



## **Simple Steps That Actually Save You Money**

Don't aggravate yourself. These green resolutions from MSN.com are worth the effort.

### **Give Up Plastic (and Paper) Bags**

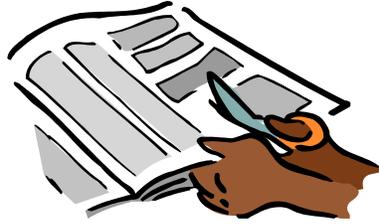
**Cost:** \$1

Do you opt for paper or plastic when at the grocery store? Neither is a good choice. Twelve million barrels of oil were used to make the 88.5 billion plastic bags consumed in the United States last year. And it takes four times more energy to make paper bags. The best choice is reusable shopping bags made of cotton, nylon or durable, mesh-like plastic. Put a few reusable shopping bags in your car so you have them handy on your next shopping trip. And if you happen to forget your reusable bag (as we all do!), choose paper if you will recycle it or plastic if you will reuse or recycle it.

### **Stop Buying Bottled Water**

**Cost:** \$14.98 for aluminum water bottle

Did you know that it takes 26 bottles of water to produce the plastic container for a one-liter bottle of water, and that doing so pollutes 25 liters of groundwater? Don't leave a trail of plastic water bottles in your wake! Stop buying bottled water. Use reusable water bottles instead made from materials like stainless steel or aluminum that are not likely to degrade over time. If you choose a plastic water bottle, check the number on the bottom first: Plastics numbered 3, 6 and 7 could pose a health threat to you, so look for plastics numbered 1, 2, 4 or 5.



## **Stop Receiving Unwanted Catalogs**

**Cost: \$0**

Every year, 19 billion catalogs are mailed to American consumers. All those catalogs require more than 53 million trees and 56 billion gallons of wastewater to produce -- and many of us don't even know how we got on so many mailing lists! So grab that stack of catalogs piling up on your coffee table and clear out the clutter. Visit [CatalogChoice.org](http://CatalogChoice.org) to put a stop to unwanted catalogs. Within 10 weeks, your mailbox will be empty of unwanted catalogs. A less cluttered mailbox means less pollution, less waste and less of the pollution that causes global warming.

## **Give Up Hot Water (At Least in the Clothes Washer)**

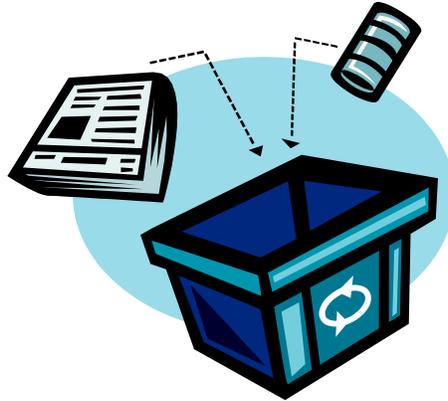
**Cost: \$0**

Did you know that only 10 percent of the energy used by a typical washing machine powers the motor? About 90 percent of the energy is used to heat the water, and most clothes will come clean in cold water. So switch your washing machine's temperature setting. For heavily soiled clothing, change it from hot to warm, but otherwise try to wash and rinse most of your clothing in cold water.

## **Give Up Paper Towels**

**Cost: \$6.95**

No matter how you look at it, paper towels create waste. During your next trip to the grocery store, buy some reusable microfiber towels, which grip dirt and dust like a magnet, even when they get wet. When you are finished with them, toss the towels in the wash and reuse them again and again. They are even great for countertops and mirrors. If you absolutely have to use disposable towels, look for recycled products. If every household in the United States replaced just one roll of virgin fiber paper towels (70 sheets) with 100 percent recycled ones, we could save 544,000 trees.



## Recycle

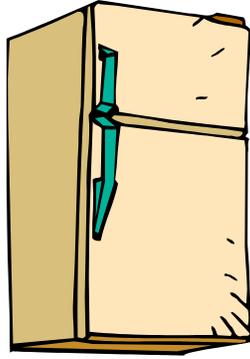
**Cost:** \$0

For every trash can of waste you put outside for the trash collector, about 70 trash cans of waste are used in order to create that trash. To reduce the amount of waste you produce, buy products in returnable and recyclable containers and recycle as much as you can. The energy saved from recycling a single aluminum can will operate a television for three hours! If your community doesn't provide containers for recycling, designate a bin in your garage for recyclables to make it easy for you and your family to recycle things like the newspaper and aluminum cans.

## Run a Fully Loaded Dishwasher

**Cost:** \$0

If you have dishwasher, use it. Running a fully loaded dishwasher -- without pre-rinsing the dishes -- can use a third less water than washing the dishes by hand, saving up to 10 to 20 gallons of water a day. Simply scrape large pieces of food off your dishes and let the dishwasher handle the rest. And by using the air-dry setting (instead of heat-dry), you will consume half the amount of electricity without spending a dime.



### **Lower the Temp in Your Fridge**

**Cost:** \$0

As one of the biggest appliances in your kitchen, the refrigerator is also one of the most power hungry, accounting for 10 to 15 percent of the average home energy bill each month. Get your fridge running in tip-top shape. First, set the refrigerator thermostat to maintain a temperature between 38 and 42 degrees (F). This temperature will protect your food from spoiling while saving electricity. Twice a year, clean the condenser coil at the back of your fridge. Condenser coils tend to get dusty, making them less efficient.

### **Give Up 2 Degrees**

**Cost:** \$0

Electric power plants are the country's largest industrial source of the pollutants that cause global warming. By snuggling under a blanket on the couch on a snowy winter night instead of turning up the heat, or enjoying the breeze from a fan in the height of summer instead of turning up the air conditioning, you can save pounds of pollution, as well as some money off your utility bills. Set your thermostat in winter to 68 degrees F (20° C) or less during the daytime and 55 degrees F (13° C) before going to sleep or when you are away for the day. And during the summer, set thermostats to 78 degrees F (26° C) or more.



## **Stop Idling**

Every moment spent idling your car's engine means needlessly wasting gas, as well as rougher wear on your vehicle. Idling for more than 10 seconds wastes more gas than is needed for startup. Overall, Americans idle away 2.9 billion gallons of gas a year, worth around \$78.2 billion.

## **Turn Off Your Computer**

Save energy and wear and tear on your hardware by shutting down your computer at night. You'll save an average of \$90 of electricity a year. The Department of Energy recommends shutting off your monitor if you aren't going to use it for more than 20 minutes, and the whole system if you're not going to use it for more than two hours.

## **Wash Your Laundry in Cold Water**

An easy way to clean green is to turn the dial on your washing machine to cold. Most loads don't need hot water, and 90% of the energy used by washing machines goes into heating. The higher the water temperature, the higher the cost to you.

## **Reduce Junk Mail**

Around 100 million trees and 28 billion gallons of water are used to send junk mail to Americans every year, according to greendimes.com. You can stop 75% of unsolicited mail by registering on the Mail Preference Service on the Direct Marketing Association Website ([www.dmachoice.org/](http://www.dmachoice.org/) for a fee of \$1) or by telephone 212-768-7277. You can also write them at PO Box 9008, Farmington, NY 11735-9008 Within 90 days, most unsolicited mail will stop.

There is also a toll free number to stop mailings of credit card offers. One call to 1-888-5-OPT-OUT will reach the major national credit bureaus, Equifax, Experian and Trans Union.



### **Pack a lunch.**

Instead of stopping at the lunch truck when mid-afternoon hunger hits, reach for a packed lunch in a reusable lunchbox. Check out reusable sandwich containers as an alternative to plastic bags, and don't forget the reusable silverware

### **Print on Two Sides**

Know what? It's not that hard to print on both sides of the paper. But even though most software programs give that option, most of us still print only on one side of the page. Consider this: the U.S. alone uses 4 million tons of copy paper annually, about 27 pounds per person. Save dough and your local landfill. Print on two sides.

### **Stop Wasting Gas**

#### **Cost: \$0**

Increase your gas mileage by checking your tire pressure. More than a quarter of all cars and nearly one-third of all SUVs, vans and pickups have underinflated tires, according to a survey by the Department of Transportation. If every American kept his or her tires properly inflated, we could save 2.8 billion gallons (10.6 billion liters) of gasoline a year -- and help curb global warming pollution -- so inflate the tires on your car or truck and continue to do so once a month or as necessary.

