

10 TIPS FOR LIVING GREENER

1. **Live in the old city of Ottawa, or downtown.** Dense, urban living is the most sustainable, resource and energy efficient, and environmentally responsible way to organize modern society. Hard to believe? Consider this: ever drive to work? live in a space with more than 1000 ft² per person? It's true that NYC buildings can be horribly energy inefficient (and there are a lot of low cost, easy things to do about it), but density by far makes up for it, so that on a per-capita basis, Ottawa is the most energy and resource efficient places in the country.

2. **Understand your energy usage.** Dig out those old utility bills and familiarize yourself with how much energy you use each month. Develop an understanding of which appliances use the most energy, which can easily be replaced with Energy Star-labeled models (<http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/residential/10759>), and which you can turn off when you're not at home or not using it. (Our energy guinea pig spent a month unplugging his "Ghost Loads" — all the stuff that's plugged in and use energy when turned "off" like your VCR, TV, stereo, cheap ipod/iphone docking station... etc. — and cut his monthly energy bill by 30%! His comment was: How many flashing clocks do I really need anyway?)

3. **Use non-toxic materials and products.** Here's a simple rule of thumb: If it's poisonous, carcinogenic, triggers asthma, or wreaks havoc on your nervous system, you probably don't want it in your building. And yet most of the products we use to build and maintain our buildings - including paints, cleaners, insulation, cabinetry, and carpets - are portable Superfund sites, making their way Trojan Horse-like, into our common and living spaces. Fortunately, keeping the toxins out is a relatively easy thing to do. <http://www.chba.ca/newhomesmonth/consider-the-benefits-of-a-new-home/greening-your-new-home.aspx> you can find more info and tips on how to do it.

4. **Use high quality, energy efficiency compact fluorescent lighting and Energy Star appliances.** Just because it saves energy doesn't mean fluorescent lighting looks good. Know what to look for when shopping for fluorescent lighting. See the following article: Understanding

5. **Use materials and products with post-consumer recycled content.** Search for products that state the percentage of post-consumer recycled content. Paper is a biggie. So are plastic and paper packaging (essentially, anything you can recycle should be made from recycled materials to keep the cycle going). And if you're buying wood, tiles, countertops, carpet, or insulation there are options recycled and resource minimizing options for these as well.

6. **Increase your comfort and reduce your energy consumption by controlling the indoor temperature.** If you have a radiator, and control the heat in your apartment by getting up and adjusting the valves all winter long, or even worse, opening the windows, then having just the right temperature is probably a rare event. The same goes for cooling with AC - turning it off and on is a pretty crude way to control temperature. Erratic temperature is not only uncomfortable, but it wastes lots of energy, especially if the radiator's kicking out heat or the AC's keeping things nice and cool when nobody's home. You can control the temperature in your living space by installing low cost, easy to use, thermostats and automatic radiator controls, simultaneously saving energy and increasing comfort.

7. **Switch to Green Power.** Two utility companies now offer "green power", - electricity made from in-state wind and small, low impact hydro (no dams) - for utility customers in Ottawa. That means that city residents now have a low-cost, no-hassle renewable energy option. It costs a few bucks more a month, but that money helps grow the local renewable energy industry.

8. **Reuse and Recycle.** Ensure your building management makes recycling a priority. Get information on what and how to recycle, along with composting and waste prevention tips, at http://www.ottawa.ca/en/garbage_recycle/

9. **Support Community Gardens.** Ottawa needs more green space and vegetation. It filters the air and the noise, reduces the summer heat, and cleans the water.

10. To get involved or learn more about Green Living, please visit <http://greenlivingottawa.com/>