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11 Ways to Green Your Apartment

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1. Remember the 3 R's from elementary school: reduce, reuse, recycle.

WHY: Minimizing the use of materials and energy decreases the rate at which these items are used, whether it is fossil fuels, trees, or synthetic materials, utilizing the 3 R's can help decrease the effects of Global Warming by decreasing CO₂ release from our energy production and increasing CO₂ uptake from trees and plants.

2. Purchase green: Buy local, buy in bulk, buy ENERGY STAR products and Green Seal products where applicable.

WHY: ENERGY STAR and Green Seal Labeled products are third-party tested to certify that the product your purchasing is among the most efficient and healthy in their respective class.



3. Use area rugs instead of wall-to-wall carpet.

WHY: Carpet can act as a sponge for chemical and biological pollutants including pesticides, dust mites, pollen, fungi, and other allergens. Smooth surface floors or rugs, such as hardwood floors or area rugs, are more easily cleaned and maintained. New carpets can be a source of chemical emissions, emitting Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) as do products that accompany carpet installation, such as adhesives and padding.

4. Use Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs) for lighting.

WHY: CFLs use an average of ¼ the power of an equivalent incandescent light bulb.

5. Use remanufactured, composite (Wheat Fiber), formaldehyde-free, low-VOC, and/or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) furniture, depending upon which is applicable.

WHY: Re-using furniture diverts the furniture from landfills. Purchasing FSC furniture assures that the furniture's materials were harvested from a sustainably managed forest. Purchasing low-VOC and formaldehyde-free furniture decreases the amount of harmful gasses that will be emitted indoors, promoting good indoor air quality and health.

6. Use non-toxic, low-VOC paints, stains, finishes, adhesives, and cleaning products. If possible, choose a concentrated version.

WHY: Purchasing low-VOC products decreases the amount of harmful gasses that will be emitted indoors, promoting good indoor air quality and health.



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7. Install, or ask your landlord to install low-flow fixtures and aerators on all faucets.

WHY: If you pay your utilities, the immediate return is the cost savings in your water and sewer bills. Installing aerators and low-flow fixtures reduces water consumption withdrawn from rivers, streams, groundwater, and other water bodies or city water supply and can reduce sewer maintenance and treatment costs.

8. Shade or allow light passage through windows for solar radiation reflectance or heat allowance depending upon season.

WHY: Smart use of shading devices can reduce heating and cooling use and costs.

9. Have leaky windows and doors plugged and weather-stripped.

WHY: Air leakage is a major contributor to inefficient operation of Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning equipment (HVAC) leading to increased energy use and increased costs in your energy bills.

10. Utilize power strips/surge protectors.

WHY: Power Strips can operate like an electric panel to turn off many electronics at once, especially those with adapters (including phone chargers) that are still plugged in. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, in the average home, 75% of the electricity used to power home electronics is consumed while the products are turned off. The end purposes for using power strips are to save energy and money.

11. If you purchase your power directly, ask your utility provider about purchasing your energy from renewable sources. (i.e. wind and solar generated power)

WHY: In purchasing your power from renewable energy sources through your utility, you are directly promoting the construction of more renewable energy systems, which will help in reducing the use of fossil-fueled energy plants, reducing CO₂ emissions.

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