

UF College of Dentistry Green Team

Green Tips of the Month



January 2009 New Year's Resolutions

OK, so maybe you've already given up on the diet, exercise or smoking cessation program. But you can resolve to make some changes that will reduce your impact on the planet!

In the house:

Did you get a new gadget or three over the holidays? Make sure the old one won't go to a landfill to become the next generation's toxic waste problem. This guide to E-Cycling (<http://planetgreen.discovery.com/tech-transport/holiday-recycling-consumer-guides.html>) details several ways in which you can responsibly get rid of that old TV, computer or gaming console. If you can't find an e-cycler in your area, take your electronics to the hazardous waste collection center (<http://www.alachuacounty.us/government/depts/epd/pollution/hhwcenters.aspx>) instead of dumping them on the curb.

In the yard:

Composting vegetable peelings, coffee grounds, and other non-meat food waste along with leaves and grass clippings will reduce the amount of trash you send to the landfill and yield richer soil for your plants or garden. For more information on composting, visit <http://www.treehugger.com/files/2007/07/green-basics-compost.php>.

And speaking of yard waste, step away from the leaf blower: these annoyances use fossil fuel and emit carbon and noise pollution. Raking leaves the old-fashioned way doesn't take a whole lot more time and helps burn those holiday calories (up to 300 an hour).

At work:

Electronics suck power out of the wall even when they're turned off. In a big organization like UFCD, this can waste thousands of dollars in "phantom power" a year! Plug as much of your office's electronic equipment as you can (copiers, printers, monitors, lamps) into power strips that are turned off at the end of the day (you can also do this at home with cell phone chargers, kitchen appliances and other devices that aren't in continuous use).

To get to work, try out carpooling, biking or taking the bus a few days a month – it's easier than you think! If possible, take advantage of flextime and telecommuting policies to reduce the number of days you commute.

Here's to a greener 2009!