

SUSTAINABILITY AT HOME

Looking for ways to engage in sustainability at home? Check out the following suggestions for ways to reduce your environmental impact (and achieve cost savings) at your house or apartment.

For additional information, check out [Sustainability and Resilience at Home](#).

waste management

- **Cancel unnecessary mail** to reduce the amount of paper you receive.
- Follow the **do's and don'ts** from Murfreesboro Water Resources, including to not flush baby wipes, even the ones advertised as "flushable". They are among the most common objects that clog pipes and jam pumps at sewage treatment plants. The Environmental Protection Agency is urging folks to **only flush toilet paper**.
- **Can your grease**; don't flush it. See Johnson City's [campaign](#).
- If ordering takeout or picking up a meal at a restaurant, let the restaurant know you would like to **opt out of receiving disposable utensils**.
- **Reuse hard to recycle items** in [crafts](#) or environmental education activities.
- **Shop sustainably!** If you only need something temporarily, ask if you can borrow it from a friend or neighbor. Consider sharing items like books, magazines, games, or puzzles between friends and neighbors. Or if you can make something yourself, try a fun DIY project!

food

- Start with a **weekly meal plan**. A 2012 [report](#) by the National Resource Defense Council found that American families throw away about 25% of the food and drinks they purchase.
 - **Make a list of meals for the week** and plan to use leftovers. If you like to make large portions at a time, plan to freeze half to serve the following month.
 - **Freeze, preserve, donate, or can surplus fruits and vegetables** - especially abundant seasonal produce.
 - Read more on the EPA's [website](#) for tips on planning, storage and meal prep to **reduce food waste**.
 - If you live in a house, consider **starting or adding to your compost pile!**
 - For more information about how to **reduce your "foodprint"** check out [Get Food Smart Tennessee](#).
- 
- 



energy

- **Turn off lights** when you leave a room. This can save about \$35/year in energy costs and extends the life of your light bulb.
- **Use natural light.** Open your shades to take advantage of natural light and save about \$100/year. Exposure to natural light also decreases stress and promotes better health.
- **Move that dial;** adjusting a degree or two closer to the ambient temperature results in substantial savings. For example, save 5% for every degree below 70 that you set your heater in winter.
- If you have central heating and cooling, **close the air vents in unused rooms** to avoid heating or cooling unused spaces.
- Have you **changed your HVAC air filter** recently? Clogged filters reduce indoor air quality and energy efficiency.
- **Turn the temperature down on your water heater** a few degrees.
- Use the **power-save or economy mode on appliances** and electronics.
- **Clean your dryer's lint filter** before every new load to keep efficiency at the highest level.
- Knoxville's **Savings in the House** provides targeted tips and workshops to help residents reduce their energy bills.

water

- **Shave down your shower;** shaving 2 - 4 minutes off of your shower time saves about 4,000 gallons and \$100/year, promoting water conservation.
 - Fill it up! **Only run the dishwasher and washing machines on full loads on cold.** In addition to running about half as many loads, you'll save about \$150/year in energy and water costs. Your clothes will thank you, too; the color and fabric hold up better in a cold wash than in hot water.
 - **Avoid using water to defrost items.** Instead, refrigerate overnight. This saves water and energy; having frozen items in your refrigerator also keeps its temperature colder, which means it has to run a little less to maintain its temperature.
 - **Act quickly to address water leaks.** A sink that drips once a second wastes 3,000 gallons a year - or the equivalent of 800 showers. Learn more, including how to make basic repairs [here](#).
 - Want more tips on **saving water**? Check out the [Water Footprint Calculator](#).
- 
- 