

**We attain to life by promoting the best life in others, never  
seeking to thrive at the expense of other life.**

**- - - Felix Adler**

## **Earth-Keeping:**

**Practical Tips To Save Energy,  
Resources, and Our Planet**

**by**

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Earth Ethics Committee**

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**As human beings concerned with ethical conduct, we know that we diminish ourselves and others if we use people and discard them. Similarly, if we merely use the bounty of the Earth for short-term ends, we deplete our resources and endanger humanity, thus diminishing ourselves and others. We are learning to see ourselves as an integral part of the delicate balance of nature; interfering with this balance threatens our health, the quality of our lives, and the survival of all life on our planet.**

**Our use of the Earth often creates irreversible harm. As an illustration, we point to “the tragedy of the commons”: individuals tend to overuse resources held in common. No single person can stop this abuse, but we can curb this abuse by acting in concert with others.**

**The Earth is our home; it provides a wonderful bounty of sustenance and beauty. We love, respect, and cherish it, and we should pledge to care for it. We can do this by gently taking from it only what we truly need, replacing what we can, improving where we know how, and supporting each other in this effort. Each of us makes choices every day, consistent with his or her own circumstances and ethical standards. We know that as we each keep our commitment to the Earth, our actions will not be futile; they will clearly make a difference. This booklet contains suggestions to help us care for our Earthly home. The Earth Ethics Committee would like to hear your comments and ideas.**



**---Washington Ethical Society Earth Ethics Committee**

## ACTIONS WE CAN TAKE TO PRESERVE AND CHERISH OUR EARTH

Note: Items with ★ are free or low cost and will save money quickly.

### Reduce heating and air conditioning costs by:

- installing storm windows and doors
- insulating exterior walls, cellar ceilings and walls
- or crawl spaces
- insulating an attic
- upgrading or cleaning a furnace
- using a supplementary wood or corn-burning stove
- caulking where the foundation meets the siding
- having caulked, weather-stripped, and double-glazed windows.

1.★ Stop drafts and heat escaping through floor-boards and skirting boards by filling gaps with beading, sealant, caulk, or foam sealant.

2.★ Install a programmable thermostat and use it to lower your home's temperature in winter and allow the temperature to rise in summer.

3.★ Check and make sure that your attic insulation is adequate. R-49 is considered optimal in our climate.

4.★ Consider replacing leaky windows with high-quality, argon-filled, double-glazed windows. This is a significant investment that will more than pay for itself over the years. A low-cost alternative to double-glazing is to tape plastic sheeting across window frames.

5. Install Window Quilts® or other insulating shades to help keep out cold (winter) or heat (summer) and save on heating/cooling costs and energy use.

6. Pull shades and/or close curtains when the sun goes down in winter and open them in the morning. In the summer close any shades or curtains where the sun will shine in and heat the house. Open them in the evening to let heat escape.

7.★ Clean or replace air filters as recommended. Cleaning a dirty air conditioning/heating filter can save 15% of the energy used.

8.★ If you have a fireplace, close the damper when you don't have a fire burning. An open fireplace can let 8% of heat from your furnace escape through the chimney; in the summer it lets cool air escape.

### Save water and electricity

9.★ Run your dishwasher only with a full load. Use energy-saving settings for both washing and drying.

10.★ If you have a fairly new dishwasher, there is no need to rinse the dishes! Save time, water, and energy by just putting the dirty dishes in the dishwasher.

11.★ If you have an older dishwasher and need to rinse the dishes, first fill one pot that needs to be washed with warm water and use that water and a cloth or sponge to rinse your dishes. By not running the water while rinsing dishes, you can save 20 to 30 gallons of water for each load of dishes!

12.★ Wash clothes in cold or warm water, NOT hot.

13.★ Run the washing machine only when you have a full load.

14.★ Hang your clothes outside to dry. This solar dryer (clothes line) is much more energy efficient than a gas or electric dryer.

15.★ Contrary to popular opinion, it does NOT use more energy to turn a light off and back on than to leave it on. If you are leaving a room for more than 1 to 2 minutes (at home, work, WES, etc.)---TURN THE LIGHTS OFF!!! This applies to fluorescent as well as conventional incandescent lamps.

16.★ Turn off the TVs, radios, and stereos when no one is watching it.

17.★ Standby/always-on devices: Standby energy devices can consume 15% of all electric usage in the home. Do you need all of the following to be plugged in and ready all of the time? -- standby for remote controls such as garage door openers, televisions, VCRs, DVDs, stereos, transformers for heating and air-conditioning system controls, door chimes, cube plug-in transformers, power supplies, chargers for portable electric tools, telephone answering machines, portable/cordless phones, alarm systems, and low voltage lamps. By plugging appliances into a surge protector/control strip and shutting off power at the strip, you avoid standby energy use.

18.★ With Windows and Apple OS, you can set your computer's power options to automatically turn off peripherals, particularly monitors, after 15 minutes of non-use.

19.★ When you boil water, fill with just the amount you need, put a lid on the pot; it'll boil faster and you'll use less gas or electricity.

**20.★ Don't leave the refrigerator door open any longer than necessary, as cold air will escape.**

**21.★ Avoid putting hot or warm food into the refrigerator. Allow it to cool down first. In cold weather put hot leftovers in the garage, on the deck, or somewhere outside the kitchen where they will cool off.**

**22.★ Turn down the thermostat of your hot water heater; 120 degrees is usually hot enough. If your dishwasher heats water, set your thermostats even lower than 120 degrees. Set it so that the person in the house who likes water the hottest can take a bath or shower using only hot water (usually well under 120 degrees). People in the house who prefer cooler water can still mix cold with hot for washing.**

**23. Drain sediment from your water heater every couple of years. The sediment acts as an insulation barrier between your heat source and the water, cutting your unit's efficiency. Draining a gallon or two from the valve at the bottom of the tank will flush the sediment.**

**24.★ Install low-flow showerheads and low-flow aerators on sinks to save both water and the energy used to heat it.**

**25.★ Wrap your hot water heater in an insulating jacket.**

Point of interest -- Wasting water wastes electricity. The biggest use of electricity in most cities is supplying water and cleaning it up after it's been used. Unless you have a low flush toilet, you use about five to seven gallons of water with every flush. A leaky toilet can waste more than 10,000 gallons of water per year. Leaky faucets can also waste thousands of gallons per year. And wasting hot water wastes the fuel to heat it.

**26.★ Take shorter showers.**

27.★ Fix leaky faucets.

28.★ If the toilet leaks, fix it. To see if any toilet in your home leaks, put several drops of food coloring into each toilet tank. Make sure no one flushes any toilet for an hour; then check each toilet bowl. If the water in any toilet bowl has traces of the dye in it, that toilet leaks. If the water is clear, it does not leak.

29.★ When you replace a toilet, buy a low-flow model that uses 1.5 or 1.6 gallons per flush.

30.★ When you brush your teeth, after you wet the toothbrush---turn the water OFF.

31. Use / purchase solar hot water panels and/or solar electric panels to your home and/or buy alternative energy.

32. Have an energy audit and fix whatever needs to be fixed -- repair heat ducts, add insulation, etc.

### Save Energy and Get Exercise

33.★ Rake leaves with a rake instead of using a leaf blower. It is good exercise and not too difficult. The only energy you use will be the calories you burn. By contrast, a leaf blower uses gas or electric energy, causes noise and air pollution, and is more expensive to buy and use than a rake.

34.★ Use a snow shovel rather than a snow blower. A shovel is better for the same reasons that a rake is better than a leaf blower (see #33).

35.★ Whenever possible, use the stairs rather than an elevator. Elevators use electricity; stairs give you exercise.

## Use Efficient Transportation

- 36.★ Whenever possible, walk or bicycle rather than using a motorized vehicle.
- 37.★ If neither walking nor biking is an option, use public transportation when possible.
- 38.★ When you drive, drive the most fuel-efficient vehicle you can. Carpool when possible. When you need to replace a car, switch to the most fuel-efficient vehicle that will meet your family's needs, such as a hybrid.
- 39.★ Keep tires fully inflated and check tire pressure regularly, even weekly.
40. Get regular maintenance for your car.
- 41.★ When waiting 1 minute or more at traffic signals and other places, turn off your engine. Post-1990 cars have electronic fuel injection systems, so even a few seconds off saves more gas than the startup uses.

## Shopping

42. Plan your shopping so you make one trip instead of several separate trips.
- 43.★ When you need to replace an appliance, look for the EnergyStar label awarded by two federal government agencies to appliances that meet strict energy-conserving standards.
- 44.★ Replace all incandescent lamps – even the ones that have not burned out yet – with compact fluorescent or LED lamps and turn them out when leaving any room.

**45. Buy foods with little or no processing. When possible, buy organic since fewer chemicals are used to grow them.**

**46. Buy recycled paper or reuse the other side.**

**47. When possible shop at thrift stores. And also donate your own used goods to them for reuse.**

**48.★ If you have a home with a yard, compost vegetable-matter garbage and yard waste.**

**Other**

**49. Wherever possible, locate beds, couches, and chairs against interior walls, not exterior walls.**

**50.★ Use cloth napkins instead of paper ones. Most families use thousands of paper napkins per year; a few cloth napkins can be tossed in the wash and reused for years.**

**51.★ Recycle everything you can (metal, paper...).**

**52. If there is no recycling at your workplace, try to organize a recycling program there.**

**53.★ When possible, print on both sides of the paper.**

**54.★ Print rough drafts on the back of paper that has been used on one side.**

**55. Use rain barrels under downspouts to collect water that can be used to water the lawn and garden.**

**56. Help elect strongly pro-environment candidates.**

**For more information---**

**Websites:**

[ase.org](http://ase.org) (alliance to save energy)

[energyquest.ca.gov/saving\\_energy](http://energyquest.ca.gov/saving_energy)

[pbs.org/wqbh/warming/carbon](http://pbs.org/wqbh/warming/carbon)

[chooseclimate.org/flying](http://chooseclimate.org/flying) (shows the impact of flying on global warming)

[calcars.org](http://calcars.org)

[energy.state.md.us](http://energy.state.md.us)

<http://dsireusa.org/> (database of state incentives for renewables and efficiency)

[sierraclub.org/energy/](http://sierraclub.org/energy/)

[energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov)

The above are just a small selection of what is available. There are many more websites that you may find helpful.



## Earth Ethics Mission Statement

**PRINCIPLE - - -** Members of the Earth Ethics Committee recognize that we are interdependent with the Earth and all of its constituents, living and nonliving. We believe that safeguarding their health is of paramount importance.

**PURPOSE - - -** The Earth Ethics Committee promotes ethical principles and actions within WES and beyond to improve our relationship to the Earth and all living beings.

### **GOALS - - -**

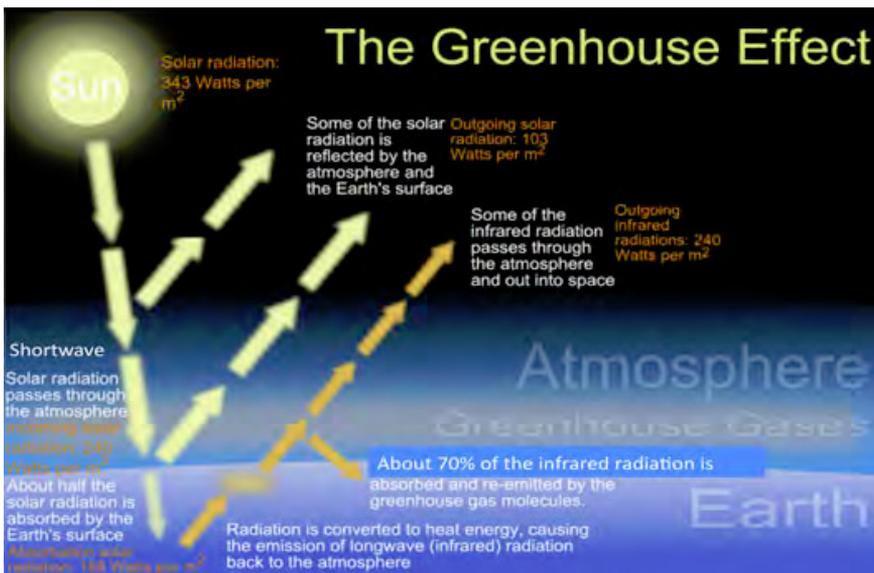
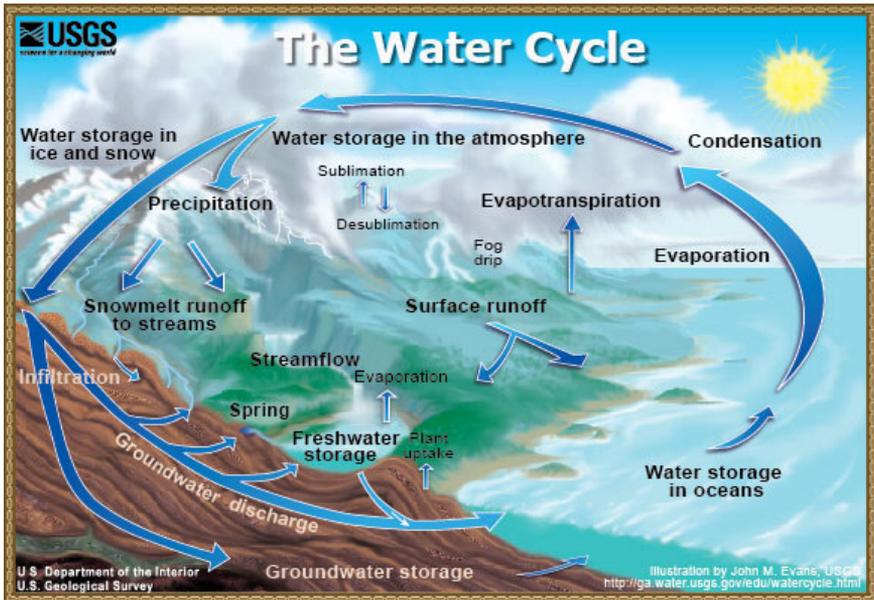
- **Expose WES to ideas and actions in the wider environmental community.**
- **Connect WES to the religious environmental community.**
- **Improve WES's performance in environmental stewardship.**
- **Provide opportunities for WES members to express environmental awareness and participate in environmental action.**

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**YOUR NOTES:**