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## Top 6 Green Tips for Apartment Dwellers

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**State:** CA

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We asked Alegre Ramos (LEED AP and Allied Member ASID), owner of **Green and Greener**, an "Eco-Living General Store and Design Center" in Valley Village to share her best tips for green living for those of us who dwell in apartments...



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## Top 6 Green Tips for Apartment Dwellers

**Use Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs (CFL's):** You've heard it before and here it is again about CFL's. The most important thing we need to do right now with regards to the environment is to reduce our carbon footprint. While solar panels and electric cars are FANTASTIC there are also less cash intensive ways to make a real impact. These include changing out any incandescent light bulbs to **CFL bulbs**. CFL's are more efficient at changing energy to light so they use about 75% less energy for the same light output. They also last much longer than traditional light bulbs and so you reduce waste and energy consumption by using it longer. Be sure to dispose of them properly. In Los Angeles that means taking them to your **local SAFE center**

**Cut "Phantom Loads":** Many appliances use electricity even when they are off. A **smart surge protector** ends that. Save money AND save the environment.

**Get your apartment/condo/townhouse to recycle:** In Los Angeles, the city just recently began offering recycling for multi-unit dwellings. To sign your residence up visit **larecycles.org**.

**Insulate with Blown Cellulose (paper):** Insulation keeps your home cooler or warmer reducing the impact on your HVAC system. It also sound proofs a space. The beauty of blown cellulose insulation is that it can be done after construction has already occurred. With just a little bit of patching, you can't even tell anything was done (see photos **here**). Also, blown cellulose becomes highly compacted in the walls (because it is blown in) giving you a higher insulation value (R-value) than batting (rolled) insulation, and because it is treated with boric acid it is also a pest deterrent and a fire retardant. Finally, blown cellulose insulation is usually 100% post consumer waste and is very cost effective to install. Not all cellulose insulation is created equal though, so make sure the product is coming from a good company...and if you have a landlord, be sure to check with them before embarking on this.

**Beautify with fabric:** A lot of times painting the walls, an easy way to perk up a place, are off-limits to those renting. In that case, textiles can do a lot to add color and visual interest to an interior without permanent changes. We recommend using organic bed linens or textiles.

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**Wash Your Car Without Water:** Most apartment dwellers are not able to wash their own cars at their apartments...which is good because you don't want any harsh, not-earth-friendly detergents washing down the storm drains and into the ocean where it will contaminate beaches and lead to algae blooms (car washes are at least required to catch their run-off and direct it to sewage treatment plants.) But now there is a **no-water car wash option** that you can do yourself!



Alegre Ramos is a Green Living Expert and LEED AP Interior Designer living in Encino, CA. She is the founder/owner of eco-living general store and design center **Green and Greener**. G&G offers a 10% off "no-driving" discount on in-store purchases.





Los Angeles

Gregory July 7, 2008 03:00PM

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