

## ON THE ROAD

### Buy Right

- When buying a car, factor in fuel costs over the years you'll own the car, at [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov).
- Consider a hybrid, plug-in, or electric car, now available from a broad range of manufacturers.

### Keep Your Car Fit

- Keeping tires properly inflated may save you three percent at the gas pump.
  - Consult your owner's manual and make sure your vehicle is up-to-date with suggested maintenance, which can improve gas mileage.
    - Keep unneeded items out of your trunk and vehicle, and remove unused roof racks—a lighter car gets better gas mileage.

### Drive Slow and Steady

- Keep to or below the speed limit to boost fuel efficiency. Setting cruise control can help.
- Drive mindfully to avoid unnecessary accelerations and braking.
- Turn off the engine, even for short trips in and out of the car; it takes less gas to start your car than to leave it idling.
- If your car was built after 1990, there's no need to "warm the engine" while idling.

### The More the Merrier

- Join or start a Ride Share carpool group in your area.
- Use public transportation, when possible.
- Combine errands when you can, to avoid unnecessary trips.

### Walk or Bike

- Walking or biking is enjoyable, non-polluting, and good for your health.
- In winter, use a rugged "mountain" bike—some are designed for winter use.

## IN YOUR COMMUNITY

### Rediscover Local

- Check out a local restaurant, theater, or shop.
- Take in an artwalk, gallery, open studio, crafts fair, or museum.
- From maple syrup and blueberries to lobsters and veggies, eat local foods and shop at local farmer's markets.
- Enjoy the outdoors at a nearby park.
- Plan a Maine "staycation"—there's so much to do right here!
- Instead of sightseeing by car, use walking trails or bikes.

### Borrow and Recycle

- Share and borrow seldom used items such as tools and specialized cooking equipment.
- Check for tool rental services or libraries.
- Join your community library.
- Discover pre-owned items at yard sales and resale shops.

### Go Green at Work

- Turn off computer monitors at day's end; unplug unused printers and computers that consume standby power.
- Convince your workplace to invest in energy-efficient lighting and other improvements.
- When you must print, use recycled paper and double-sided printing.
- Consider switching to four ten-hour days to save on heat, commute, and energy costs.

### Get Involved

- Work with your town and school committee to implement proven energy-efficiency strategies.
- Help promote energy-efficiency education in your community.
- Take advantage of energy-efficiency help available from [www.energycmaine.com](http://www.energycmaine.com).



## OUR MISSION

To protect, restore, and conserve Maine's environment, now and for future generations.

## For more than 55 years,

people who love Maine have trusted the Natural Resources Council of Maine, the state's most effective member-supported nonprofit working for Maine's environment. We harness the power of science, the law, and more than 16,000 supporters across Maine and beyond to protect our air, waters, and forests.

When you become a member, your support helps NRCM:

- Improve the quality of Maine's rivers, lakes, streams, and coastal waters;
- Promote sustainable communities through initiatives that reduce toxic pollution and the impacts of waste;
- Decrease air and climate-disrupting pollution and set Maine on a path to a clean energy future; and
- Conserve Maine lands and crucial wildlife habitat, including our treasured North Woods.

For more information about the Natural Resources Council of Maine or to become a member, contact us at:

Natural Resources Council of Maine  
3 Wade Street, Augusta, ME 04330  
(800) 287-2345 • [nrcm@nrcm.org](mailto:nrcm@nrcm.org)

Visit us online at  
[www.nrcm.org](http://www.nrcm.org)

Artwork by Toki Oshima  
Printed on processed chlorine-free,  
100% post-consumer recycled paper.

## BRIGHT IDEAS



## Tips for Home Energy Savings



# AROUND THE HOUSE & YARD

## Maximize Your Home's Energy Efficiency



- Get a professional home energy evaluation to calculate costs and savings of home improvements to help determine your top priorities.
- Properly insulate attics to prevent unnecessary heat loss and ice dams, too.
- Often more than ¼ of a home's heat is wasted through air leaks. Caulk, weatherstrip, or otherwise seal cracks around doors, windows, and your

foundation sill, to improve efficiency.

- Buy an efficient water heater and keep its thermostat set to 120° F or lower, and launder in cold water. Buy an efficient dishwasher and install a low-flow showerhead, too.
- When shopping for a new appliance, like a refrigerator, buy the most efficient one that will meet your needs. Place your fridge or freezer in a cool spot.



- Use LED bulbs—they provide excellent light, last far longer than CFLs, and save money on electricity bills.
- Switch to programmable thermostats to easily pre-set the temperature you want at any given time. This helps you stay cozy, while saving \$100 or more.
- Outfit your home with the most efficient Energy Star appliances and furnace you can find, to ensure a high return on your investment.
- Install solar panels to turn the sunshine on your roof into electricity for your home and save money. Visit [www.energymaine.com](http://www.energymaine.com) for a list of registered installers and financial incentives.

## Tune-Up for Winter

- Call professionals to service your furnace to ensure it runs at peak efficiency, and to clean your chimney if you heat with wood.
- Keep the fireplace damper closed. If no longer functioning, seal off and insulate the opening.
- Prevent heat loss by installing temporary inside storm windows made from easy-to-use heat shrink-wrap.
- Hang and draw drapes snug to the window to minimize drafts and keep more of the warmth in and the cold out.

## Employ Nature

- Dry laundry outdoors on a line or rack to save up to \$25 a month on your electric bill.
- Place desks and chairs near windows to take advantage of natural light.
- Paint walls a light color to reflect more light and naturally brighten up workspaces.
- Keep windows free of dust and grime to let the sunshine in.
- Reduce mowing by replacing lawn with native Maine greenery. This reduces pollution and saves money.



## Build Efficiently

- Build your home to be as efficient as possible; it's always cheaper to build in efficiency, and it will save you money year after year.
  - Build and position your new home to take advantage of natural passive solar light and heat, and summer shade and breezes, while avoiding winter winds.



## Get Ready for Dinner

- Use an appropriately sized oven for the job. It pays to cook smaller meals in the microwave, toaster oven, or slow-cooker.
- Keep pre-heating the oven to a minimum; if possible, cook several items at once.



- On the stovetop, use the smallest pan possible and keep the lid on to reduce heat loss.
- Reduce cooking times by defrosting frozen foods in the refrigerator beforehand.
- Buy delicious local foods to cut the distance traveled from the farm to your plate.

## Turn Off Computers and Other Small Appliances

- Plug your cell phone chargers, computer, microwave, and other small appliances into power strips—and switch them off when not in use to stop “phantom load” electricity from wasting energy and money.

## Don't Blow It

- Use a shovel or snow scoop instead of a snow blower—you'll save as much as 70 car miles worth of CO<sub>2</sub> pollution. **Bonus:** shoveling snow for 15 minutes qualifies as moderate-intensity exercise.
- Leaf blowers are noisy and polluting. Rake instead, or better yet, leave leaf litter in place to help protect soil habitats for critters.



## Energy Efficiency

Good for the Environment,  
Your Health, and Your Wallet

Taking steps to improve energy efficiency in your everyday life can save you money, reduce pollution, add to your comfort, and improve your sense of well-being. Around the house, on the road, and in your community, following these tips can help you become more energy efficient today.

### Did you know, for example:

- Every gallon of heating oil or gasoline you burn generates about 20 pounds of climate-disrupting carbon—plus sulfur and other pollutants?
- Every kilowatt hour of electricity you use generates a pound of global warming pollution? Maine's electricity comes from many sources, including coal, oil, gas, and nuclear-fueled power plants that produce smog, haze, acid rain, and nuclear waste.
- Maine sends \$5 billion out of state every year to buy oil, gasoline, and other fossil fuels. Imagine how much more prosperous we could be if we kept more of that money in state!

Efficiency is always the cheapest and least-polluting way to meet your energy needs.

The Natural Resources Council of Maine has many resources to help you save money on your energy bills while reducing climate-disrupting pollution. Visit our website at [www.nrcm.org](http://www.nrcm.org) for more information. Email us at [nrcm@nrcm.org](mailto:nrcm@nrcm.org) or call (800) 287-2345 to request materials.