

30

Days to a Greener Lifestyle

With all the buzz surrounding eco-friendly living these days, you may wonder where to start. But reducing your impact on the planet can be simple, and every action does make a difference. Want even more incentive to change? Most green actions will save you money, limit waste, enhance your health and even increase your overall physical activity—all while benefiting the planet. Here are 30 daily tips to get you started.



April

1 **Recycle.** Most people can recycle more than they do. Paper, magazines, cardboard, cereal boxes, glass, aluminum foil, cans and even grocery bags should go in your bin, not the trash.

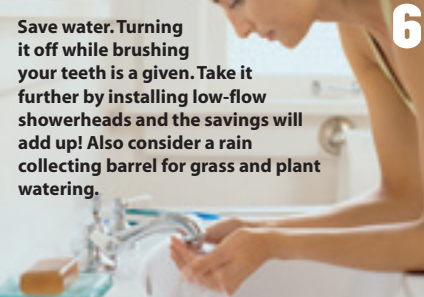
2 Use cloth napkins. All disposable items hurt the environment, and that includes paper products like napkins. In the end, you'll save money by investing in cloth, which also looks more sophisticated.

3 Bring your own bag. Bring reusable bags everywhere, from the grocery to the mall. If you can't afford to buy bags, then reuse the plastic ones you already have. If you don't need a bag for your items, politely decline.

4 Buy local. On average, food travels 1,500 miles from farm to table. Buying local supports small farmers in your community. It also uses less fossil fuel in transport.



5 Visit the library. Instead of buying books, CDs, movies and magazines, borrow them. The library is free, local and eco-friendly. Imagine how many resources are saved when hundreds of people share one book from a central location!



6 Save water. Turning it off while brushing your teeth is a given. Take it further by installing low-flow showerheads and the savings will add up! Also consider a rain collecting barrel for grass and plant watering.

7 Unplug. It's not enough to simply turn off electronics when you're not using them. When they're plugged in, they're still sucking in and wasting electricity. Get in the habit of unplugging chargers, TVs, computers and more.

8 Eat without meat. The raising, processing and storage of meat can negatively impact the environment. Aim for a few meatless meals each week, choosing beans, nuts, and legumes for protein.



9 Drive less. If you can walk or bike to your destination, then do it! You'll get fit, save money, and pollute less. Choosing public transportation (buses, subways, and trains), carpooling, or trip combining also helps.

10 Hang your laundry. Your clothes dryer is one of the most energy-consuming appliances in your house. Try hanging your clothes on lines or racks outside (they'll smell great!) or inside.

11 Try reusable bottles. Beverage bottles, cups and cans are wasteful, even if recycled. You'll save money and reduce waste by using a reusable bottle for water and drinks. Take one to the coffee shop too!

12 Print sensibly. If it's not necessary to print something, don't. Decrease your paper margins to save paper, and print on both sides of paper. When the ink cartridges are empty, recycle them at any office supply store.

13 Repair things. Pants with holes and broken toasters aren't trash. Instead of sending them to the landfill, sew, mend, and repair things when they break and use them longer.

14 Explore bamboo. Floors, furniture, cutting boards and more can be made from bamboo, which is renewable and faster-growing than trees. Bamboo also makes ultra-soft towels, sheets and clothing.

15 Reduce packaging. Look for products without excess packaging, like concentrated detergent. In the produce aisle, forgo the plastic baggies. Instead of buying individual yogurt cups, buy one large tub.

16 Recharge. Using rechargeable batteries is worth the investment. You'll get dozens of uses out of a single battery that would otherwise be used once. That saves you money, trips to the store, and waste.

17 Eat seasonally. Seasonal foods are fresh and more nutritious. Plus, they don't have to travel far to get to your table and are rarely imported from far-away countries.

18 Go natural. Natural materials produce less waste and last longer than man-made materials like acrylics. Choose wool, cotton, leather, silk and linen over synthetics whenever possible.

19 Size matters. Smaller is better when it comes to cars and houses, among other things. Small sizes are more energy efficient, use fewer materials, produce less waste and cost less money.

20 Clean green. Household cleaners are often made with chemicals that harm your body and the planet. Instead, make your own with simple but effective products like lemon juice, baking soda and vinegar.



21 Consider compost. Food scraps that end up in landfills can't decompose properly. But composting yard and kitchen waste is easy! And it naturally fertilizes your soil and plants.

22 Search for secondhand. Don't let someone else's perfectly good items go to waste. A gently used version of whatever you need exists. Auction websites and thrift stores make secondhand shopping easy and affordable.

23 Don't depend on oil. Many products are made from petroleum—including plastics, soaps, and detergents. To really decrease your dependence on oil, look for plant-based cleaners and plastic alternatives like glass.

24 Go organic. Organic farming doesn't use chemical fertilizers or pesticides, which can pollute the air and water. Choose organic produce and cotton (it's the most heavily sprayed crop) when you can.

25 Vote with your wallet. Buy products from companies who care for the planet by using recycled packaging, solar-power, or eco-friendly ingredients and more.

26 Look for Energy Star. Next time you have to replace an appliance or electronic device, consider an Energy Star product. It might cost more up front, but usually pays for itself in energy savings.

27 Lower the water heater. It consumes tons of energy by heating water even when not in use. By lowering it to 120 degrees, you'll save utilities to boot. Save even more by skipping hot settings on your washer.

28 Don't idle. You'll save gas and emissions by parking and turning off the car instead of idling in the drive-thru. It also gives you an opportunity to add more steps to your day.



29 Write a check. At the very least, donate what you can afford to organizations that help the environment. Visit CharityNavigator.org to find one.



30 Invest in green energy. Most utility companies give you the option to pay about \$5 extra a month, which is put directly into researching and creating renewable energy.