



MARCH CHALLENGE: WHERE WE LIVE

March's challenge asks us to look around our homes and gardens and see what we can do to make them more eco-friendly. We spend a lot of time in our homes - more so if under the lovely iron-fist of a global pandemic - so making sure that they're healthy for both ourselves and the planet is kind of important.

One way to tackle this challenge is to go from room to room and make each one as green as possible. However, some of the most eco-friendly changes we can make involve the whole house - insulation and energy source, for example. It's probably best to start with the big ticket items that affect your entire house and then move on to room-by-room 'greening'.

Below are some ideas as to how you can make your home more eco-friendly¹.

PART 1: THROUGHOUT YOUR HOME

LIGHT BULBS

You'll save 66% more energy by using CFL bulbs (compact fluorescent light) instead of incandescent bulbs. One CFL bulb generates 400lbs of greenhouse gas emissions less than one incandescent bulb.

EXTENSION CORDS

Use extension cords and turn them off when not in use - you can reduce your home's energy consumption by up to 15% versus appliances that are plugged into the wall.

¹ Ideas from: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/eco-friendly-home-50-ways-to-do-it_n_5916442



UNPLUG

Unplug your TV when it's not in use to save electricity - TVs are a huge culprit in this as they are usually left on standby for roughly 17 hours a day. The same goes for PC monitors.

FLOORING

If you're in the market for a new floor, check out bamboo rather than timber for a hardwood floor. Bamboo is the fastest growing plant on earth and this quick replenishment rate makes it a very environmentally friendly choice for flooring.

THE BLINDS

If you leave the blinds open during the day to let the sunlight in, you can save 10% on the energy you'd otherwise require to heat the house. The inverse is true when it's warm out: close the blinds during the day to stop the sunlight from heating your house up too much. You'll need less aircon when you get home in the evening.

RUGS

Using rugs on your floors can save 4-6% of your energy bill.

BE SOCIAL

Invite friends over in the winter months - each person can generate the same amount of heat as a 100 watt heater!

CUDDLE

Rather than turning up the heat in the evening, snuggle up with your pet or partner to generate some warmth.



JUST ONE DEGREE

Save around 60 quid a year on heating costs just by turning your thermostat down by one degree in the winter.

PART 2: THE KITCHEN

IN THE SHADE

Try to avoid having your fridge in direct sunlight - it will have to work harder to keep its contents cool.

NO PEEKING

Snack attack? Decide what you want to eat before you open the fridge - opening the fridge numerous times a day and just staring at it with the door wide open can cost you about £35 a year

STARS

Make sure your appliance rank well on the energy star scale. Energy star qualified appliances use 10-50% less energy than standard models.

SPACE

Keep about 7.6cm between your fridge and the wall to ensure proper airflow. This helps the fridge stay cool, therefore using less energy.

COMPOST

Composting your food scraps is so important - it reduces the amount of household waste in landfill and eases the costs associated with rubbish collection.



HOMEMADE

Rather than buying plastic spray bottles for cleaning, make your own cleaning solution with vinegar. It's a natural way to kill bacteria, germs and mold.

MICROWAVE

Microwave's use 50% less energy than conventional ovens, making them a great choice for reheating leftovers at least.

COOKWARE

Use glass, silicone or ceramic dishes as they are the most efficient. They reduce the cooking temperature required, therefore cutting down on energy costs.

DISHWASHER

Avoid pre-rinsing, only run a full load, and air-dry your dishes at the end to save on energy consumption.

CLOSED

Don't keep opening the oven door - the temperature inside can drop by 65 degrees for every 30 second opening!

PART 3: BEDROOM

SAFE SMELLS

Try to use essential oils and non-aerosol scents instead of chemicals and synthetic fragrances



OUTSIDE IN

Improve the air quality in your home by indulging in a jungle of house plants.

REPAINTING?

Use eco-paints that have very low levels of volatile organic compounds rather than traditional paint.

UPGRADE YOUR SHEETS

Use organic cotton or bamboo sheets - regular cotton bed linens account for 25% of the world's insecticide use.

PART 4: BATHROOM

TURN IT OFF

When brushing your teeth or washing your face, turn the tap off rather than letting the water run.

LOW FLOW

Install a low-flow toilet - flushing toilets account for 30% of indoor water use.

RECYCLED

Buy recycled toilet paper.

SHAVE SMART

Use a cup of warm water to rinse off your razor rather than keeping the tap flowing.

FIX LEAKS

A leaky toilet can waste 757 litres of water every day. Get it fixed ASAP.



PART 5: LAUNDRY ROOM

HANG DRY

2-3 kg of carbon emissions is produced for every hour a dryer is in use. Hang your clothes up to dry instead.

DIRTY 30

Washing your clothes at 30 degrees celsius uses 40% less energy than higher temperatures.

CONCENTRATE

Use concentrated detergent with reduced packaging - they have a lower carbon footprint.

PART 6: GARDEN

COMPOST

If you compost your food scraps, not only are you saving that waste from going to landfill, but you'll also be reducing your need for water, fertilisers and pesticides in your garden. You can use your homemade compost instead!

WATER

Save rainwater and use it to water your plants when the weather is dryer.

NATIVE

Plant plants that are native to your area to protect your local environment. Look at which ones are bee-friendly as the bees could use all the help we can give!