toilet can substantially reduce your water usage.

- **Have you put a brick or sealed water bottle in the cistern of the toilet?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

The average cistern fills itself up until a float rises to a certain height, which is usually around 8litres/2gallons of water. Approximately 6litres/1.6gallons of water is emptied into the toilet bowl every time you flush. By placing a brick or water bottle in the cistern, less water will be required to lift the float up to the required level and thus less water will be used per flush.

7.2 Bathroom faucets

- **Have you switched to AAA showerheads, which are inexpensive and efficient?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

By switching all your old showerheads to AAA rated showerheads (cheapest showerhead costs as little as US\$4.0 you can save as much as US\$200 per year on energy and water bills.

- **Do you limit showers to 3 minutes or turn off the water while lathering up?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Turning off the water whilst lathering up can reduce your overall water usage by 20 to 30 litres / 5 to 9 gallons per shower.

- **When taking a bath, do you plug the bath before turning on the water and fill it half as full as you usually do?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Do not fill the bathtub to the top: By not filling the bathtub to the top you could save 50 to 80 litres/13 to 21 gallons of water each time.

- **Are all leaking taps or shower heads fixed within 48 hours?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Fix leaking taps: One dripping tap can waste 24,000 litres/6340 gallons a year. You can fix it in a few minutes with a cheap washer.

- **Do you turn off the tap while you brush your teeth or whilst you shave?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Switch off the tap whilst brushing your teeth or shaving. A running tap can waste 17 litres/4.5 gallons a minute.

- **Do you use only cold water where possible?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Each time you turn on the hot water tap, a litre/0.26 gallons or more of cold water that had been heated but has cooled in the pipes runs down the sink before hot water is delivered. Doing this just 10 times a day will generate about 200kg/441lb of greenhouse gas each year if you have an electric hot water.

- **When using a mixer tap for cold water, do you position the lever as far right as possible?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Make sure the mixer tap lever is positioned to the far right: Otherwise you will be wasting hot water, as most mixer taps begin blending hot water with cold as soon as they are moved from the 'hard right' position.

- **Do you have sensor taps with an automatic on-off device?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Install sensor taps: Sensor taps can detect when hands are near it which can help save water, especially if you have young children who have difficulty turning them off.

- **Each time you turn on a water faucet do you use the lowest pressure necessary?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

When turning on water faucets use the lowest pressure necessary and keep the water turned on only while it is needed.

7.3 Other

- **Do you use an electric razor or hand razor with replaceable blades instead of disposable razors?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use an electric razor or a razor with replaceable blades: Doing so will help reduce the amount of waste entering our landfills.

- **Do you avoid using hotel toiletries?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Take your own toiletries when you travel: Don't use the single-use toiletries from your hotel. They are invariably made of plastic and will go to landfill. Instead, fill small bottles with your own shampoo and shower gel from home.

- **Do you avoid using a heated towel rack?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Heated towel racks are highly energy intense: A heated towel rack can cost up to US\$130 a year to operate. Do you really need one? If so, fit a timer switch so it runs only when needed.

8. Kitchen

The kitchen is an area where energy, water and waste problems can be improved dramatically.

Did you know that rice is the one of the thirstiest crops grown worldwide, using an average of 12.3 mega litres/3.35 mega gallons of water per hectare (cotton uses 6.4ML/ha/16.9MGAL/ha)?

8.1 Fridge and Freezer

- **Does your fridge/freezer have a high energy efficiency rating?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Energy efficient appliances use less water and power than inefficient low energy rating models whilst performing to the same standards. You'll also find that energy efficient appliances don't usually cost any more but will pay you back with significant savings on your energy and water bills.

- **Is your fridge in a cool spot?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Place fridge in cool position: If possible, position the fridge so that it is out of direct sunlight and away from ovens.

- **Have you ensured that all fridge seals are working?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Check fridge seals: Test them by closing the door over a piece of paper so it is half in and half out of the refrigerator. If you can pull the paper out easily, the hinge may need adjustment or the seal may need replacing. New door seals can increase efficiency by 10%.

- **Is your fridge set at the most efficient setting of 3–4°C/37–39°F and the freezer at –15 to –18°C/5 to –0.4°F?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Set efficient fridge temperatures: Setting your fridge and freezer at a suitable temperature will help reduce energy consumption and save money. Normally temperatures of 3–4°C/37–39°F for the fridge and –15 to –18°C/5 to –0.4°F for the freezer are most efficient.

- **Do you make sure you only open the fridge door for a short period of time?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Only keep fridge open for a short time: By removing or replacing several items at a time you can contain the cold air inside the fridge and save energy. It also helps to think ahead and plan what you need to take out before opening the fridge.

- **Do you really need that second fridge?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Get rid of your second fridge: A rarely used second fridge, or 'beer fridge,' can cost more than US\$160 a year in energy bills.

- **Have you made sure there's sufficient space around the fridge for ventilation of the coils at the back (>80 mm/3in gap)?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Fridge positioning: Make sure you have a gap of at least 80mm/3in between the back of the fridge and the wall – good ventilation is crucial for it to run efficiently.

- **Have you ensured that your refrigerator is level by adjusting the legs?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Fridge positioning: A refrigerator that is not level may cause the door gasket to seal improperly, letting cold air leak out. Adjust the legs until the refrigerator is level.

- **Do you cover liquids and wrap foods stored in the refrigerator?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Cover food in fridge: Uncovered foods release moisture and make the compressor work harder.

- **Do you defrost your freezer every six months?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

It is a chore but defrosting your fridge can save you money: Regularly defrosting your freezer can massively improve its efficiency. The ice that builds up becomes an insulator, reducing the effectiveness of the freezing process.

- **Do you freeze water bottles to help retain the cold temperature when the freezer is less full?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Fill freezer with water bottles: The more air space in a fridge, the more power it will use to keep that air space cool. Refrigerators operate efficiently when full, however be careful not to overload as overloading prevents cold air from circulating properly.

- **Do you make sure that hot food is not placed into the fridge to cool?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Do not place hot food in fridge: Simply leave hot food on the bench to cool before placing it into the fridge.

- **Have you gotten rid of any refrigerator or freezer in your home that's more than ten years old?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Time to say goodbye to your fridge if it is more than ten years old: You'll save as much as US\$80 annually in energy costs when you replace your old fridge with one that has a high energy efficiency rating.

- **Do you clean your fridge/freezer coils (these are located at the back of your fridge/freezer)?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Regularly clean the fridge/freezer coils: One great way of improving the efficiency of your fridge/freezer is by cleaning the condenser coils. Once dust accumulates on these, the energy consumption of the fridge/freezer can increase by up to 30%.

8.2 Stove, oven and microwave

- **Do you have high energy rating cookware?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Energy efficient appliances are also more environmentally friendly, reducing your impact on global warming and conserving valuable resources such as water. Again this saves you

money by reducing your water and energy bills. Visit www.thinkappliances.com/green.aspx to gain a better understanding about what energy efficient features to look out for.

- **Do you only boil as much water as you need?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Only boil as much water as you need: If you only want one cup of tea do not fill the whole kettle — you can save around US\$160 a year by only boiling as much water as you need.

- **Do you use an electric kettle to boil water rather than using the stove?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use a kettle instead of the stove: Using an electric kettle consumes less energy than boiling water on a stove.

- **Do you put lids on pots whilst cooking?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Cook with lids: Keeping lids on pots when you are cooking will use up to 20% less energy and your food will also cook more quickly and evenly.

- **Do you use the least amount of required water when steaming?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Do not use too much water when steaming food: Each litre/0.26gallons of water boiled generates up to a kilogram/2.2 pounds of greenhouse gas.

- **Do you steam vegetables rather than boil them?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Steam your veggies: Besides using less water, you'll retain more vitamins in the food.

- **Do you simmer food, rather than boil furiously?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Do not 'overboil' your food: Keeping up excessive temperatures uses considerably more energy than using lower heat.

- **Do you try to save energy when cooking vegetables by using stacking steamers, thereby using only one hotplate?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Maximise the usage of each hotplate: The less hot plates you use the less energy you will waste.

- **Do you choose the appropriate pan size?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

The right pan for the right hot plate: Make sure that the pan is the right size for the hot plate. You can waste substantial amounts of energy by using the wrong pan.

- **Do you regularly clean hotplate reflectors?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Clean stove regularly: Doing so will ensure heat is diverted upwards and thus work more efficiently.

- **Do you use the correct size lids on pots and saucepans?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Lids on pots and pans: By cooking with lids you reduce the amount of heat that escapes from the pot / saucepan.

- **Do you cook toast in a toaster rather than under the grill?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use your grill sparingly: The grill uses a great deal more energy than a toaster.

- **Do you have a baking day, or bake biscuits and cakes before and after using the oven for a roast?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Synchronise the way you cook: By using the oven or hotplates continuously for separate dishes you maximise usage of residual heat. That way you can make use of residual heat and reduce energy usage.

- **Do you allow frozen meats to thaw completely before cooking?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Thaw before cooking: A frozen roast placed directly into the oven without thawing will require one-third more cooking time and waste more energy.

- **Do you avoid preheating your oven? (unnecessary waste in most cases)** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Do not pre-heat oven: Up to 90% of the energy used by ovens is wasted: consider alternatives such as the microwave, electric frypan, or pressure cooker.

- **When possible, do you use the microwave, electric frypan or pressure cooker rather than the oven?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use the oven sparingly: Microwaves, electric frypans or pressure cookers are much more energy efficient than using the oven. For example using a gas or electric oven is four to five times more expensive than using a microwave and slower too.

- **Do you switch off the stove or oven a few minutes before the food is cooked?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Switch off stove or oven before food is cooked: Doing so will help maximize the use of residual heat and thus save energy and money.

- **Do you have a fan-forced oven?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Fan forced ovens: When it comes to replacing your oven make sure it is fan-forced. Fan-forced ovens generate up to 35% less greenhouse gas than conventional ovens and more items can be cooked at the same time, as heat is more evenly distributed around the oven.

- **Do you use a gas oven rather than an electric one?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Gas ovens are generally more efficient than electric ovens. They heat up quicker and use less energy to maintain the same temperature than electric ovens.

- **Do you avoid opening the oven door when cooking?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Do not open the oven door unnecessarily: Doing so can reduce the temperature by up to 20°C/68°F each time.

- **Have you inspected the seal around the oven, and replaced any seals which may be damaged?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Replace damaged seals on oven to ensure heat does not escape unnecessarily from the oven whilst it is on.

- **If you live in a small household do you try to cook in bulk, freeze the food and then reheat in the microwave oven?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Try to avoid cooking single serve meals: By 'cooking in bulk' and freezing some of the food you will cut greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Do you defrost food by taking out what you need early, instead of using the microwave?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Do not defrost food in the microwave: Using the microwave to defrost wastes energy and money. Plan ahead and take dishes out of the freezer early and allow them to thaw naturally.

- **Do you switch your microwave off at the wall?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Switch off microwave at the powerpoint: Microwaves with display clocks use more energy to power the clock 24/7 than they do to heat up food. If your microwave has got a clock, keep it switched off when you are not using it.

8.3 Dishwasher and cleaning

- **Do you have a high energy rating dishwasher?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Water-efficient dishwashers are usually also energy-efficient, as heating water is a major part of their energy use. Visit www.thinkappliances.com/green.aspx to gain a better understanding about what features to look out for when buying a dishwasher.

- **If you hand wash dishes, do you do them all together in the sink (instead of letting the tap run and washing everything individually)?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Wash dishes in the sink rather than individually with running water. A running tap uses up to 20 litres/5gallons of water per minute.

- **If you use a dishwasher, do you only use it when you have a full load?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Dishes love company – only run the dishwasher when it is full: Running your dishwasher uses both electricity and hot water, so the less you run it, the more you will save on both your electricity and water heating bills.

- **Do you turn off the dishwasher before drying cycle and open the door to let the dishes air-dry?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Air-dry crockery and cutlery: Allowing the dishes in your dishwasher to air-dry will substantially reduce the electricity consumption of your dishwasher.

- **Do you clean the dishwasher filter regularly?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Clean the dishwasher filter. Doing so will help maintain washing performance and save money, energy and water.

- **Where they are available, do you use small load or half load options, short wash cycles or rinse-only cycles for maximum energy efficiency?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use efficient washing cycle: A modern dishwasher generates around 1.4kg/3lb of CO₂ per wash - the quick wash/economy cycle uses about half as much energy.

- **Do you use cold water when rinsing dishes before loading them into the dishwasher?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use cold water to rinse dishes: Rinsing dishes under running hot water before putting in dishwasher can use more hot water than the dishwasher itself!

- **Or, preferably, do you scrape clean dishes before loading them into the dishwasher?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

By avoiding pre-rinsing dishes before loading them into the dishwasher you could save as much as 80 litres/21 gallons a load, or 20,000 litres/5283gallons per year.

- **Do you pack the dishwasher appropriately to ensure high efficiency?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Correct stacking of dishes in dishwasher: High efficiency is only obtained when items are placed in the dishwasher according to manufacturer instructions. Pack correctly and be sure there are no large items preventing the wash arms from rotating.

- **Do you use environmentally-friendly washing detergents, which are phosphate-free?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Only use environmentally friendly detergents: Many detergents contain phosphate - it's a naturally occurring substance, but if too much of it gets into waterways, algae and phytoplankton

feed on it and reproduce in massive numbers. This results in algal blooms which kill life in rivers, lakes and oceans.

- **Do you wash vegetables and fruits in a bowl or basin using a vegetable brush rather than letting the water run?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Don't waste water and money when washing fruit and vegetables: A running tap uses up to 20 litres/5 gallons of water per minute. Use a bowl and a brush instead.

8.4 Food Packaging

- **Do you avoid using plastic wrap (cling film)?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Minimize usage of cling film: Cling wrap is made from PVC (polyvinyl chloride) which happens to be one of the most toxic forms of plastic. A chemical called plasticizer is added to cling film to make it flexible and transparent. This chemical has been found to cause cancer in laboratory animals. Reuse containers to store food in - or buy multi-use containers.

- **Do you wash and reuse ziplock bags?** ☐ YES ☐ NO
- Reuse wrappers and containers: Reusing simple things like ziplock bags reduces the amount of waste that ends up in our landfills.

- **Do you use the waxy liners of cereal boxes or other used plastic wrappings to wrap sandwiches in?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Reuse wrappers or containers: Reusing everyday items reduces the amount of waste that ends up in our landfills.

- **Do you cook from scratch to avoid food packaging?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Ensure you avoid packaging intense food.



- **Do you use a washable commuter mug for your morning coffee and eliminate the use of a Styrofoam or plastic cup every day?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

It's not much, but simply changing the way you have your morning coffee can have a real impact on the amount of waste you send to the landfill. Bringing a reusable mug for your indispensable cup of tea or coffee can even get you a discount on your beverage at some retailers. Encourage your favourite coffee retailer to offer reusable mugs!

- **Do you use reusable/washable containers for lunchboxes rather than disposable packaging?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Make sure you use environmentally friendly lunch boxes: Reusable containers reduce the amount of waste that ends up in our landfills.

- **Do you use washable plates, cups, and silverware for parties and picnics instead of disposable products?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Plastic single use crockery and cutlery ends up in our landfills and will not break down in your lifetime or your children's for that matter.

- **Do you keep one set of dishes at the office, including: a cup, utensils, bowl, and plate to prevent using disposable ones?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Fifty percent of all packaging is consumed by people outside the home, and most of this is in the form of take-away food and drinks: so bring your own instead – save money and the environment.

8.5 Other

- **Do you swap at least one meat dish a week for a vegetarian meal?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Go vegetarian at least once a week: Livestock emissions have a big impact on greenhouse gases and global warming, not to mention the clearing of rainforests for grazing land and the significant amount of water and energy required to produce meat (visit vegweb.com to find tasty, meat free recipes).

- **Do you avoid pouring cooking oil down the sink?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Getting rid of cooking oil: When dumped down the drain, cooking oil, and especially cooking grease, can clog up your pipes, back up sewer systems and wreak havoc on the sewer treatment plant at the end of the pipe.

- **Have you installed aerated taps?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Install aerated taps: Help reduce the amount of water you are using without having to give up water pressure. They are really cheap usually at under US\$4 or you can even ask your local utility to see if they provide them for free. For very little effort, you can really save on your utility bills.

9. Laundry

Accounts for up to 16% of a household's water usage.

- **Do you use a clothes line to dry clothes, instead of a dryer?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Drying your washing on a clothesline instead of in a dryer can save hundreds of kilos/tonnes of CO₂ and quite a bit of money too.

- **If you must use a dryer, do you make sure the spin cycle in the washing machine removes most of the excess water?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Spin cycle: spinning your clothes will remove most of the excess water on your laundry and will thus greatly reduce drying time.

- **Do you ensure the lint filter is clean before turning on the dryer?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Cleaning the lint filter on the dryer regularly will help maintain full air flow, maximise the drying efficiency and minimise fire risk.

- **Do you dry consecutive loads so that the residual heat will help dry the next load?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

If you must use a dryer this will ensure some heat is saved and utilised.

- **Do you only have a high energy efficiency rated washing machine and dryer (even better: hang your clothes on an outside clothes line)?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Buy high energy rated washing machines / dryers (Note: make sure you really need that dryer: you will save bucket-loads of money if you hang up your washing on a clothes line). High energy efficiency rating appliances may be a bit more expensive upfront but over their life-time they will save you hundreds of dollars by using less electricity and water.

- **Do you use a front-loading washing machine?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Front loaders versus top loaders: Front-load washing saves up to 60% on water, 40% on energy and 50% on washing detergent.

- **Do you use cold water or 40°C/104°F cycles and only use hot water to wash whites and heavily soiled clothes?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use cold water or max. 40°C/104 °F cycle: Research has shown that dirt removal is only marginally better in warm water — but energy costs can be up to US\$130 a year higher.

- **Do you wash laundry only when you have a full load?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Only use washing machine when you have a full load. It uses about the same amount of energy and water as doing a half load.

- **Do you use the 'economy' cycle if available?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use the 'economy' cycle: it reduces energy and water consumption.

- **Do you adjust the water level of your machine when you only have a small load?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Water level adjustment: Some washing machines give you the option to regulate the amount of water used for the cycle – however, it is always best to ensure your washing machine is full.

- **Do you only use the minimal amount of washing detergent?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Do not use more detergent than specified – your laundry will not be any cleaner.

- **Do you use environmentally-friendly washing detergents, which are phosphate-free?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Many laundry detergents contain phosphate – If too much phosphate enters our waterways, algal blooms develop, killing life in rivers, lakes and oceans.

- **Do you re-use the water (e.g. for gardening)?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Reusing your laundry water will help you reduce the amount of water used to water the garden – each laundry cycle uses around 40 litres/11 gallons of water.

- **When using the dryer, do you use Wool Dryer Balls?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Dryer balls save you money and energy by cutting down the dryer's drying time and eliminating the need for softeners. The wool fibres of dryer balls absorb static cling and the friction helps to soften clothes. In addition, by allowing air to circulate more freely, dryer balls can reduce drying time by over 25%. Visit www.wooldryerballs.com

9.1 Ironing

- **Do you iron large batches of clothing at one time to avoid wasting energy reheating the iron?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Get your ironing out of the way in one go! Heating an iron consumes substantial amounts of energy – try to maximise the amount of items ironed in one session.

- **Do you use a dry iron wherever possible?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Minimise the usage of your steam iron: Steam irons look impressive but are also energy hogs; the steaming process of steam irons uses more energy than a dry iron.

- **Do you sort ironing by fabric type and iron fabrics on higher settings first, then turn off the iron and use residual heat for delicate items?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Maximise efficiency of iron: Make use of residual heat; many appliances such as irons, stoves or ovens can be switched off well before you have finished – thus optimising residual heat.

- **Have you inserted foil under your ironing board?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Inserting a few sheets of aluminium foil in between the ironing board and the board cover will reflect the heat of the iron. This means less time ironing and therefore less electricity use.

10. Home Entertainment

Appliances on stand-by (home and office) waste around 4 – 6% of our total electricity consumption which amounts to hundreds of billions of dollars worldwide every year. Video game consoles such as Sony Playstation 3 consume five times more energy than a medium sized refrigerator. A Sony Playstation 3 will cost US\$200 a year even if it is not in use and only turned on. Microsoft's Xbox is almost as energy hungry.

- **Is your TV switched off (*not* on stand-by)?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Switch off your TV at the powerpoint: PLEASE SWITCH OFF all appliances that are not being used (ideally at the powerpoint).

- **Have you turned down the brightness settings on your TV?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Adjust the brightness settings on your TV to a more appropriate level: Many LCD TVs also have a backlight setting that is often set in stores to be brighter than necessary for most home environments.

- **Is your video game console switched off (see above)?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Switch off your video game console at the powerpoint: PLEASE SWITCH OFF all appliances that are not being used (ideally at the powerpoint).

- **Is your Foxtel / Austar set top box switched off at the powerpoint?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Switch off your Foxtel / Austar set top box at the powerpoint: PLEASE SWITCH OFF all appliances that are not being used (ideally at the powerpoint).

- **Is your surround sound system switched off at the powerpoint?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Typical home sound systems, used 6 hours a day, can generate more than 100kg/220lb of greenhouse gas each year.

- **Do you rent DVDs rather than purchase them?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Rent your DVDs: Owning your own DVDs can be tempting – but seriously how often have you watched the same movie over and over again – by renting DVD's or downloading them you reduce the amount of DVD's being manufactured and ultimately ending up as waste.

11. Appliances

Refrigerators and other appliances may make up about 30% of your energy consumption.

- **Do you turn off all appliances at the powerpoint when not in use?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Turn off all appliances at the powerpoint: Our electronic devices suck power even when we're not using them. It's called "Vampire Power". A quick and easy way to cut down on this excess usage is to connect multiple devices to a power strip/surge protector. Then, at night or when you leave the house, you have only one switch to flick that will cut down on your usage immensely.

- **Do all appliances have a high energy efficiency rating?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

High energy efficient appliances use 10%-50% less energy than standard models. According to the Energy Star site, if just one in 10 homes used energy-efficient appliances, it would be equivalent to planting 1.7 million new acres of trees.

- **Have you installed a power usage meter to help you monitor your level of energy consumption?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Installing a power meter encourages you to save power by constantly monitoring how much you're using and how much it's costing. By knowing which appliances use a lot of electricity you can adopt new energy saving practices and reduce your power bills accordingly.

- **Do you make sure that all chargers (e.g. camera and phone chargers) are unplugged when not in use?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Unplug phone charger: Chargers often use just as much energy plugged in doing nothing as they do charging their appliance – Tip: If a charger is hot – despite not being connected to its appliance – it is wasting electricity.

- **Do you use a real camera instead of disposable cameras?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Avoid using disposable cameras: If you take 24 pictures each month you will save US\$120 each year if you do not buy disposable cameras.

- **Do you sell or recycle your old appliances?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

If your appliances are obsolete and very energy hungry, please recycle or dispose of carefully – see below 'To repair / reuse or not to repair / reuse?'

11.1 Computer and Laptops

- **Do you use a laptop rather than a desktop computer?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Laptop computers use 40 – 60% less energy than desktops (desktop monitors typically make up 50% of total energy consumption of a desktop).

- **When printing, do you print double-sided?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Print double-sided: save 50% paper in one shot! (For non-commercial printers: file, print, change setting to: 'print even pages', reinsert pages into printer, file, print, change setting to: 'print odd pages').

- **Do you print as sparingly as possible?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Save paper and energy by only printing documents when absolutely necessary.

- **Do you switch off the computer monitor when not in use and have you turned off the screensaver?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Turn off your monitor when not in use – make sure you have deactivated the screensaver (screensavers often use even more energy due to the intensity of the images and the processing required). Did you know that a computer screen generally consumes more energy than the processor itself.

- **Have you set sleep mode to activate after 10 minutes of inactivity on your computer/laptop?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Set sleep mode on your computer: Computers in sleep mode consume around 90% less energy.

- **Have you switched to an Eco-friendly Search Engine to save energy?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Research has shown that an all-white web page uses 74 watts of energy compared to 59W from an all-black webpage. Therefore changing from using a white web page to a black one would save up to 15W every time it is displayed. See www.dailycotips.com/tip-126-save-energy-with-an-eco-friendly-search-engine

- **Have you changed the setting of your LCD monitor to run on low brightness?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

You can just about halve the power used by your LCD monitor by setting it to run on low brightness (20 Watts compared with 34 Watts on full brightness).

- **Do you use Eco-font?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

The Ecofont uses up to 20% less toner or ink compared to the original font (visit ecofont.eu/downloads_en.html).

- **Have you Switched off Bluetooth and WiFi when not in use on your computer and mobile?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Switch off Bluetooth and WiFi devices: they are typically very power-hungry, and therefore use significantly more energy when enabled on a device.

- **Do you unplug your USB gadgets when not in use?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Unplug USB gadgets: It might be convenient to have all of your USB devices plugged in at once, but it'll save you energy to unplug the devices you only use only occasionally.

- **Do you have a LCD panel monitor rather than a conventional computer monitor?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use LCD panel monitors: An LCD panel monitor uses around half as much energy as a conventional monitor.

- **Do you switch your computer / laptop and printer off when not in use (this includes turning it off at the powerpoint)?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Turn off computer / laptop and printer at powerpoint: This cuts greenhouse gases, extends product life and avoids a potential fire hazard.

12. To repair / reuse or not to repair / reuse?

An average household owns 45 million household appliances. Each year 2.5 million of them are discarded and most end up in landfill. A recent study concluded that it was generally worth replacing appliances older than 10 years – both from a cost (higher energy usage) and environmental point of view. Reusing efficient appliances (rule of thumb: less than 10 years old) makes sense.

Make sure you ask your retail store about their take-back or recycling policy once your appliance has come to the end of its life!

13. Cleaning

Cleaning products can give off toxic solvents, such as ammonia and volatile organic compounds (VOC), which are both harmful to the environment and human health.

- **Have you switched to using washable cloths instead of single use disposable cleaning aides?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Minimize usage of disposable wipes: Disposable wipes are not only soaked in chemicals, but also contribute significantly to landfill.

- **Do you wash your car on a permeable surface rather than on the driveway?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Wash your car on gravel, grass or other permeable surfaces: Grass and gravel help filter contaminants from your wash water so they don't end up in the storm sewer.

- **Have you considered using waterless carwash products?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Try using waterless carwash products: Several companies have developed non-toxic car cleaners that require no water; they are designed to be sprayed on and wiped off with a soft towel.

- **Do you use soap rather than liquid hand-wash?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Opt for soap rather than liquid hand-wash: Plastic bottles of liquid soap consume high amounts of energy in production and contribute to landfill. Use natural organic soap to minimise packaging and reduce impact on the environment.

- **Do you use a reusable dry cleaning garment bag?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Dry cleaning enviro action: According to government estimates, over 136,363,636kg/300,000,000lb of single use drycleaner bags each year end up filling landfills and killing our wild and marine life. (visit www.thegreengarmento.com/BASE/SS).

- **Do you use the vacuum cleaner as sparingly as possible?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

A vacuum cleaner generates 1 to 2kg/2.2 to 4.4lb of greenhouse gas each hour it is used.

- **Do you use a broom instead of the garden hose to remove leaves and debris from driveway, walk, patio, and pool decks?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Hosing down your driveway: A garden hose can use around 1,000 litres/264 gallons an hour; use a broom instead and burn some of those calories!

- **Do you only purchase 100% biodegradable cleaning products?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Check out the ingredients of your cleaning products: Make sure that you are not 'cleaning' your house with toxic cocktails of hazardous detergents.

- **Do you collect and reuse tea leaves as a cleaner?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Collect used tea leaves in a bucket for one week and then add 1litre/0.26gallons of boiling water. Leave for an hour, strain and bottle the liquid. Good for cleaning mirrors, glass, doors and furniture.

- **Have you switched to fragrance-free or "natural" cleaners?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Many of the fragrances used in cleaners are known irritants and can cause respiratory problems. They may smell clean but it is worth checking out the allegedly 'clean' ingredients.

- **Have you considered using these products:**

- **Baking soda (cleans and softens water, and is also a good scouring substitute)**

☐ YES ☐ NO

- **White vinegar (works well on grease, used as a deodorizer and disinfectant)**

☐ YES ☐ NO

- **Pure biodegradable soap**

☐ YES ☐ NO

- **Lemon juice (acts as bleach and a cleaning agent)** ☐ YES ☐ NO
- **Washing soda (removes stains and grease)** ☐ YES ☐ NO
- **Borax salt (for: cleaning, bleaching, disinfectant and pest control)** ☐ YES ☐ NO

14. Recycling

Recycling has become an integral part of society for a number of important reasons. Recycling waste helps: reduce harmful chemicals and greenhouse gases which leak into the natural environment from landfill sites, reduces the need for raw materials, preserves forests and natural resources, reduces energy and water consumption and reduces financial expenditure in the economy as products made from raw materials cost a significant amount more than if they were made from recycled products.

Every week, one recycling household saves:

- Over 3 kg/7lb of greenhouse gases that would otherwise contribute to global warming.
- Enough electricity to run a 40 watt light bulb for 72 hours.
- Over 90 litres/24gallons of water, enough to wash 5 sink loads of dishes.

- **DO YOU RECYCLE?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Please check with your local council with regard to recyclable materials: In most areas you can recycle: Paper and cardboard; glass bottles and jars; aluminium and steel cans; empty aerosols and clean aluminium foil; plastic yoghurt, margarine and ice cream containers; milk and juice cartons; plastic milk, juice and soft drink bottles; plastic cups, plastic take-away containers, plastic detergent and shampoo bottles. From furniture to electronics, old items can also be recycled at: www.freecycle.org and www.earth911.org, whereby one person's trash can become another's treasure.

- **Do you wash and separate recyclable materials properly?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Secondary production is less polluting than primary production. For example, producing paper from recycled paper rather than from virgin material means 35% less water pollution and 74% less air pollution. Producing steel from recycled steel means 86% less air pollution.

- **Do you try to purchase recycled products whenever possible?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

By purchasing recycled goods you actively encourage recycling.

- **Do you recycle rechargeable batteries from cell phones, digital cameras, and camcorders?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Recycle your cell phones, digital cameras and camcorders; go to www.rbrc.org to find your nearest outlet.

- **Do you recycle/ re-ink your printer cartridges?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

More than 375 million used toner and inkjet cartridges end up in our landfills every year. This equates to approximately 1,000 tons of unnecessary pollution entering our waste streams everyday. To make matters worse, it is estimated that a laser cartridge will take up to 450 years to decompose in landfill.

- **Do you recycle old magazines to waiting rooms of hospitals, doctors surgeries, dentists or even your workplace?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Share magazines and books with friends: In SA 1.5 million tonnes of material was sent to landfill in 2005/06 – 70% of this could have been recycled.

- **Do you donate your old spectacles for distribution to those in need?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Donate your spectacles: Donate at either your local Lions Club or nearest optometrist.

- **Do you recycle fluorescent tubes?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Recycle fluorescent tubes: Recycling fluorescent tubes means up to 99.9% of the mercury in them can be reused — and stay out of our waterways.

15. Gardening

Up to a quarter of all household water is used on the garden.

- **Do you compost kitchen and garden waste?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Compost kitchen and garden waste: Composting not only significantly reduces the amount of biodegradable matter sent to landfills but also acts as a fertilizer, thus reducing the need for chemical fertilizers. Each kilogram/2.2 pounds of food diverted from landfill avoids 0.9 kg/2 lb of greenhouse gas emissions. Visit: www.howtocompost.org to learn more about composting and organic gardening.

- **Do you have a worm farm?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Turn your food waste into soil and fertiliser: Purchase a worm farm from your local hardware store or simply make your own. Visit www.onkaparingacity.com/web/binaries?img=6118&stypen=html.

- **Do you mulch your plants and trees?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Mulch your garden: It's an easy, cheap way to save water. A 75mm/3in layer of mulch can cut water loss through evaporation by over 70%.

- **Do you only use organic pesticides and/or insecticides?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Many pesticides and insecticides are some of the most dangerous items found in households and can be harmful to both humans and pets. Pays to Live Green (www.paystolivegreen.com/2008/12/make-your-own-homeade-pesticides-and-repellants) provides examples of how to make your own pesticides and insecticides from natural ingredients.

- **Do you opt for wood chip pathways rather than concrete ones?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

When laying a path in your garden, use wood chips rather than concrete slabs: A wood chip path is not only more environmentally friendly than the concrete option, but is also more attractive and can save you time and money. Simply lay down plastic sheets to control weeds and cover with wood chippings. Wood chippings may be collected from your local tree surgeon for a small fee or even for free.

- **Do you use natural organic fertilisers rather than inorganic ones?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Opt for natural organic fertilisers: Natural fertilisers release nutrients at a slower rate compared to inorganic fertilisers and as such they reduce the amount of runoff into waterways and resulting eutrophication of water bodies. Natural fertilisers are also known to support the variety of soil organisms that improve fertility and combat diseases.

- **Is your garden wildlife friendly?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Create a wildlife friendly backyard garden: Basic elements include providing fresh water (e.g. a bird bath), grow native plants that provide food for wildlife such as birds and possums and provide rocks, trees, bushes and/or bird houses for shelter and nesting. The Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program (www.nwf.org/backyard) provides some helpful, detailed examples.

- **Do you use electric powered mowers, whipper-snippers and blowers rather than petrol powered equipment?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Petrol powered gardening machinery is often quite inefficient and polluting – use electric machinery if possible.

- **Do you use mowers, whipper-snippers and blowers as sparingly as possible?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Small engines are incredibly inefficient and dirty. Running a leaf blower for one hour is equivalent to driving your car 500 kilometers.

15.1 Plants

- **Do you predominantly plant native plants?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Plant natives: Native plants attract native birds and other wildlife and require less water and time to care for.

- **Do you plant a variety of plants, rather than just one or two species?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Massed plantings of just one or two species are generally not wildlife friendly as these gardens lack the diversity of food and other resources needed by native wildlife.

- **Do you grow perennial plants rather than annuals?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Grow perennials: Gardening with plants that live for more than one year means you don't have to pay for new plants every year; it also saves the resources used commercially to grow annuals.

- **Have you planted trees in your garden?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Plant a tree! Trees provide shade and wind protection for your house which can save you money on heating and air conditioning bills while providing beautiful views around your home.

- **Do you grow your own fruits, vegetables and herbs?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Grow your own veggies and fruit! There are many benefits to growing your own produce:

- The vegetables are fresher than from the shops and taste better
- It is significantly cheaper than buying fruit and vegetables from a shop
- It is convenient – just dig up your vegetables when you need them
- It is healthier – you're not only being active outdoors but you can also control what toxic chemicals (if any) are added to your food
- Even if you don't have a yard, a concrete patio, stair landing, porch or even a roof are possible sites for a container vegetable garden. Read tips for growing vegetables in containers at www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/04/22/HOGUNIBUCQ1.DTL&hw=peirce&sn=147&sc=181

- **Do you turn cardboard egg cartons into biodegradable seed starters?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Reuse your egg cartons: you can use them as seed starters! Reusing house waste products is a good way to reduce your impact on the environment.

- **Do you have indoor plants?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Indoor plants help remove indoor air pollutants such as formaldehyde and benzene. Learn about which plants are most effective at removing toxins in the article "Using Plants to Clean Indoor Air Pollutants" (tavoktatas.kovet.hu/english/tartalom_belso-legter_karosanyag_e.htm).

- **Do you utilize Companion Planting?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Companion planting is an old gardening technique where the characteristics of plants can be used to benefit other plants e.g. you can offer plants protection from the wind or sun, as well as helping to attract beneficial insects and ward off harmful insects.

15.2 Reducing water use in the garden

In the garden: The average household uses 170,000 litres/44,909 gallons of water every year. That's enough to fill four backyard swimming pools. All this water is sprinkled, squirted, dropped, gushed and quite often wasted.

- **Have you installed a rainwater tank?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

By installing a rainwater tank, you could save up to 40,000 litres/10,567 gallons of water each year. Read about other economical and environmental benefits of installing a rainwater tank at www.aussiewatersavers.com.au/freereport.pdf

- **Do you only water your garden (if permitted) before 7am or after 5pm?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Only water your garden early in the morning or after sun-down: By watering your garden during the coolest part of the day you can reduce water evaporation and thus increase the amount of water reaching your plants.

- **Do you use grey water or rainwater tank water to water the garden?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use rainwater tank and grey water (from your washing machine or dishwasher): Almost 100,000 litres/26,417 gallons of water falls on the average rooftop every year. Using this instead of treated drinking water is better for your garden, its wildlife and the environment.

- **Do you put water loving plants together and closer to the house rather than mixed in with plants that don't need as much water?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Plant drought tolerant plants and plant water needy plants near the house: This saves you time and water, and makes it easier to get grey water from the house to the needy parts of the garden.

- **Do you use simple sub-surface drip irrigation systems (where permitted) rather than sprinklers?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use drip irrigation rather than sprinklers: These systems, which can be purchased at home-improvement and garden retailers, are lengths of thin plastic tubing perforated at intervals and placed at the base of plants where the water can most efficiently penetrate to the roots. A sub-surface drip irrigation system uses up to 60% less water than standard drip irrigation systems and up to 80% more effective than sprinkler irrigation.

- **If not, have you installed an in-ground sprinkler system that runs at the best times and is zoned to water different elements appropriately?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Efficient water sprinklers: Watering should be tailored to the appropriate types of sprinklers and run times necessary for each different aspect of a landscape. Use of a grey water system is best.

- **Have you adjusted hose attachments and sprinkler heads to emit large drops instead of fine spray?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Adjust sprinkler and hose attachments: As large drops evaporate less easily than finer drops, you'll save water and money.

- **Do you use a trigger nozzle on your garden hose so you won't waste water while you're moving the hose around?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Attach a trigger nozzle to your garden hose. A garden hose uses litres/264 gallons an hour.

- **Do you position sprinklers so they're not watering driveways and walkways?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Ensure sprinklers are not watering driveways and walkways. This is simply a waste of water and money.

- **Where possible do you hand-water with a hose rather than use a sprinkler system?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Water hose versus sprinkler: Homeowners who water with a handheld hose can use one-third less water outdoors than those who use automatic sprinklers.

- **Have you adjusted your lawnmower to cut grass to a height of 6cm/2.4in high?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Lawn-mowing: Cut grass to a height of 6cm/2.4in, doing so will help trap moisture and reduce the amount of watering you'll need to do.

- **Do you choose drought-tolerant plants?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Good drought tolerant plants: Perennials include coneflower, butterfly weed, goldenrod, iris, and daylily. Annuals include verbena, dianthus, and cosmos. Herbs include thyme, rosemary, lavender, aloe, and many species of salvia. As for shrubs, conifers generally use less water in the summer than flowering shrubs. Trees include Japanese pagoda, Kentucky coffee, honey locust, and Eastern red cedar.

- **Have you considered buying a rain barrel to catch water from your gutter system to use on plants?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Collect the water from your gutters: A barrel that holds about 240 litres/63 gallons – and includes a childproof lid—costs about US\$80. Most have a spigot for easy dispensing on your plants.

- **Do you avoid installing or using fountains or other water ornaments unless they use recycled water?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Water features use and lose (through evaporation) a lot of water. Ensure you use recycled water.

- **Do you avoid over-watering gardens and wasting water?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Over-watering your garden takes nutrients as well as water past the root zone. In doing so, it deprives your plants of nourishment and wastes water.

- **Do you have a watering can in your shower to capture the cold water before it heats up?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Capture cold water in the shower by placing a watering can in the shower. You will normally fill a 10 litre/2.6 gallons water can with three showers – in a household of three you will save around 3,500 litres/925 gallons per year.

- **Do you remove weeds from your garden?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Weeds compete with your plants for both water and nutrients. Applying a good mulch will help prevent weeds growing.

- **Do you water the highest parts of your garden first?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Water highest parts of your garden first. Doing so will help save water by ensuring that any runoff water soaks into lower, dry areas.

- **Do you water plant roots rather than the leaves?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Ensure you water plants around the roots and not the leaves. Rather than being beneficial, watering leaves can actually be harmful to plants. It increases water loss through evaporation, and chlorine in the water can damage the leaves. Along with this, water drops on leaves can act as lenses, concentrating the sunlight and can burn the leaves.

- **Do you avoid watering your plants when it is windy?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Do not water the garden when it is windy. Doing so wastes water as the wind not only blows the water away from the plants, it also increases evaporation.

- **Have you dug small trenches around trees?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Ensure that the soil level around trees is slightly lower (and mulched). By doing so you will give the water a chance to soak into the ground and thus reduce water lost as runoff.

- **Do you only water your lawn when it needs it?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Only water your lawn when necessary (and permitted by Council). A good way to see if your lawn needs watering is to step on the grass. If it springs back up when you move, it doesn't need water. If it stays flat, it may need watering.

16. Swimming Pool/Spa

Your pool pump uses electricity - lots of it (it is one of the largest consumers of energy in your entire home - second only to air conditioning)! In order to save money, you want to run your pump only as much as needed. In most instances running it 3 hours twice a day is recommended. Work out the amount of money and energy your pump consumes using the Energy Pool Pump Calculator (www.energy.com.au/energy/ea.nsf/Content/Ways+Pool+Pump+Calculator).

- **Do you use a solar heater for the pool or spa?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

- **Do you really need to heat your pool?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, please use solar water heaters.

- **If your pool/spa is heated do you keep the water temperature below 27°C/81°F and do you reduce the number of months you heat the pool?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Reduce pool temperature: This lower energy use will reduce your carbon footprint and cut your bill down to size.

- **Do you avoid emptying your pool in winter?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Do not empty pool. You can clean the water in time for summer and save over 100,000 litres/26,417 gallons. Ask your pool maintenance people for advice.

- **Do you use a pool cover?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Install a pool cover. As much as 70% of a pool's heat loss is caused by evaporation. In addition to this, it will also keep your pool or spa cleaner and reduce the need to add chemicals.

- **Have you directed a down pipe into the pool?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Directing one downpipe into your pool will normally suffice to keep your pool topped up.

- **Have you shortened the operating time for your swimming pool filter and have you made use of the automatic cleaning sweep?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Reduce pool pump usage in the winter: two hours a day of filtering could cut your filter's energy use by 40 to 50%, without any noticeable difference in clarity or sanitation.

- **Have you switched your pool filter and sweeper operations to off-peak hours?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Run pool filter in off-peak hours. When it's hot outside, air conditioners suck a lot of power out of the grid. During these peak times, many electric companies have to run dirty backup generators and they also charge higher prices. If you have a time-of-use meter, running your pool equipment only during off-peak hours can save you money. Off-peak times are generally between 6 pm and noon weekdays and all day Saturday and Sunday.

- **Do you only use cleaning systems such as an ionising water purifier to clean your pool?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Non-chlorine based pool cleaning systems: The less chlorine you use in your pool the better for the environment.

- **Have you created a windbreak around your pool with native plants and shrubs?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Create a windbreak around your pool: This wind break will prevent breezes from reaching your pool and keep hot, dry air from sucking away moisture. It also makes the pool a more attractive and enjoyable place to relax.

- **Do you keep your pool's cleaning and heating equipment clean?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Maintain your pool equipment. Well maintained equipment is more efficient and will last longer before it needs to be replaced.

- **Does your pool pump need replacing?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

For more information, see swimming.about.com/od/poolandspamaintenance/a/pool_pump_size.htm

17. Transport

An average household generates close to 6 tonnes of greenhouse gas and spends around US\$6,500 each year on transport, of which US\$2,000 is for fuel. Some households spend more than US\$10,000 each year on transport.

Instead of driving, walk, use public transport or ride a bike. In doing so, you can get fit, reduce driving stress and save money. In some cities, car sharing and car pooling programs are also available. Car sharing is for those who only require a car occasionally. Engaging in such programmes allows you to avoid paying insurance, registration, loan interest and other fixed ownership costs, and ensures that you only pay for the time you use the car.

- **Do you try to use public transport, walk or cycle?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Drive less! Driving an average car produces 0.33kg/0.7lb CO₂ per km. Compare that to:

- Hybrids or very efficient cars produce - 0.14kg/0.3lb CO₂/km
- Catching a bus - 0.08kg/0.2lb per person
- Catching a train - 0.03kg/0.07lb per person
- Walking or riding - 0 - unless you need a packed lunch/Sherpa.

- **Do your children catch the school bus?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Make your children catch the bus. Besides being good for our planet and reducing traffic jams letting your children catch the bus is also good for social interaction with other kids.

- **Or, have you considered car pooling with neighbours or friends?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Car pool your kids to school: If you hop in a car that's already travelling, the incremental impact of the extra person is small.

- **Do you try to work as close to home as possible, or preferably does your company allow teleworking?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Ask your employer about teleworking opportunities at work: Commuting to work has a massive impact on the environment, with harmful emissions from vehicles. So work as close to home as possible. Or if your company allows teleworking, perhaps work from home once or twice a week. You'll save money, fuel and time.

18. Eco-Driving

Ecodriving is a way of driving that reduces fuel consumption, greenhouse gas emissions and accident rates. Ecodriving is about driving in a style suited to modern engine technology: smart, smooth and safe driving techniques that lead to average fuel savings of 5-10%.

Visit www.ecodrive.org to find out more about how you can become a more efficient and environmentally responsible driver.

- **When buying a car, do you only look at ones which are fuel efficient?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Buy an efficient car: Individual car travel is responsible for the majority of climate change impacts from travel. If you are buying a new car, look for the fuel efficiency label to choose a more efficient model. This will cut your carbon emissions and save you money on fuel and Vehicle Tax.

- **Do you compare fuel consumption when purchasing a new car?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Compare vehicle fuel consumption at the Environmental Protection Agency (www.epa.gov/greenvehicles/Index.do).

- **Do you change up through the gears as soon as practical?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Shifting gears: Preferably, shift up gears between 2000 and 2500 revolutions per minute.

- **Do you warm up your car's engine?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Modern cars do not need to be warmed up! The engine is only cold for the first couple of minutes of a car trip and this results in an increase in fuel consumption per kilometre (mile). Make sure that you do not rev up the engine unduly whilst it is still cold.

- **Do you check that your tyre pressure every month, to ensure that it is always up to the recommended figure?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Ensure correct tyre pressure: 25% too low tyre pressure increases rolling resistance by 10% and your fuel consumption by 2%

- **Do you buy high quality/long life tires which cost less per mile travelled and reduce the problem of disposing of used tires?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Only purchase high quality tires: Excessive acceleration (burn-outs really are idiotic) and braking wear out tires a lot quicker.

- **When driving at speeds in excess of 50km/h do you wind your windows up and use ventilation system?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Wind up your windows and use ventilation system at speeds in excess of 50km/h - doing so can dramatically reduce air drag and help save fuel consumption.

- **Do you use your cruise control?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Use your cruise control: Driving at constant speed massively reduces fuel consumption.

- **Have you removed unnecessary weight and roof racks?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Remove unnecessary weight from your vehicle: Of the factors influencing fuel consumption, weight of the vehicle is the most important. Thus, with a load of 100kg/221lb on a medium-class vehicle of 1,500kg/3,307lb weight, there is an increase in consumption of about 6.7%.



- **Do you regularly service your car to minimise air pollution?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Regularly service your car thus reducing fuel costs & emissions by up to 15%.

- **Do you avoid drive-through windows, especially if there are long lines?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Switch off your engine if car is stationary for more than 30 seconds.

- **If possible, do you avoid using the car air-conditioning when driving less than 80km/h?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Car air conditioners can use about 10% extra fuel. But if you're driving at speeds of over 80 km/h, it's more fuel efficient to use air conditioning than to open your windows.

- **Do you avoid driving at high speeds?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Avoid high speeds: Driving at 110km/h hour uses 25% more fuel than cruising at 90km/h.

- **Do you minimise harsh accelerating and braking?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

OK – you might fancy yourself as a bit of a racer but harsh acceleration and braking can use up to 30% more fuel and increase wear and tear on your vehicle.

- **Do you try to optimize and combine your car trips?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

The average car costs US\$ 40-50c per kilometre – reduce the amount of kilometres driven and you will save money.



- **Do you put your car in neutral (or turn it off) at traffic lights or in gridlocked traffic?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Stuck in traffic and going nowhere? Turn off the engine or shift into neutral - doing so reduces drag on the engine and conserves fuel.

- **Do you try to avoid peak-hour traffic?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Avoid peak hour traffic if possible: Traffic jams result in wasted time, delays, inability to forecast travel time accurately, wasted fuel which increases air pollution and carbon dioxide emissions, stress and frustrated motorists encouraging road rage, wear and tear on vehicles and interferes with the passage of emergency vehicles. Off-peak commuting makes a difference.

- **Have you considered switching your car to run on LPG gas?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Switch to LPG gas: Government incentives are available and LPG is less than half the cost of petrol. This will save you a lot of money and reduce your emissions greatly. For example, if you are spending US\$40 per week on petrol, then that means at least a saving of around US\$1,000.

- **Have you calculated your car emissions?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Go to www.compensatenow.com and check out ways of offsetting some of your emissions.

- **Do you offset your car emissions?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

A quick, effective and popular way to offset some of your CO₂ emission: Go to www.compensatenow.com to offset your car emissions via the Australian Rainforest Foundation.

19. Air Travel

Air travel emissions are responsible for an increasing proportion of our air pollution and the respiratory ailments it causes (asthma, fatigue, chest infections, etc.). It also causes noise pollution and warps our perspective: we end up placing a higher value on those places furthest from us while the places near us are overlooked.

- **Do you try to limit air travel?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Fly less! Even a short return flight can produce up to 270kg/595lb CO₂. You'd have to leave a fluorescent light switched on for 9 months straight to do the same amount of damage.

- **If you do have to fly, do you choose the most direct flight?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Choose a direct route to your destination; by doing so you reduce your footprint.

- **Do you try local holiday destinations?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Holiday locally and support local tourism! Ask your friends for their favourite local attractions, fabulous festivals and hidden pleasures. Map a slow journey along roads, coasts and rivers that you've never travelled and see sights you've never seen. If you throw in the cash you save not flying to the other side of the planet, you can even indulge yourself, guilt free.

- **When possible, do you try to travel to your holiday destination by train, bus or boat rather than plane?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Travel by train, bus or boat! A lot of time and money is being spent to make flying as eco-friendly as possible. However, given the vast amount of energy needed to get a plane into the air, means that it will always be an energy-intensive way of travelling.

- **Do you offset your air travel?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

A quick, effective and popular way to offset some of your CO₂ emission: Go to www.compensatenow.com to offset your air travel emissions via the Australian Rainforest Foundation.

20. Outdoors

- **Do you avoid littering? (this includes disposing of cigarettes responsibly)**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Do not litter and encourage others to follow your lead! Cigarette butts are the most abundant type of litter found in our roadways and are one of the deadliest forms of waste littered. Littered cigarette butts cause millions in economic damages, loss of life from fires every year and contain toxins which enter our marine ecosystems and wreak havoc on wildlife and water quality.

- **Do you help to keep your country clean by picking up litter on beaches, in parks, along roads, in your neighbourhood, etc?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Help clean up every day! Pick up litter on beaches, in parks, along roads, in your neighbourhood, etc.

- **To cut down on energy usage, do you choose human-powered exercise like running or walking outside rather than on a treadmill in a gym?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Treadmills and similar machines use electricity of which roughly 80% comes from coal-fired power stations. Walking or biking to the office, walking to your favourite pub or restaurant at lunch is another way to burn calories.

- **Do you avoid feeding native wildlife?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Do not feed wild animals: Providing human food for native animals can attract pest species and may affect an animal's natural ability to forage.

- **Should you feed birds?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

There are differing views on whether it is a good idea to feed birds in your garden. Most authorities agree that the best way to attract birds to gardens is by providing a good variety of native plants and a reliable supply of fresh water, as well as discouraging predators such as cats.

- **Do you collect pet droppings and dispose of them thoughtfully?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

When walking your dog, always carry a plastic bag or pooper scooper with you to pick up your pet's waste. It is a neighbourhood nuisance that can wash into gutters and storm drains carrying dangerous diseases into our rivers and ocean. In some areas, you can even receive a fine for not carrying a plastic bag when walking your dog.

- **Do you ensure that balloons from birthday parties or other events are never released outdoors?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Never release balloons outdoors: Balloons frequently find their way to open water (even from 100's of miles away) and can harm or kill turtles, birds, whales and other marine animals.

- **Do you use non-lead shot and fishing equipment?**

☐ YES ☐ NO

Lead is a heavy metal that can poison most natural environments. There are many suitable alternatives to lead products available today, which don't usually cost much more either.

21. General Wastage

Industrialized countries generate more than 90% of the world's annual total of some 325-375 million tons of hazardous and toxic waste, mostly from the chemical and petrochemical industries. Per capita generation of waste varies with a high of 5.3kg/11.7lbs per day for OECD countries to less than 0.8kg/1.8lbs per day in developing countries. But changing life styles, lack of awareness, ineffective policies etc. may mean that this rate will increase exponentially over the next decade.

- **Do you try to reduce the amount of garbage you produce?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Avoid producing waste: Generally do you follow these simple rules (and in this order):

- Refuse: excess packaging and materials. Reduce: the amount of materials you use by buying in bulk, repairing appliances and furniture instead of replacing them, and avoiding disposable products.
- Re-use: containers, building materials and clothing: repair and sell things you no longer need and consider buying second-hand.
- Recycle: everything you can't refuse, reduce or re-use. Check with your local council or state environmental authority to find what and where you can recycle.

- **Do you send festive season eCards rather than traditional paper cards?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Send email festive season and birthday cards: Did you know that Christmas cards generate up to 20,000 tonnes of waste per year. Now you can help reduce this waste by sending an eCard, which are usually free to send and often come with music and animation.

- **Do you reuse gift bags and wrapping paper?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Reuse wrapping paper (I know: our grannies used to do it and we thought it was weird – but think about it: it makes perfect sense to reuse perfectly good wrapping paper again and again). Did you know that gift or wrapping paper is typically not recyclable? The way in which the paper is manufactured means that it cannot be recycled by conventional paper recycling techniques.

- **Alternatively, do you use old newspaper to wrap gifts?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use newspaper to wrap presents: Watch this [video](#) which demonstrates eight ways to wrap gifts with newspaper.

- **Do you complete your tax return online?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Completing your tax return online saves paper and space as you no longer need to keep all the details in bulky files.

- **Do you use online banking and online billing to prevent paper wastage?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Do as much of your banking (including paying bills) online – it will save you paper, energy and money.

- **Rather than purchasing books, do you use your Local Library or alternatively ebooks?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use your local library, borrow books from friends: Doing so will save energy from every step of the process. The paper won't be used to make another book, it won't be packaged or shipped to the store, and when you're done with it, someone else will be able to enjoy it. For information on ebooks, visit www.ecobrain.com

- **Have you attached a 'no junk mail' sign to your letter box?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Attach a 'no junk mail' sign to your letter box: Each person will receive almost 560 pieces of junk mail this year, which adds up nationally to 4.5 million tonnes, according to the Native Forest Network. About 44% of all junk mail is thrown in the trash, unopened and unread, and ends up in a landfill. Simply visit your nearest newsagency or hardware store to pick up your 'no junk mail' sign.

- **If moving house, do you go to shops and large companies to get used cardboard boxes for free, rather than pay a removal company or storage company?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Reuse old boxes or go to shops and use recycled boxes when moving.

- **Do you use a handkerchief instead of tissues?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Copy your granddad and use a handkerchief: Handkerchiefs are much more environmentally friendly than tissues. If you do use tissues make sure they are made from recycled office paper and are non-bleached.

- **Do you use cloth diapers instead of disposable diapers?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Disposable nappies cost a fortune and are an environmental problem: You'll save around US\$480 per child by using a laundry diaper service instead of disposable diapers.

- **Do you use computer print-outs, junk mail and notices from school as scrap paper for shopping lists or drawing paper for kids?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Try to reuse everything that you can – try reducing your garbage by thinking about the things you put in the bin.

- **Do you empty out vacuum cleaner bags and reuse them?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Some vacuum cleaners are bag-less. Check them out next time it comes to buying a vacuum cleaner.

- **Do you try to borrow rather than buy new products?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

For items that you only use occasionally, rather than purchase it, borrow it off friends or rent it from stores: Doing so will save you money and help the environment.

- **Rather than dispose of items, do you give them away?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Donate items to charity or give them to friends rather than dispose of them: Books, sporting goods, toys, clothing and furniture are always needed by non-profit groups. Other examples include: donating extra coat hangers to your local dry cleaners, donate unwanted art materials to schools or other cultural organisations and give unwanted boxed/bagged/canned food to homeless shelters, food banks or soup kitchens. Alternatively, hold a garage sale and make money off items which you no longer use.

22. Miscellaneous

- **Are you thinking of painting your house?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

When painting your house choose low VOC (volatile organic compound); avoid alkyd or oil-based paints, even if they are labelled low-VOC, and seek latex paints instead. For more information, read the article "Eco-Friendly Paint and Paint Products" (natural-products.suite101.com/article.cfm/ecofriendly_paint_and_paint_products).

- **Do you dispose of toxic products at a hazardous waste facilities?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Products requiring special handling include:

- Building Materials - paint, varnish, solvents, , paint thinner, wood preservatives, driveway sealer and rust remover
- Household cleaners - spot removers, , metal cleaners, bathroom cleaners, drain cleaner, rug cleaners, oven cleaner
- Automotive products – kerosene, gasoline, brake fluid, charcoal lighter fluid, transmission oil, power steering fluid, used oil filters, used antifreeze, used motor oil
- Pesticides - weed killers, insect killers, flea products, fertilizers with weed killer, moth crystals
- Miscellaneous - photographic chemicals, pool chemicals, acids and corrosive chemicals, compact fluorescent light bulbs, batteries

Visit you local government webpage to find out appropriate disposal sites located near you.

- **If you intend to get married, have you considered having a green-wedding?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Some simple tips include: Start by considering carefully about how the environment will be impacted by every purchasing decision you make e.g. consider what the product is made of, where it was made and who made it.

- Think about arriving by a hybrid car.
- Use locally grown food, flowers and decorations.
- Send out invitations by email.
- Consider a second-hand wedding gown or a dress made of natural fibres.
- Use plates made from palm leaf that can be turned into mulch. They'll also save water and power because they don't need to be washed up. For more tips on green-weddings visit www.greatgreenwedding.com.

- **Have you considered a green funeral?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

That's right, even cemeteries are becoming more environmentally friendly! Some cemeteries contain no tombstones or caskets. Instead, bodies are buried in ways that aid natural decomposition, and survivors can locate their loved-ones' burial site with a handheld device that contains a GPS location finder. Read the article: [Eco burial](#) to learn more.

- **Do you keep your cat indoors?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Keep your cat indoors or attach a bell to it. Domestic cats kill over one billion small birds and animals every year (1 outdoor cat averages 40 kills per year). They upset natural predator/prey balances and eliminate ground nesting birds.

- **Do you opt for bamboo rather than hardwoods as a building material?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use sustainable building material: It takes just four to six years for bamboo to mature, compared to 50-100 years for typical hardwoods.

- **Have you considered using timers for aquarium lights and pumps?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use timers for aquarium lights and pumps: Doing so will help cut down on energy consumption without affecting the health of the fish.

- **Do you participate in water-conservation programs in hotels and motels?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Reuse linen and towels: Many lodging establishments provide you with ways to inform the maid that you don't need fresh towels and bed sheets every day, which will save on their laundry-water usage.

- **Do you use Spotify or other music downloading sites instead of buying CDs?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Spotify allows you to stream your favourite music over the net and listen to what you like. By using Spotify and other music downloading sites you will eliminate the need to purchase CDs, which are often manufactured in a way that is harmful to the environment.

- **Do you opt for jewellery made from alternative materials to gold?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Opt for alternatives such as vintage or recycled gold, or metals that are less environmentally damaging such as platinum or silver: Although gold may look pure and aesthetically pleasing, it has a devastating cost to the environment. When gold is mined, basically the earth is blasted and massive craters are dug. Cyanide is poured over the ore to extract the gold and some companies dump the contaminated waste rock into rivers and oceans.

- **Do you still buy cut flowers and flower arrangements?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Avoid overseas flower bouquets: Lavish bouquets of cut flowers are in demand. As a result, the flower industry is booming, shipping hundreds of tons of cut flowers all over the world for sale in supermarkets and at florists. Most consumers do not think about the environmental and social aspects of the cut flower industry. Most cut flowers are grown in South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia in large greenhouse that are intensely climate controlled to yield the best cut flowers, and they are also heavily sprayed with pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides (quite often banned substances including DDT and methyl-bromide).

- **Do you leave messages for family members/roommates on a reusable message board rather than on paper?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Use a reusable message board such as a whiteboard to leave messages for your family members/roommates: Doing so will reduce paper usage, which will save you money and help protect forests from being cut down.

- **Do you celebrate Halloween?**
If yes, do you: Keep Halloween decorations from year to year? ☐ ☐
YES NO

Hold onto last seasons Halloween decorations to avoid buying new ones: Doing so will save you money and reduce the amount of waste entering our waste streams.

- **Avoid buying new costumes each year?** ☐ ☐
YES NO

Rather than buy a new costume, recycle last years costume, make it out of clothes and fabrics from around the house or visit thrift shops or garage sales. In addition, you can also swap costumes with friends and neighbours. After use, donate costumes to day care centres or shelters.

- **Avoid purchasing one-use bags for collecting candy?** ☐ ☐
YES NO

Instead of purchasing one-use bags for collecting candy, use reusable buckets, pillowcases or canvas bags.

- **Recycle Halloween waste?** ☐ ☐
YES NO

Recycle pumpkins, the straw used to build scarecrows and any other organic material by composting it in your garden. The compost will act as a great fertiliser for your garden.

- **Encourage your children to dispose of candy wrappers in an appropriate manner?** ☐ ☐
YES NO

Teach you children to dispose of their candy wrappers in their bags or in rubbish bins rather than on the street.

- **Opt for Halloween treats that have minimum amounts of packaging?** ☐ ☐
YES NO

23. Doing that extra bit for the environment

- **Do you learn about global warming and keep up-to-date with environmental news and events?** ☐ ☐
YES NO

Keeping up with new innovations will help you to reduce your own emissions. Visit www.greenbizcheck.com for the latest environmental news.

- **Do you get involved in various environmental days such as Earth hour?** ☐ ☐
YES NO

(Visit globalstewards.org/calendar.htm to find out about upcoming events).

- **Do you work with your employer to implement these and other energy and water efficiency and waste reduction measures in your office or workplace?** ☐ ☐
YES NO

To help make a difference you can also form or join local citizens' groups and work with local government officials to see that these measures are adopted in schools and public buildings

- **Do you ensure that your elected leaders make environmental issues such as climate change a priority?** ☐ ☐
YES NO

Create change by writing letters, voting, making phone calls and campaigning for officials and policies that strive for environmental sustainability.

- **Do you donate to various environmental organisations such as the Australian Rainforest Foundation?** ☐ ☐
YES NO

(Visit www.arf.net.au)

- **Have you considered forming/joining a tree-planting group with family and/or friends?**
☐ YES ☐ NO

Form a tree-planting group with family and/or friends: Commit to planting and maintaining an agreed-upon number of trees over your lifetime. Plan regular gatherings for tree-planting and watering. Log your commitments in the United Nations Billion Tree Campaign (www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign).

- **Have you calculated your ecological footprint?**
☐ YES ☐ NO

(Visit: www.myfootprint.org)

- **Have you calculated the effect your diet is having on the environment?**
☐ YES ☐ NO

(Visit cspinet.org/EatingGreen/calculator.html)

24. Top 5 Ways to save money at home:

1. Switch off electrical items when not in use
2. Avoid heating and cooling whenever possible
3. Limit the use of hot water
4. Combine shopping and errands in one trip to save on travel
5. Buy locally and reduce consumption of unnecessary items.

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 visit: www.greenbizcheck.com

Please consider the environment before printing this document — every year we are losing 40 million acres of oxygen producing forests through logging and land clearing.

List of useful References

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