

# Save energy... ...save the world

**W**e need energy for everything, but burning fossil fuels – our main source of energy – releases carbon dioxide, causing global warming. Fossil fuel reserves are spread unevenly around the world, and some are running low. The world needs to change over to clean forms of energy, but this takes time. The immediate and best solution is to use less fuel.

It is something that everyone can and needs to do. Direct actions – like turning down the heat or walking

instead of driving short distances – add up to big savings. But indirect ones – such as buying locally grown food, which is not driven or flown long distances to reach our plates – are just as important. Everything we consume – including its packaging – requires energy to create and transport, so even though the energy savings from indirect actions are harder to see, they are still vital. Here are some suggestions for everyday direct and indirect savings that will make a difference.

## Direct saving

- \* Turning off lights when leaving a room.
- \* Completely turning off electronic equipment like VCRs and TVs; standby modes use huge amounts of electricity, often more than actually running the appliance.
- \* Walking, cycling or using public transport – or sharing rides.
- \* Using the shortest, coolest cycle possible for washing machines or dishwashers, and only running a full load.



- \* Filling the kettle with only as much water as needed.
- \* Preventing heat – and air-conditioned cooling – escaping from homes by keeping doors and windows shut, closing curtains and stopping draughts.
- \* Hang-drying clothes instead of tumble-drying.
- \* Buying solar-powered or rechargeable batteries.
- \* Investing in a pressure cooker – it speeds up cooking times.
- \* Inflating car tyres to the recommended levels to improve fuel efficiency.



- \* Taking shorter showers, and showers rather than baths.
- \* Using compact fluorescent light bulbs; one lasts as long as five or six incandescents and uses about 70 per cent less energy.
- \* Turning off PC monitors; one left on overnight consumes enough energy to laser-print about 800 pages.
- \* Turning the thermostat down by 1°C; this could cut the heating bill by 10 per cent.
- \* Shutting the refrigerator door; when opened, up to 30 per cent of the cold air escapes.
- \* Insulating homes. About half of their heat can escape through the roof and walls.



## Indirect saving

- \* Recycling glass, paper, plastics and metals at home, work and school; it takes more energy and resources to create new items. Recycling one aluminium can saves enough energy to power a TV for three hours.
- \* Using cloth bags for shopping instead of the plastic ones at the store.
- \* Trying to buy goods that use little or no packaging.
- \* Printing on both sides of a sheet of paper.
- \* Reusing all materials, such as food containers, when possible.
- \* Participating in a carbon-offsetting scheme, such as Climate Care. This involves using the organization's website ([www.climatecare.org](http://www.climatecare.org)) to calculate carbon emissions – for example from a flight or from driving a certain number of kilometres a year – and the amount it would cost to make up for them. Pay up the money and it will be used to fund sustainable energy projects around the world.
- \* Buying recycled products, such as paper.
- \* Shopping at second-hand clothes shops.
- \* Using rewritable CDs instead of single-use ones, or investing in a data stick.
- \* Recycling/refilling printer cartridges.
- \* Buying locally grown, seasonal food and locally made goods such as furniture and clothing.
- \* Repairing damaged items such as electronics, furniture and clothes, instead of buying new, and upgrading to energy-efficient models when appliances must be replaced.
- \* Spreading the word, such as by holding parties to share green tips, or volunteering with an environmental group.

