



GreenTip
How Do You Measure Up?

Resolutions For A Greener New Year

If you've been meaning to pay more attention to your personal carbon footprint, or if the economies of making greener choices have finally hit home with you, maybe this is your year to make some green resolutions. Here are a few examples you might consider, starting with the basics and working up to more challenging possibilities.

It's Easy To Be Green:

•I will learn about my recycling program and recycle everything possible!

All residents of Guilford County have recycling programs available to them, whether it's through curbside trash collection services or through the use of drop-off locations. If you recycle all of the materials that your program accepts, and recycle them using the proper procedures, you will aid your community by raising both the volume and the value of recyclables. You will also aid our environment by reducing your contribution to our waste stream and by adding valuable recycled material to the manufacturing supply chain. Remember, you can recycle paper, plastics, metals and glass at home; you can also recycle batteries, paints, household chemicals, electronics, plastic bags, tires and appliances through drop-off programs. Click [here](#) to access the Guilford County Solid Waste Services Guide, where you can look up your own community's recycling program and obtain information about drop-off programs so that you can learn what's recyclable and how to recycle it.

Leaner and Greener:

•I will reduce my use of electricity!

There are lots of easy, inexpensive ways to reduce your use of electricity. The most basic is to pay attention to turning off and/or unplugging unused lights and other devices in your home or workplace. If you leave a room for more than a minute or two, turn off the lights! That axiom about using more energy to turn a light back on than to leave it on just isn't true.

Also, if you're like lots of households, you have dozens of electronic devices all over the house that are plugged in and ready to go – tv's waiting for commands from remote controls, stereos with red LCD lights – almost every electronic device draws "standby power" 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In wealthy, industrialized countries like the US, this can account for between 2% and 5% of a home electricity bill; for businesses the percentage can be even higher. So switch off your power strips and unplug your stereo systems when they're not needed.

Perhaps the easiest way to make the biggest dent in your electricity usage is to change out your incandescent light bulbs with the new compact fluorescent bulbs. While they cost more to purchase, these bulbs can last up to 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs while using 75% less electricity! Click [here](#) for more information about compact fluorescents.



**Use about 25% of the electricity
required by incandescents**

•I will reduce my gasoline consumption!

By planning ahead, you can make a large dent in the amount of gas you use in your vehicles. For example, if your bank has a branch within walking distance of your home or workplace, make it a point to walk to the bank to conduct your business. Check for other stores and services that are within walking distance as well, such as the post office, pharmacy or dry cleaners. If walking isn't an option, plan your driving route ahead of time and choose the shortest route to cover the maximum number of errands in one trip. Regular maintenance on your vehicle will also help reduce your gasoline usage. Be sure your tires are properly inflated and that your engine is running properly and efficiently.

Greener Pastures:

•I will "buy local!"

We have gotten used to having all types of produce available all year round. Changing your family's expectations along these lines is a must, since buying locally grown produce means being able to purchase only fruits and vegetables that are in season, that lend themselves to cold storage, or that are grown in local hothouses. Check the labels on fruits and vegetables to be sure what you're taking home with you is, in fact, home grown. Farmers markets are a great place to find locally produced foods. Buying locally produced meats can be more challenging. Ask your grocer for information about locally raised beef, pork, fish and poultry.

It's also a great idea to purchase other goods and services that are manufactured locally, if available. When buying anything from shampoo to a mattress, ask your retailer for brands that are either manufactured in the local area or in the southeastern United States. Buying local merchandise supports our local economy while eliminating the energy used to transport these goods from far away growers and manufacturers.

•I will reduce my use of toxic materials and manage my hazardous waste properly!

Lots of common household products contain elements that are toxic or hazardous. In fact, it's been estimated that the average American household keeps between 10 and 15 gallons of toxic cleaning products on hand. Household cleaners and polishes often contain chlorine bleach or ammonia, along with a host of other hazardous ingredients. Manufacturers have begun to market "green" cleaners that are effective without being toxic. Check your grocery store shelves for these less toxic alternatives. Or, if you'd rather produce your own, click [here](#) for some simple recipes and instructions.



Other toxic elements in our households include electronics (which contain toxic metals like lead and mercury), batteries, fluorescent bulbs and tubes, paints, solvents and polishes, lawn and garden chemicals and automotive supplies. To keep these hazardous wastes out of landfills, be sure to use the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center to drop them off for safe disposal and recycling. Click on these links for more information about [hazardous household waste](#) and [e-waste](#).

Looking for more **green** ideas to use in the new year? [Click here](#)