



Be Green and Save Green 2008-04

Climate change has gotten a lot more attention. In recent news, the Southern Baptist leaders <http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0312/p02s03-usgn.html> has called upon its followers to take a more proactive role in protecting the environment. The 2008 Presidential candidates have debated and clashed http://blogs.wsj.com/environmentalcapital/2008/02/13/obama-climate-change-and-coal-country/?mod=googlenews_wsj on what to do about the environment.

What can you do? In the April 2007 issue, we discussed no or low cost behavior changes that would help preserve the environment <http://home.att.net/~kai/html/bg0704.html>. This month, we have more tips to share.

1. Take the Stairs. How many times have you taken the elevators by yourself? Just make sure you can exit at the floor you want. A lot of office buildings lock stair well doors to prevent unauthorized entrance. Taking the stairs rather than using the elevators will save energy, and allow you to get some exercise.

2. Go Green when the timing is right. A recent article in the Washington Post drew attention on the wrong way to "be green". <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/04/AR2008030403198.html?hpid=topnews> Being and becoming green, doesn't mean you need to throw out everything you have and buy new green products!

Make sure the things you have work efficiently so they last a long time. This is especially true in our homes. Most appliances and machines in our homes should last 10 or more years. <http://www.oldhouseweb.com/stories/Detailed/10382.shtml> if you do regular maintenance, they will perform with maximum efficiency and prevent premature failures. For example, you should clean / replace your Heater / Air conditioner's air filter. Dirty air filters make the unit work harder and use more energy.

To get organized, use this simple Excel template <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/TC060904331033.aspx> to track maintenance needs and service history. The Energy Star web site http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=heat_cool_pr_hvac provides additional detailed information on items that needs attention, and what you should do.

When you do need to (or really want to) replace an item, look for products that have earned an Energy Star. Some Energy Star compliant products may even save you money on taxes. http://energystar.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/energystar.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=3863&p_created=1196360838&p_sid=4ETFwt-i&p_accessibility=0&p_redirect=&p_lva=2928&p_sp=cF9zcmNoPTEmcF9zb3J0X2J5PSZwX2dyaWRzb3J0PSZwX3Jvd19jbnQ9MjEmcF9wcm9kc0zMTlmcF9jYXRzPSZwX3B2PTEuMzEyJnBfY3Y9JnBfcGFnZT0x&p_li=&p_topview=1 Make sure the store you buy from, will take your old item and dispose of them properly.

3. Make your own natural fertilizer. Each time we cook and eat at home, we generate food waste. Food waste decomposes naturally into fertilizer under the right conditions. If you have a garden or flower bed, consider making your own fertilizer from food waste. You can follow the old fashion method <http://home.howstuffworks.com/composting.htm> or you can go for the new high-tech option <http://www.naturemill.com/howItWorks.html>



4. Resist the urge to consume. I will be the first to admit it is hard. I spend thousands of dollars on golf equipment. I justify buying new equipment by trading the old ones in. The reality is, the hidden cost to transport my old clubs to a 2nd hand store, or to a recycling plant, or back to the manufacture, all require oil and produces carbon. I should have just stayed with my old clubs, which, I actually play better with. Think carefully before you make a new purchase next time. Do you really NEED it?

5. Consider shopping at Surplus Grocery Stores. Do you shop at TJMaxx, Marshall, Nordstrom Rack? WSJ defines Surplus grocers as stores that sell "closeouts," which include products that manufacturers have discontinued, seasonal items that are outdated and goods that are near the date when manufacturers expect freshness to wane.

[http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB120364165202984611-](http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB120364165202984611-9tou9QaihEhwsfZxSrFclsXo8_20090221.html)

[9tou9QaihEhwsfZxSrFclsXo8_20090221.html](http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB120364165202984611-9tou9QaihEhwsfZxSrFclsXo8_20090221.html) You are not only saving money, you will be saving our landfills. Yes, some products that are not sold can be recycled and made into new material, but, as with any kind of recycling, there is energy cost involved. If we can use all the products that are produced, there will be minimal waste.

Being green should not be taken as the hip thing to do; rather, take it on because it is the right thing to do. Using common sense and changing our life style a little, we can collectively do less harm to the environment.