

The Center for Green Building's Five Shades of Green Living

3. Teal Green- Changes that require some effort

This is where the rubber starts to meet the road – and some investment. Pay attention to the interior of your home and how it interacts with the elements, and you'll find it will be a safer and more comfortable place.

Consider looking at your ecological impact by visiting www.earthday.net/footprint, and join us at The Center for Green Building to learn more.

- **Insulation:** By improving the R-value of the insulation in your house, you can create a warmer house in the winter and cooler house in the summer, without using more valuable energy than necessary. (The higher the R-value, the more comfortable your house.) Much of the warm or cooled air is squandered as it leaks out doors, windows and uninsulated ceilings, walls and floors. By doing the insulation basics, you can make huge strides in reducing your energy consumption.
- **Plug air leaks:** This simple step can go a long way toward keeping your home at the temperature you desire, saving money on heating and air conditioning bills and more. Common leaks occur around windows, doors, and other wall penetrations. Plugging those leaks with weather stripping and caulk can be a simple task for anyone. Also, installing pre-cut foam forms around outlets and switches helps cut down on air leaks.³
- **Paints, stains and finishes:** When you remodel your house, choose paints, lacquer and paint thinners that are low in volatile organic compounds (VOCs) to ensure healthy indoor air quality. These toxic chemicals cause indoor pollution by off-gassing – emitting low levels of toxic vapors in the air for years after their application. After automobiles, paints are the second highest contributor to smog.
- **Tune your ride:** A well-maintained car is more fuel-efficient, produces fewer greenhouse gas emissions, is more reliable, and is safer! Keep your car well tuned, follow the manufacturer's maintenance schedule, and use the recommended grade of motor oil. Also check and replace your vehicle's air filter regularly. For more details, including potential savings from these actions, visit the [Fuel Economy Guide Web site](#).
- **Passive solar heat and day light:** Take advantage of south facing windows. Passive solar heating in particular makes use of the building components to collect, store, and distribute solar heat gains to reduce the demand for space heating. It does not require the use of mechanical equipment because the heat flow is by natural means (radiation, convection, and conductance) and the thermal storage is in the structure itself. Also, passive solar heating strategies provide opportunities for [day lighting](#) and views to the outdoor through well-positioned [windows](#).
- **Give your car a break:** Use public transportation, carpool, walk or bike whenever possible to avoid using your car. Leaving your car at home just two days a week will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 1,600 pounds per year. Whenever possible, combine activities and errands into one trip. For daily commuting, consider options like telecommuting (working from home via phone or over the Internet) that can reduce the stress of commuting, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and save you money.⁷
- **Compact fluorescent light bulbs:** In general, CFLs (compact fluorescent light bulbs) last ten to fifteen times longer than standard incandescent light bulbs, and use only a quarter of the electricity; this will save you as much as \$30 over the life of the bulb. If every American family replaced an incandescent bulb with a CFL, it would eliminate 90 billion pounds of carbon dioxide (CO₂), the principal global warming gas.²

www.smartlivingcatalogue.com or 800.527.4448

Sources:

³ U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC); ⁷ U.S. Department of Energy

The Center for Green Building, Measure for Measure, LLC 2007

3380 Fairfield Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06905 203.382.0774 www.centerforgreenbuilding.com