



## BUY LESS STUFF DECEMBER ENERGY ACTION SHEET

This month's projected annual savings: varies; 2.2% of energy use

**MANUFACTURING AND DISPOSING OF THE THINGS WE BUY TAKES A HUGE AMOUNT OF ENERGY.** In fact, the energy “embedded” in the stuff we buy represents over a quarter of our total energy footprint.

Before building, remodeling or buying stuff –from clothes to children’s toys to a car or computer, think hard: Do I need this - or simply want it? Will I fully use it? Buying less stuff takes a change in mindset that can lead us to be more creative and resourceful. Though challenging at first, it soon becomes a habit. **This month, try giving and getting in other ways.**



Anne Leonard, 2010

**Let's fill ourselves instead with connection and community.**

Thinking that new stuff will make us happy costs us and the Earth, and the new stuff rarely leaves us feeling good for long! When we buy less stuff, we de-clutter our lives physically and spiritually.



References available upon request from [CreationCarePartners@gmail.com](mailto:CreationCarePartners@gmail.com). This info sheet employs the Task of the Month concept developed by Dr. Stephanie Kimball for Earth Care, an affiliate of Hoosier Interfaith Power & Light.

## How to Do It

**BUILDING & REMODELING USES MORE ENERGY OVERALL AND PER DOLLAR SPENT THAN ANYTHING ELSE WE BUY.** Before you remodel or build, ask yourself, do I actually need this?

Buy used cars, clothes, appliances, electronics and more: See [autotrader.com](http://autotrader.com), [Buy Nothing](#), Craigslist, thrift shops, Facebook Marketplace, Ebay, [carsdirect.com](http://carsdirect.com), and more.

Borrow books from the library or a friend or buy them used from a bookstore, Ebay or Amazon. Then make a donation directly to the author.

Use and re-use cloth dish towels, napkins and bags instead of using paper or plastic.

Bring your own non-disposable water bottle, coffee mug, dishes and restaurant leftover containers. In most of the U.S., tap water is safer than bottled water.

Sick of junk mail? Opt out of direct marketing - [DMAchoice.org](http://DMAchoice.org) - \$2 for 10 years; credit card & insurance offers: [optoutprescreen.com](http://optoutprescreen.com), and catalogues: [Catalogchoice.org](http://Catalogchoice.org).

Avoid all that packaging. Buy in bulk or with less or no packaging, Avoid single-serves.

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HOWEVER, if high-efficiency options exist – like a fridge – replacement can save energy.

**What about recycling?** While better than a landfill, recycling still uses lots of energy. So first reduce what you buy, and repair, reuse or repurpose what you can. Then recycle.

If you do buy new, buy quality stuff that will last.

If you do build or remodel, keep in mind:

- Smaller saves energy. So does a home that shares walls with other homes.
- From insulation to sealing, HVAC and windows placement, your construction choices now determine energy needs for decades to come.
- Sustainably harvested wood has a lower energy footprint than concrete or steel.

## Special (Not-Stuff) Gifts

**Ease the way:** babysitting, painting, carwash, gardening, house cleaner

**Experiences:** an art class, concert tickets, movie passes, a museum membership, a weekend camping

**Help those in need:** give a family a goat, keep babies healthy ([Heifer International](#), [Oxfam](#), [World Vision](#))

**A personal touch:** photo calendar, hand-knit hat, homemade bread, sock puppets, a hike together

**Yum!** Wine, fruit basket, cookies, a restaurant or coffee gift card

### Estimated Annual Savings

Cut your new clothes, books & furnishing purchases by a quarter  
Reduce residential construction and remodeling by half

### Energy Footprint

2.2%  
3.6%



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