



ClimateSmart Ideas for YOUR HOME

By Beth Powell



Compact Fluorescent Light Bulb

Greening your home isn't just about buying sustainably-built furniture and biodegradable household cleaners. There are many ClimateSmart ways to green your home from an energy-use perspective—everything from no-cost conservation measures to solar rooftop panels.

Conservation

Conservation is the easiest, most affordable way to reduce a home's carbon footprint. Cumulatively, small actions really can make a large impact. All energy-efficiency measures conserve energy, and easy conservation measures include turning off lights, TVs and electronic devices when not in use, and connecting computer and TV peripheral devices into a Smart Power Strip. Two other essential measures to implement include a programmable thermostat and electrical outlet sealers made of fire-retardant foam that reduce air leakage.

Energy Efficiency

Do you have an older, drafty home and wonder about the most cost-effective ways to make energy-efficient improvements? Have a newer home and still feel your energy bills are higher than they should be? To start, check your energy bill and compare your home's energy usage with Colorado averages (625 kWh of electricity and 67 therms of natural gas per month). This is only an average; the author's 800 square foot condo draws 100 kWh per month.



Programmable Thermostat

Energy Audit

The best \$100 you ever invest in your home will most likely be a Center for ReSource Conservation Residential Energy Audit (REAP), which takes all the guesswork out of the "Where do I start?" question. A REAP is an in-house visit and analysis of your home's insulation, appliances, furnace, windows, and lighting by an energy professional who will provide you with a report of recommended improvements and average costs to implement.

Lighting

Replace your incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents (CFLs). Don't wait for the old ones to burn out. Though it might seem wasteful to throw them away, incandescent bulbs waste 75% more coal-fired electricity than their CFL counterparts. ENERGY STAR-approved CFLs can last up to 10 years and can be used in three-way, track, and recessed (canned) lighting fixtures. Keep in mind that you'll pay more up front, but the reduction in your energy bill will typically pay back your investment in one year or less. Don't forget the porch light!

ENERGY STAR™ Appliances

Replacing inefficient appliances with ENERGY STAR appliances is a great option for those who can afford it. The refrigerator is most important because it runs 24/7. You can calculate your own appliances' energy efficiency against newer models at the ENERGY STAR Web site.

Tankless water heaters have been in use in Europe for decades, and they are extremely efficient as they only heat water on demand. They do cost more up front but will last 20 years, and payback is typically less than five years. When you replace an appliance, to reduce unnecessary landfill waste, be sure the delivery service has a recycling program.



Learn More

Learn more about the city and county of Boulder ClimateSmart programs at www.beClimateSmart.com or 303.441.1846

For information about the CRC's Residential Energy Audit Program (REAP) or for contractor referrals for tankless hot water, solar PV, and solar thermal, visit: www.conservationcenter.org or call 303.999.3820

Also, attend a Solar Week Workshop on "How to Reduce Your Energy Bills" on Monday, October 8, in Boulder, and Wednesday, October 9, in Longmont. Learn more at www.conservationcenter.org



Solar PV and Solar Thermal

Solar PV for electricity and solar thermal systems for hot water delivery are excellent options in Colorado due to a sunny climate and significant rebates and tax incentives. Check out the CRC website for contractor referral lists of local vendors who can provide quotes. ClimateSmart Power programs include solar rebates, solar grants for nonprofits and affordable housing units, and more. •