

Energy Efficiency Can Be at the Top of Your Shopping List

Energy Savers Blog

I don't know about you, but about the last thing I want this year for the holidays is another mustard-yellow sweater. Sure, it's nice to have some extra-warm clothes stashed in the top drawer of the dresser this time of year, but I'm clearly maxed-out in the yellow department.

Right around this time of year I start putting together my master list of gifts that I *could* actually use—you know, things my parents would never buy me unless I told them I needed them. Now, honestly, not all of what I want this year has to do with saving energy and money. I can't think of any noble, altruistic way, or any money-saving benefits, to justify my desire for a flat-screen T.V., for example.

But what I've decided to do is put together a short list of some of the things—you'll see I'm pretty optimistic—that I'll be asking my lucky stars for this year. Maybe some of you out there will be inspired to put one or two of these ideas on your list, too.

- [Plug-in hybrid](#) [1] — Electric cars with some serious potential, the lithium ion battery-powered go-getters should be available next year or in 2011, including ones from [Chrysler](#) [2] and [GM](#) [3]. This year, I'm hoping to find a [Tesla Motors](#) [4]' Tesla Roadster, which is already on the road, in my parking space.
- Big fat photovoltaic array — Now that the price of [installing](#) [5] solar photovoltaic cells on your roof has fallen far enough to make it a realistic investment for the energy-conscious consumer, this could be the year for [PV](#) [6]. EERE has great [resources](#) [7] to help you make this dream gift a reality.
- Energy efficiency makeover — Depending on where you live, [weatherizing](#) [8] your home can save you up to 40% on your energy costs. Also, by using Energy Savers' [tips](#) [9] to improve the efficiency of your appliances, water systems, and landscaping of your home, this could truly be a gift that pays for itself.
- Cushy down-filled comforter and blankets — For the gift giver obsessed with practicality, warmer bedding could help someone you love lower the thermostat at night, saving a little cash.
- ENERGY STAR® certified [products](#) [10] — From heating and cooling systems to home appliances and electronics, ENERGY STAR products and online [tools](#) [11] provide a proven approach to lowering your carbon footprint.
- Automated, programmable [thermostat](#) [12] — These nifty gadgets are cheap, easy to install, and can instantly begin saving you money. By automatically turning the heat down when you're not home or when you're asleep, and keeping your home toasty just when you want it to be, a

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thermostat is a no-brainer that can save you around 10% a year on your heating and cooling bills.

- New bicycle or bike tune-up — My bike could use a tune up, even though I use it to commute to work every day. The extra exercise helps me stay in shape and gives me an extra shot of energy in the morning. Obviously, the energy and money savings are considerable when you curb your car for the day. Also, consider a [neighborhood electric vehicle](#) [13] for quick trips in your community.
- Replacement [filters](#) [14] for the furnace and air conditioner — just replacing your furnace filter regularly can save you up to 40% on your heating costs.
- Ceiling fan and other [ventilation](#) [15] upgrades — A slight breeze on a hot night can make the difference between a sleepless night and good night's sleep. And your pocket book with thank you for every hour you avoid kicking on the air conditioner next summer.
- [Water-conserving showerheads](#) [16] — For around the price of a DVD each, replacing your old showerheads with low-flow versions will cut your hot water use up to 60%. That's another small, common-sense way to help make a big difference.

Now that we're at December's doorstep, it's time to get out of your house and start checking off your shopping lists. Personally, I hope your holidays are filled with cool ways to fine-tune your life that will get you closer to the cutting edge of energy efficiency.

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- [1] http://www.afdc.energy.gov/afdc/vehicles/plugin_hybrids.html
- [2] http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/news/news_detail.cfm/news_id=11990
- [3] http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/news/news_detail.cfm/news_id=11979
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- [9] <http://www.energysavers.gov/>
- [10] http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=find_a_product.
- [11] http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=home_improvement.hm_improvement_index

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[12] http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/space_heating_cooling/index.cfm/mytopic=12720

[13] http://www1.eere.energy.gov/vehiclesandfuels/avta/light_duty/nev/index.html

[14] http://www.energysavers.gov/seasonal/tips_winter.html#maintain

[15] http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/space_heating_cooling/index.cfm/mytopic=12351

[16]

http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/water_heating/index.cfm/mytopic=13050

[17] <http://feedproxy.google.com/~r/EnergySavers/~3/k8k36Of2efA/post.aspx>