

all you
Live green
and save!

Go green in every room!

Turn your home
into an eco-haven
with these smart
money-saving tips

By Leah Ingram

In the kitchen

Save some dough by altering your cooking and cleaning routines.

Cut back on electricity

At the end of a dishwasher cycle, open the door to let dishes air-dry. Cook veggies and other foods in the microwave, toaster oven or slow cooker—all of which use less energy than a stove. Depending on how much you cook, you might save a dollar or more a week.

Go low-flow

Install an aerator on your kitchen faucet to cut water usage in half. A \$4 investment helps you save \$44 a year in water costs. See options at niagaraconservation.com.

Eco-bonus! When you use less water, wastewater sewage plants save energy.



Total annual savings in
the kitchen: **\$144.70**



Mix your own cleaner

Combine 1 cup white vinegar with 1 gallon hot water. Over a year, this will cost \$5.50, while an all-purpose cleaner costs \$18.20. You save \$12.70.

Eco-bonus! There will be fewer toxic chemicals around the house.



Make your own bubbles

A Soda-Club machine lets you make soda for as little as 42 cents a liter. If you drink 200 liters at 60 cents a liter, you'll save \$36 a year (\$80; sodaclub.com).

Eat local and in season

Buying produce grown near you ensures a fresher product and, often, a less expensive one. Visit sustainabletable.org/shop/eatseasonal/ to find out which foods are in season in your area. For example, fresh plums from a local greenmarket run \$1 a pound; at the supermarket they're \$3 a pound.



Recycle your food!

Composting is easier than you think. You need an open-bottomed bin in your yard and a small bin in your kitchen to collect vegetable peels, coffee grounds and more. Empty the small bin daily into the outside bin, then cover with leaves, grass clipping, mulch or dirt. Once a week turn your compost. Soon you'll see rich, dark brown soil that you can use to fertilize your lawn and flower beds.

In the living room

Make floor-to-ceiling changes in your family's main space.

Use shutters as window insulation

If you can't afford new double-pane windows, consider installing plantation-style shutters inside. They keep cold air out in winter and cool air in during summer, and can cut energy costs by 80 percent, or \$190. Find out more at signatureshutters.com.

Barter for furniture

Americans spend an average of \$650 annually on furniture. Trade goods gratis with "freecycle" and save a bundle. Check out freecycle.org.

Heat and cool with ceiling fans

Using ceiling fans year-round can save you as much as 50 percent on your heating and cooling bills, which adds up to about \$475 annually. Set blades to rotate counterclockwise in summer to draw warm air up, and clockwise in winter to push warm air down.

Eco-bonus! Lower your energy usage and you'll help cut carbon emissions at the local power plant.

Install carpet tiles

Tiles cost about the same as wall-to-wall carpeting (about \$3 a square foot), but installation is do-it-yourself, saving you \$75 to \$100. Learn more at sustainablecarpet.com.

Eco-bonus! Unlike some traditional carpeting, carpet tiles can be chemical free and recyclable.



Choose green home decor

Renovating or redecorating? Select low-toxin paint (made by Benjamin Moore and Sherwin-Williams, among others) and countertops made from recycled paper (paperstoneproducts.com). For flooring, choose earth-friendly materials such as bamboo, a renewable resource. The NaturalLee line of furnishings includes organic fabric slipcovers and recycled fibers used as pillow fill (naturallee.com).



Use a power strip

Plug energy-sucking electronics into a single power strip so you can turn everything off at once. You'll save as much as \$50 a year in energy costs.

Program your thermostat

Automatically adjusting your home's temperature when you're sleeping or out of the home means you're not paying to heat or cool your house unnecessarily. It adds up to energy savings—about \$150 a year.



Total annual savings in the living room: **\$965**

In the bathroom

Conserve a critical natural resource and cut down on noxious chemicals in the home.



Make your own scouring cleanser

Want a sparkling clean bathroom? Baking soda does the trick.

Just sprinkle it directly onto a damp sponge, just as you would a cleansing powder. A 4 lb. box of baking soda costs \$2, about \$1.35 less than the same amount of scouring cleanser, and contains fewer toxic chemicals.

Wash down the shower before you step out

Take a scrub brush and wipe down the shower walls and tub with bath soap. If you use two containers of tub cleaner a year, you'll save about \$6.

Flush less water

Each flush sends five to seven gallons of water down the toilet. A dual-flush toilet (about \$160) uses less than two. Expect \$2 to \$4 a month in savings. **Eco-bonus!** Considering the average American flushes the toilet eight times a day, you'll conserve 2,920 gallons of water a year.

Go natural

Replace your plastic shower curtain liner with a mildew-resistant curtain made of hemp, a renewable resource. A hemp liner costs more than a plastic one, but it will last a lifetime.

Eco-bonus!

Plastic shower curtains give off noxious PVCs, so getting them out of the bathroom helps clear the air.



Total annual savings in the bathroom: **\$54**

Laundry room

Rethink how you do your 400 loads of laundry every year.

Shake up your laundry routine

Wash on cold only, let clothes soak rather than doing long wash cycles and hang clothes up to dry whenever possible. This could help you save as much as \$114 in energy costs a year.

Cut back on laundering

Hotels use about 40 percent less water by not washing sheets and towels every day. Do the same by spot-cleaning clothing and re-wearing items. You could save about \$25 in water costs per year.

Eco-bonus! Your clothes will last longer.

Try green stain removal



Soak stained fabrics in water mixed with borax, lemon juice or white vinegar instead of bleach. Brand-name bleach costs \$240 annually to do 400 loads*, versus \$128 on 20 Mule Team borax. You save \$112.



Total annual savings in the laundry room: **\$251**

**TOTAL
WHOLE-HOUSE
SAVINGS:
\$1,414.70**

*The national average