

Shedding Light On Green Energy -- The Responsible New Year Resolution

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The responsible New Year resolution

Women often balance career, children, marriage and running a home single handed. But are they reluctant to look at the infrastructure of their homes?

Whilst decisions about children, schools and the home are often led by women, this may not be true in such areas as choosing their electricity supplier.

According to a survey by Green Energy UK, a renewable energy supplier, only a quarter of women were solely responsible for the switch to green energy and only another quarter made the decision together with their partners. Just over 50 per cent of decisions were made by men.

Yet green issues are increasingly to the fore. 2005 looks like being the second warmest year ever. Nearly half of all UK carbon dioxide emissions come from buildings and we waste £6 billion worth of energy every year by not adopting the simplest energy-saving measures. Deputy prime minister John Prescott is considering sending in 'energy police' to monitor householders' energy use. None of us want that! And even the Queen is going hydro-electric at Windsor Castle.

"It's high time we all looked at what we do in our homes," says chief executive Doug Stewart. "There are so many ways in which we can help save energy. If we all just switched off our TVs instead of leaving them on standby we would save £88 million pounds of electricity every year and 480,000 tonnes of CO2."

Going green often involves a change in lifestyle, a change in our patterns of life, a slight effort to 'do the right thing'. But changing to cleaner, greener electricity costs nothing apart from a phone call. It's as easy as flicking a switch. And once you've done it, you can bask in the warmth of knowing you've made a good decision!

Changing to Green Energy UK means you help the environment, it's painless to switch and it need not cost any more. What's more the company is giving 400 shares to the first 100,000 customers.

Changing is as easy as flicking a switch. What's more it need not cost any more than your existing electricity supplier. Switching over can be done online at www.greenenergy.uk.com or by telephoning the company on 0845 4569550 (local rate).

So maybe it's women's turn to grab the initiative and switch to green energy. And what better time to do it than a New Year!

TOP TEN TIPS FOR SAVING ENERGY

1. Turn it down!

Turn your thermostat down just 2 degrees C and you'll cut as much as 10 per cent off your heating bill - if you and your friends' households all did this you could save 3.6 tonnes of CO2 per year.

2. Switch it off at the set!

Switch off your TV, video, DVD or stereo. Leaving them on standby wastes 10 – 60 per cent electricity. If just 10 households switched off their TV sets, one tonne of CO2 would be saved each year.

3. Chill to perfection

Make sure run efficiently - defrost your fridge and freezer regularly and set them to the right temperature. Buying an energy efficient fridge could save you up to £35 a year on your electricity bill and help reduce your carbon dioxide output

4. Fill up your washing machine (and dishwasher)

Keep your weekly number of washes down by using full loads. It will save you money on water, electricity, soap – and you'll help the environment.

5. Fit fitter light bulbs

Energy saving light bulbs will save you around £10 a year. If everyone in the UK installed just one energy saving light bulb, the carbon dioxide emissions saved would fill the Royal Albert Hall in London nearly 3,000 times!

6. Insulate your tank

Fit a lagging jacket around your hot water tank and stop heat escaping. If everyone in the UK did this emissions would be reduced by 2.5 million tonnes (the volume of 400,000 hot air balloons).

7. ... and your walls

Install cavity wall insulation. More than 40 per cent of the heat generated in your home is lost through the walls and roof. Insulating your walls could cut your fuel bills by £70-£100 per year and save large amounts of carbon dioxide from escaping into the atmosphere. It would normally pay for itself within three to five years.

8. ... and your loft too

Save £20-30 on your fuel bills and a tonne of CO2 emissions by fitting 180mm of loft insulation - it will only cost you £200 but will stop 25 per cent of the heat from your house disappearing through the roof. The amount of heat lost annually through roofs and walls is enough to heat three homes.

9. Install an energy efficient boiler

If your boiler is over 15 years old it may not be energy efficient - replacing with a condensing boiler could save you money and reduce your emissions.

10. Unplug your phone charger when not in use

Always unplug your phone charger when not in use. We waste a staggering 95 per cent of the energy used by mobile phone chargers and emit 50,000 tonnes of CO₂ by not unplugging them or switching them off at the socket. A forest with an area equivalent to almost 500 football pitches would be needed to absorb these emissions!

Sources: www.est.org.uk and Green Energy UK estimates

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Notes to editors:

1. Our homes are one of the leading culprits of carbon dioxide emissions contributing to climate change - making up 28 per cent of the UK's total. Each household could save around two tonnes of carbon dioxide a year by taking energy efficiency measures.
2. Individual households could cut their annual fuel bills by £250 by insulating their home and adopting other measures such as installing energy-saving lightbulbs.
3. Green Energy UK has to date saved almost 15,000 tonnes of carbon emissions from going into the atmosphere.
4. The company has an unusual business model: it is giving away half of its business in shares – the first 100,000 customers are getting 400 shares each. This not only gives them a potential stake in the future but involves them in the business and its successes.
5. It also is ploughing back 50 per cent of the profits into developing renewable energy technologies, such as tidal generation, solar power, small-scale hydro, biomass facilities and wind farms.
6. It is one of only five companies which was recommended by Friends of the Earth (with its GE100 plan).
7. It is also one of only 55 companies to have Ethical Company Accreditation, which is granted to companies and certifies that they have scored highly in an overall analysis of its corporate social responsibility record.

