

Environmental Tips: All Eco Tips

First: Reduce

The critical first step of waste prevention has been overshadowed by a focus on recycling. Please help to promote a greater awareness of the importance of the "Reduce" part of the Reduce-Reuse-Recycle mantra. For a great overview of how raw materials and products move around the world, see the video [The Story of Stuff](#) .

- Simplify: Simplify your life as much as possible. Only keep belongings that you use/enjoy on a regular basis. By making the effort to reduce what you own, you will naturally purchase less/create less waste in the future. For information on voluntary simplicity, check out [Voluntary Simplicity Websites](#)

- Reduce Purchases: In general, think before you buy any product - do you really need it? How did the production of this product impact the environment and what further impacts will there be with the disposal of the product (and associated packaging materials)? When you are thinking about buying something, try the 30-Day Rule -- wait 30 days after the first time you decide you want a product to really make your decision. This will eliminate impulse buying.

- The Compact: Join or form a [Compact](#) in your area - groups all across the globe committing for 12 months to not buy any new products (see lower right sidebar for groups).

- Replace Disposables: Wherever possible, replace disposable products with reusable ones (i.e., razor, food storage, batteries, ink cartridges (buy refill ink), coffee filters, furnace or air conditioner filters, etc.).

- Buy Used: Buy used products whenever possible. Some sources:

- [local thrift stores](#)

- [Ebay](#)

- [Craigslist](#)

- [Amazon](#) (search on specific refurbished product)

- [Freecycle](#) (free!)

- local newspaper listings

- [local material exchange sites](#) (search in your area)

- [garage sales](#) (search in your area in the 'for sale' > 'garage sales' section)

- used refurbished computers (check your computer manufacturer's website or Amazon.

- [local used furniture stores](#) (search in your area)

- [local consignment shops](#) (search in your area)

- Borrow From Friends: If you only need something temporarily, ask if a friend or neighbor would loan it to you.
 - Share With Friends: Share things like books, magazines, movies, games, and newspapers between friends and neighbors.
 - Tree-Free Home: As much as possible, create a tree-free home:
 - replace paper napkins with cloth napkins
 - replace paper towels with a special set of cloth towels/napkins (or cut up old t-shirts for great towels) - store the used ones in a small container in your kitchen and just wash and reuse
 - purchase bleach-free, toilet paper that is made from the highest post-consumer waste content you can find (80% minimum)
 - if you print documents, print on once-used paper and/or bleach-free, recycled paper with the highest post-consumer waste content available (or [hemp](#) /alternative-source paper, if you can afford it)
 - reuse envelopes, wrapping paper, the front of gift cards (as postcards) and other paper materials you receive wherever possible
 - read books, magazines, and newspapers from your local library
 - create and use note pads from once-used paper
 - leave messages for family members/roommates on a reusable message board
 - make your own cards/letters from once-used products or handmade paper
 - if you will be doing construction on your house, search out [alternatives](#) to using newly cut wood (no endorsement of any company intended):
 - [Eco-Friendly Flooring Guide](#)
 - [straw bale](#)
 - bamboo -- two sites to check out: [Plyboo](#) and [Teragren](#)
 - [true \(natural\) linoleum](#)
 - previously used wood -- one site to check out: [Vintage Timber Works](#)
 - cob -- three sites to check out: [Cob](#) , [Cob Cottage](#) , and [EcoBusiness-Cob Building](#)
- [Resources](#)
- composite decking -- [The Latest Trend in Decking](#)

- Bulk Purchases: Avoid products that are packaged for single use (i.e., drinks, school lunches, candy, cat and dog food, salad mixings, etc.). Instead, buy in bulk and transfer the products to your own reusable containers. Many health food stores have bulk bins where they sell everything from grains to cereal to cleaning products. For additional ideas, read the [Precycling](#) information page.

- Buy Only What You Need: Buy only as much as you know you'll use for items such as food, cleaning supplies, and paint.
- Avoid Creating Trash: Avoid creating trash wherever possible: when ordering food, avoid

receiving any unnecessary plastic utensils, straws, etc. (ask in advance), buy ice cream in a cone instead of a cup, don't accept "free" promotional products, buy products with the least amount of packaging, etc. Every little bit of trash avoided does make a difference!

- Shopping Bags: While shopping, if you only buy a few products skip the shopping bag. For larger purchases, bring your own. Learn about the [dangers of plastic bags and what countries around world are doing about it](#) ("The Dangers of Plastic Bags" slide show from [Teacher Vishal Mody](#)).

- Junk Mail: For ideas on how to reduce junk mail, check out:
 - [Reduce Personal and Business Junk Mail](#)
 - [Do-it-yourself: Stop junk mail, email and phone calls](#)
 - [How to Get Rid of Junk Mail, Spam, and Telemarketers](#)
 - [Opt-Out](#)

- Waste-Free Lunches: [Pack a Waste-Free Lunch](#) whenever possible.

- Mug-to-Go: Carry a mug with you wherever you go for take out beverages.

- Address Early Consumption Habits: New American Dream offers [tips for protecting your children from intrusive and harmful advertising](#) that promotes mindless consumption.

- Encourage Hotels to Reduce Waste: When staying at a hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast let the management know that you like to support businesses that adopt environmentally responsible practices (including reducing waste). Print out and drop off the [Sustainable Solutions for Green Hotels](#) environmental tips list. To locate environmentally friendly hotels, search on the Internet under "ecotourism" and/or visit [Green Hotels Association](#).

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Second: Reuse

The media has done a wonderful job of selling us on the attractiveness and benefits of buying "new", "improved", "special", etc. products. However, we already collectively own so much that we could all survive for quite a while on the existing products - if we just reused them a few times!

- Garage Sales: Shop at and hold garage sales - this is a great way to reuse products.
- Reusables: Switch from disposable to reusable products: food and beverage containers, cups, plates, writing pens, razors, diapers, towels, shopping bags, etc.
- Donations: Donate (and buy used):
 - household items - clothes, furniture, dishes, books, sports equipment, magazines, appliances, electronics, business attire, wedding attire, etc. (to charity)
 - women's business attire (to [Dress for Success](#))
 - [computer equipment](#)
 - cell phones, cameras, iPod/MP3 Players, laptops, PDAs (to [Recycling for Charities](#))
 - cell phones and ink cartridges (to [Cure Recycling](#) - profits from reuse of items support the CURE Childhood Cancer organization. Free postage. Another place to donate cell phones is [Collective Good](#)

). If you would like to start your own recycling program, check out [Wireless Recycling](#)

. Learn how to erase cell phone data with this [free data eraser](#)

- building material (to companies who specialize in selling used material). One organization: [Habitat for Humanity](#)
- eyeglasses (to [Lions Club](#) , For-Eyes, Pearle, or [Lenscrafters](#))
- extra hangers (to your local dry cleaners)
- art materials (to a school or cultural organization)
- unwanted boxed/bagged/canned food (to homeless shelters, food banks, or soup kitchens)
- etc.

- Buy/Sell Used Items: Buy and sell your items on sites such as:

- [local thrift stores](#)
- [Ebay](#)
- [Craigslist](#)
- [Amazon](#) (search on specific refurbished product)
- local newspaper listings
- [local material exchange sites](#) (search in your area)
- [garage sales](#) (search in your area in the 'for sale' > 'garage sales' section)
- used refurbished computers (check your computer manufacturer's website or Amazon)
- [local used furniture stores](#) (search in your area)
- [local consignment shops](#) (search in your area)
- [Recycler's World](#) facilitates buying and selling used products (for home and work)

- Freecycle: [The Freecycle Network](#) provides an online community tool for giving and receiving free stuff.
- Share: [thingloop](#) facilitates sharing our belongings with each other.
- Throwplace: [Throwplace.com](#) lets you list items online that you would like to give to nonprofit organizations, businesses, or individuals.
 - Community Swap: Organize a community swap program (i.e., designate a place where people can leave unwanted items for others to use).
 - Packing Peanuts: Drop off at a local packing, shipping or moving store.
 - Wash and Reuse Plastic Bags: With either a [wooden bag dryer](#) or in the [washing machine](#).
 - Buy Durables: Buy products that will last and take care of them.
 - Teach Thrift: Teach your children the value of being thrifty (the wise economy in the management of money and other resources; frugality).
 - Frugal Printing: Use both sides of each piece of paper -- for note taking or printing documents from your computer (at home or work). Create note pads by stapling together once-used paper.
 - Kitchen Reuseables: Instead of buying these items new, save and reuse all: paper bags, rubber bands, twisties, boxes, and packaging material. Reuse your plastic bags with a handy [bag dryer](#).
- Library: Pick up books from your local library or used book store. The library is also many times a great place for finding magazines, CDs, books-on-tape, and videos.
- Share with Neighbors: Join in with neighbors to purchase infrequently used products such as lawn mowers, ladders, etc.
- Refurbished Computers: [Buy refurbished computers for less](#)
- Rechargeable Batteries: Purchase rechargeable batteries and a battery recharger (some battery rechargers will also recharge regular alkaline batteries). Solar powered battery rechargers are available online.
- College Reuse: [Dump and Run](#) is a nonprofit organization that organizes the collection of college students' castoff items in the spring, so they can be sold to incoming students in the fall. The proceeds are then donated to nonprofits.

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Third: Recycle

- Recycle Bins: Create designated holding "bins" for each type of recycled product and

place in convenient locations in your home/garage

- Recycling Fact Sheet: Create a local recycling fact sheet for yourself and interested neighbors. The local Yellow Pages, [Internet Consumer Recycling Guide](#) and [Recycling Resources](#) are great resources. Find out where you can recycle:

- glass
- paper products
- plastic grocery bags (better yet - use cloth bags)
- [plastic](#) - including 1 - 7 identification codes
- aluminum
- cardboard
- tin cans
- scrap metal
- motor oil (one quart of oil can kill fish in thousands of gallons of water)
- ink cartridges
- household appliances such as refrigerators
- computer equipment and other electronic devices
- aseptic packaging (square boxes used for liquids)
- styrofoam
- tires
- athletic shoes (contact a local sporting goods or athletic shoe store - some donate used shoes, others recycle them)
- etc.

- Recycled Content: Ask your local retailers to stock more products made from recycled materials and buy products made from the highest recycled content whenever possible.

- Green Paper: In general, try to buy products/containers made from recycled material as often as possible to support the recycled product market. When purchasing paper products (toilet paper, etc.), look for paper that has been recycled using a minimum of 50% post-consumer waste. Also, purchase from companies that do not use chlorine to bleach their paper products (which creates [dioxin](#) waste).

- Natural Fertilizer: Leave grass clippings on the lawn as fertilizer.
- Composting: Start a compost pile with yard trimmings and food scraps. Learn more at [Wikipedia's Compost page](#)

- Pack-it-Out: If you are traveling and no recycle bins are available, pack your recyclables home with you whenever possible.

- Eco-Friendly Burials: For the ultimate in recycling, check out the growing movement in [eco-friendly burials](#) and [conservation burial](#)

. Also,
[eco-friendly recycled paper coffins](#)
are becoming available.

- Recycled Gold: If you are shopping for wedding rings or other jewelry consider buying [recycled gold jewelry](#)
and
[synthetic diamonds](#)
and
[gemstones](#)

- Hazardous Waste: The other key aspect of dealing with waste effectively is to dispose of toxic products at a hazardous waste facility. Products requiring special handling include:

- Building Materials - paint , varnish, paint thinner, solvents, rust remover, wood preservatives and driveway sealer
- Automotive products - gasoline, transmission oil, brake fluid, kerosene, charcoal lighter fluid, power steering fluid, used motor oil, used oil filters, used antifreeze
- Household cleaners - spot removers, rug cleaners, metal cleaners, bathroom cleaners, oven cleaner, drain cleaner
- Pesticides - insect killers, weed killers, flea products, moth crystals, fertilizers with weed killer
- Miscellaneous - photographic chemicals, acids and corrosive chemicals, pool chemicals, compact fluorescent light bulbs (mercury), Ni-Cd batteries

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Your Food

Switching to a vegetarian diet is a powerful way to help protect our environment and help ensure everyone has enough to eat. The United Nations recently released [Livestock's Long Shadow—Environmental Issues and Options](#), which concludes that the livestock sector (primarily cows, chickens, and pigs) emerges as one of the top two or three most significant contributors to our most serious environmental problems,

at every scale from local to global.

It is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gases - responsible for 18% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions as measured in CO2 equivalents.

By comparison, all transportation emits 13.5% of the CO2. It produces 65% of human-related nitrous oxide (which has 296 times the climate change potential of CO2) and 37% of all human-induced methane (which is 23 times as warming as CO2). It also generates 64% of the ammonia, which contributes to acid rain and acidification of ecosystems. In addition, the enormous amounts of grain required to feed livestock reduces the amount of food available for the

[world's hungry](#)

. Buying organic, locally grown food also reduces climate change emissions and helps protect the environment.

"The world is producing the wrong kind of food, by a process that leaves millions of people landless, homeless, cashless, and unable to feed themselves." Anita Roddick

- Organic: The [What is Organic?](#) page explains what organic produce is and how it is certified.
- Local: Buy food (and drink - ideally tap - water) from local companies whenever possible. Each pound of local food you purchase prevents a quarter pound of climate change (CO2) emissions. Support your area's Farmer's Market. If possible, grow your own fruits and vegetables using organic gardening practices. You can find local farmer's markets, community supported agriculture, restaurants that cook with regional cuisine, and food cooperatives through [Local Harvest](#).
- Vegetarian/Vegan Diet: Consider becoming a vegetarian or vegan (no animal products).

Informational sites:

- [Vegetarian and Vegan Resources](#)
- [Why Vegan](#)
- [Vegan Action](#)
- [Vegetarianism: A Few Facts](#)
- [101 Reasons I'm a Vegetarian](#)
- [Diet Bio](#)
- [Notmilk!](#)
- [20 Health Benefits of Going Vegan](#)

- Vegetarian/Vegan Restaurants: Restaurant locators:
- [HappyCow](#)
- [VegGuide](#)

- Healthy School Lunches: Support efforts to [increase healthy food choices](#) in school lunches (US)
- Green Calculator: Learn about the effect your diet is having on the environment with the [Eating Green Calculator](#)
- Score Your Diet: Learn how your diet scores on nutrition, the environment and animal welfare with [Score Your Diet](#).
- Non-GMO: There are [many organizations](#) that are working to protect our food supply from genetically engineered produce. Please get involved in any way you can. Whenever possible, buy products containing non-GMO soy, cotton, and corn. Ask your local supermarket to carry non-GMO products and ask your friends to also make this request - have faith that your requests will get back to the growers and store headquarters. This trend will only turn around when customer demand non-GMO products. Your pocketbook is your most effective voice.
- Unprocessed Food: Eat unprocessed/unpackaged food whenever possible.
- Smart Seafood: If you purchase seafood, consult [a seafood choices chart](#) to select environmentally smart seafood. Also, learn more about avoiding mercury in your seafood at [NRDC](#)
- "Dolphin Safe" Tuna: Only purchase tuna labeled "dolphin safe".
- Shade-Grown Coffee: Buy [shade-grown coffee](#) to protect desperately needed migratory bird habitats. Many "fair trade certified" coffees are shade-grown.
- Free-Range: If you eat meat, buy "free-range" raised animals. According to the EPA, "there are approximately 450,000 AFOs (Animal feeding operations - livestock-raising operations, such as hog, cattle and poultry farms, that confine and concentrate animal populations) in the United States. About 6,600 of these operations fall into the largest category and are referred to as Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)."

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Conserve Energy

Please do not wait to start conserving as much energy as you can to reduce your climate

change emissions! And please ask your elected representatives to push for strong legislation to move toward overall reduced energy usage and increased alternative energy production.

- Quick & Easy Energy Tip: Take the [Zero-Volt Challenge](#) and reduce your energy bill today!
 - Set Goals: To reduce your energy consumption:
 - Set specific energy reduction goals (for electricity, gas, and gallons of fuel consumed in your car(s)) -- for example, commit to using 20% less per month
 - Determine a baseline to start reducing from. Print the [energy and water consumption chart](#) and post in a visible spot in your home. Updates:
 - **for your car(s)**: chart the number of miles you drive each month
 - **for your home/office**: chart the gas "therms" and/or electric kilowatts per hour (kWh) used in the last 12 months (for comparison to each month this year)
 - Make specific changes in products used and family member habits:
 - buy energy saving products where needed
 - read the [Sustainable Solutions for Getting Around Town](#) page for ideas on reducing mileage/increasing mileage efficiency
 - get your family involved by asking for specific changes in everyone's habits (e.g., tape signs to light switches reminding family members to turn out lights when they leave a room, tape a sign to your car dashboard reminding the driver to check tire pressure during the first week of each month, assign someone to turn out all lights and cut power to unused appliances (to reduce [standby power](#) usage) each night)
 - look for additional ideas below
 - Once a month, add the new usage information to the charts and make adjustments as needed to reach your goals
 - Use the money saved to do something fun with your family (if you have children, increase their allowances by the amount saved to encourage them to get involved in finding new ways to conserve)
 - Join the [Carbon Conscious Consumer](#) program by New American Dream to receive new ideas monthly.
 - Buy Green Energy: If possible, choose a utility company focused on renewable energy. If you live in a deregulated state in the U.S., [Green-e](#) provides information about certified "clean electricity" providers for your state. In the U.K., visit [Green Helpline](#)

- Resources: The following pages provide tips on how to save energy:
 - [Tips from StopGlobalWarming.org](#)
 - [EPA Climate Change Site: Actions for Individuals](#)
 - [Personal Emissions Calculator](#) , [Calculate Your Impact](#) , and [Carbon Calculator](#)
 - [Best Going Green Tips Library](#)
 - [Home Energy Saver](#)
 - [Energy Star Energy Efficient Appliances](#)
 - [Choosing Energy Efficient Products](#)
 - [Energy Efficient Windows](#)
 - [Consumer Energy Information](#)
 - [Home Improvement Toolbox](#)
 - [Energy Efficiency: First Things First](#)
 - [Energy Efficient Home Articles](#)
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- Kitchen: [Kitchen Unplugged](#) -- ways to conserve energy in the kitchen
 - Carbon Footprint: The [Carbon Footprint Calculator](#) helps you to determine your carbon dioxide emissions from major sources: home energy consumption and transportation by car and plane. This information can be tracked over time, allowing you to gauge the impact of actions you take to reduce your carbon footprint.
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- Carbon Offsets: If you are taking a trip, consider buying carbon emission offsets. Two [popular organizations](#)
- :
- [Terrapass](#)
- and
- [Carbonfund](#)
- .
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- Home Shade: In hot areas, if you have west-facing windows use window tints, blinds, deciduous trees or trellises to help keep out heat from the summer sun. In general, you will lower your summer air-conditioning bill by planting trees and bushes along the west side of your home.
 - Paint Colors: Paint your home a light color if you live in a warm climate and a dark color if you live in a cold climate.
 - Insulation: Insulate your hot water heater (a tank that is warm to the touch needs added insulation), as well as hot water pipes and ducts located in unheated areas.
 - Standby Power: Reduce "[standby power](#)" (the energy used while an appliance is switched off or not performing) at home and at work. The easiest way is to unplug appliances that are not being used. You can also plug your appliances into power surge protector strips (with multiple electrical outlets) and turn the power off at the strip.
 - Lights Off: Whenever possible, keep lights off during the day. Consider installing a well insulated skylight if more light is needed. Encourage family members to get in the habit of turning off lights when they leave a room (taping small reminder notes to light switches can help).

- Location of Home: Choose a place to live that reduces the need to drive (easy access to public transit, easy biking routes, close to work and stores, walk able community, etc.).
- Solar Cooker: Consider using a [solar cooker](#) to cook some of your meals.
- Cool Water: When turning on a water faucet, unless you need warm water choose the coolest water setting.
- Energy Efficient Mortgages (U.S.): [EEM's](#) let you borrow extra money to pay for energy efficient upgrades to your current home or a new or old home that you plan to buy.
- Invest in Energy: Investing in renewable energy production is the same as investing in a home or office building. Buying energy from a utility, on the other hand, is like renting - at the end of fifteen years you don't have anything to show for it - and you are left vulnerable to the fluctuating costs of energy. One investment option is solar panels which can produce energy for 40 years or more - far longer than it takes to pay off the installation costs (currently around 15 years for homeowners and only 7 years for businesses). Wind power, where available, has a far quicker payback period. For more information on renewable energy, check out:
 - [Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Network site](#)
 - [Hydrogen, Fuel Cell, and Renewable Energy Links](#)
 - [The American Solar Energy Society - Factbase \(click on "Solar Guide"\)](#)
 - [Geoexchange \(geothermal energy\)](#)
 - [American Wind Energy Association](#)
 - [Renewable Energy Policy Project](#)
 - [National Renewable Energy Laboratory site](#)
 - [Home Power -- The Hands-On Journal of Home-Made Power](#)
 - [Clean Power](#)
 - [Wavegen \(wave generated energy\)](#)
- Dark-Sky: Change outside light fixtures so that light does not shine up into the sky. The [International Dark-Sky Association](#) works to educate individuals and communities about the use of energy-efficient, properly designed lighting that allows for good night sky viewing. The [Fatal Light Awareness Program](#) educates individuals about how urban lights harm migratory birds.

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Conserve Water

Freshwater degradation is a looming crisis that we must face head on with strong and effective actions. Please do your part to protect this precious resource and call upon your elected representatives to take action today to protect not just future generations but our own future by adopting sustainable water practices. Only [3% of the earth's water is freshwater](#) - we must protect this critical resource. In addition, water-related energy consumes a large amount of energy. In California, for example, water use consumes 19% of the state's electricity, 30% of it's natural gas, and 88 billion gallons of diesel fuel annually.

- Set Goals: To reduce your water consumption:
- Set specific water reduction goals -- for example, commit to using 20% less per month
- Determine a baseline to start reducing from. Print the [energy and water consumption chart](#) and post in a visible spot in your home.
- Chart the number of gallons of water used in the last 12 months (for comparison to each month this year) (if water consumption is listed by CCF (hundred cubic feet), one CCF equals 748 gallons.
- Make specific changes in products used and family member habits:
 - buy water saving products where needed
 - get your family involved by asking for specific changes in everyone's habits (e.g., place signs near water outlets reminding family members to reduce consumption (e.g., shorter showers, turning the faucet off when not needed, only watering outdoor plants in the morning or evening))
 - look for additional ideas below
- Once a month, add the new usage information to the charts and make adjustments as needed to reach your goals
 - If you have children, increase their allowances by the amount saved to encourage them to get involved in finding new ways to conserve
- Resources: You'll find several water conservation ideas at [H2ouse Water Saver Home](#) including a [Top 5 Water Savers](#) page and [10 Ways to Save Water](#).
- Water Consumption: Each time you turn on a water faucet use the lowest pressure necessary. Keep the water turned on only while it is needed. For drinking water, keep a pitcher

in your refrigerator so you don't have to let water run to cool.

- **Fix Leaks Promptly!:** It is estimated that 13.7% of household water is wasted by leaks. Check your water meter when no one is using water in the house. If it's moving there's a leak. A running toilet can waste 2 gallons a minute. Check by adding food coloring to the tank without flushing. After 10 minutes, look for leaks indicated by color in the bowl. This is most likely a worn [flapper valve that can easily be replaced](#) .

- **Low Flow Toilets:** One of the best ways to avoid wasting water is to switch to low flow or dual flush toilets. Visit [Terry Love's consumer toilets report](#) for a great review on available low flow toilets. Flush your toilet only every other time or when it has solid waste. [Lea](#)

[kAlerter](#)

notifies you if your toilet is leaking.

- **Showers:** Replace existing shower heads with the lowest flow product you can find. Shower heads with a mist setting let you reduce water flow even further. Shower instead of taking a bath. Time your showers - try to keep them to 5 minutes. If taking a bath, limit how high you fill the tub.

- **Aerators:** Install flow restrictor aerators inside all faucets for a savings of 3 to 4 gallons per minute.

- **Full Loads:** Always run full loads of laundry and dishes. Choose the short cycle at low water levels whenever possible. Set the clothing washer at the lowest possible temperature needed and for single rinse only. If you buy a new appliance, compare the water efficiency of each [washing machine](#) and switch to a water-conserving model (e.g., front loading washer).

- **Dish Washing:** Use your dishwasher and don't rinse dishes beforehand (for an average 20 gallon savings).

- **Native Plants:** Fill your yard with native plants. This will cut down significantly on watering requirements and, in the process, provide much needed food and shelter to local wildlife.

- **Mulching:** Mulch your gardens to reduce water evaporation around your plants (this also reduces weeds and builds healthy soil).

- **Drip Irrigation:** Install a drip irrigation system to water your plants more effectively

- **For Your Hoses:** Buy a squeeze nozzle for all of your hoses. However, if you're watering plants, use a watering can to reduce water waste.

- **Best Time to Water:** Water at night to minimize evaporation.

- **Leftover Water:** If you have house plants, whenever possible water them with leftover or unused water from drinking, cooking, and showering. Keep a water pitcher near your sink or bathtub and collect unused water running from the tap (waiting for cooler or warmer water).

- **Car Wash:** Take your car to a car wash that recycles water. If you wash it yourself, use a bucket and sponge and rinse sparingly.

- **Greywater System:** Find out if creating a [greywater/waste water](#) system would work for you.

- **Water Pollution:** Protect our water supply by following the steps outlined in [How to Clean Up Our Water: 12 simple actions to help stem the tide of polluted runoff](#)

- Tap Water: Make the switch back to environmentally-friendly [tap water](#) instead of bottled water.
- Cooking Vegetables: Steam rather than boil your veggies to save a quart or more of water. Better yet, try giving vegetables a quick rinse, placing them in a covered bowl, and microwaving them for a minute or two.
- Drinking Water: In the U.S., learn more about your drinking water at [EPA's Ground Water and Drinking Water](#) site.
- Water Shortage Issues: Organizations that are working on international water shortage issues include:
 - [Worldwatch Institute](#)
 - [Green Cross International](#)

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Out in Nature

- Trash: When you are out hiking, pick up trash along the way.
- Hiking Tips: [Leave No Trace, Outdoor Ethics](#) - provides tips for campers, climbers, and hikers.
- Restoration: Organize a community group to clean up a local stream, highway, park, or beach. For opportunities to do restoration work for a local organization, check out [VolunteerMatch](#).
- The American Hiking Society coordinates week long [volunteer vacations](#) to help restore trails.
- Tree-Planting: Form a tree-planting group with family and/or friends: commit to planting and maintaining an agreed-upon number of trees over your life times. Plan regular gatherings for tree-planting and watering. Log your commitments in the [United Nations Billion Tree Campaign](#).
- Parks: Visit and help support local parks. In the U.S., reserve a campsite at a National Park through the [U.S. National Park Service Reservation Center](#) or [Reserve](#)

[America \(includes some state parks\)](#)

- Frogs: In the USA, help to track frog and toad populations through [Frogwatch USA](#) .
- Birds: In North America, help to track bird populations through [Citizen Science](#) .
- Balloons: Never release balloons outdoors. They frequently find their way to open water (even from 100's of miles away) and can harm or kill turtles, whales, and other marine mammals.
- Stargazing: [Stargazing schedule](#) - provides current information about stargazing events.

- Educational Sites:
 - Animals: [Animal Diversity Web](#) and [Wild Sound Stories](#)
 - Biology: [The Biology Project](#)
 - Marine Biology: [OceanLink](#)
 - Birds: [Peterson's Perspective](#) and [Introduction to the Aves](#)
 - Microbes: [The Microbe Zoo](#)
 - Astronomy: [Nine Planets Solar System Tour](#)
 - [WWF Fun and Games](#)
 - [Environmental Kids Club](#)
 - For Teachers: [Environmental Education Resources](#) and [Environmental Defense's Teacher's Guide](#)
- [Ocean activities for kids](#)

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Your Home and Finances

Create a [non-toxic](#) , safe home for your family and pets. Gather up all products in your house or garage that contain unsafe chemicals and drop off at your local hazardous waste facility. Switch to alternatives containing nontoxic and biodegradable ingredients (some products labeled 'green' [aren't really safe](#) - look for [green certification labels](#)).

Nontoxic Home

- Hazardous Waste: Dispose of the following products at a hazardous waste facility:

- Building Materials - paint , varnish, paint thinner, solvents, rust remover, wood preservatives and driveway sealer
- Automotive products - gasoline, transmission oil, brake fluid, kerosene, charcoal lighter fluid, power steering fluid, used motor oil, used oil filters, used antifreeze
- Household cleaners - spot removers, rug cleaners, metal cleaners, bathroom cleaners, oven cleaner, drain cleaner
- Pesticides - insect killers, weed killers, flea products, moth crystals, fertilizers with weed killer
- Miscellaneous - photographic chemicals, acids and corrosive chemicals, pool chemicals, **compact fluorescent light bulbs (mercury)**, mercury thermometers, Ni-Cd batteries

- Home-Made Products: Suggested recipes for home-made cleaning products:
 - [Make Your Own Nontoxic Cleaning Kit](#)
 - [All-Purpose Spray Cleaner](#)
 - [The Healthy Home](#)
 - [Better Basics for the Home](#) is a great resource book
- Green Certified Products: The [Eco-labels center](#) evaluates the different eco-label programs so that you can pick your products based on the most rigorous certification processes.
 - Dry Cleaning: If available, clean your "dry clean only" clothes at a dry cleaning facility that uses [wet cleaning techniques](#) . Or, safer yet, when possible avoid purchasing clothes that require dry cleaning.
 - Clothing: Whenever possible, buy clothing made from [organic cotton](#) and/or [hemp](#) . Locate a store that sells organic cotton products through the [International Organic Cotton Directory](#) .
- Soap Nuts: Check out environmentally-friendly [soap nuts \(Sapindus\)](#) to replace your laundry detergent. It can also be used as a general cleaning soap.
- PVC: Avoid purchasing plastic #3, PVC/vinyl. Information: [PVC Alternatives Database](#) and [waste crisis from disposal of PVC](#) .
- Plants: Learn about the top plants for removing toxins from the air in your home in the article: [Using Plants to Clean Indoor Air Pollutants](#) .

Natural Body Products

- Natural Products: You can find nontoxic products at [SkinDeep: Cosmetic Safety Database](#) . Head over to your [local natural products store](#) to pick up natural, cruelty-free body products.

- Cruelty-Free: To learn about and find cruelty-free products, check out [Animal Ingredients and Their Alternatives](#) and [Companies That Don't Test on Animals](#)

- Home-Made: Great book on safe, home-made [personal care products](#) .

Building or Remodeling Your Home

- Contractor: Find a building contractor who will follow the Environmental Protection Agency's [Energy Star Homes Program](#) . You can locate a "green building" professional through the [Green Building Council Directory](#)

- Resources: Access the [Sustainable Building Sourcebook](#) and/or [Green Building Concepts](#) for information about building an environmentally-friendly home.

- New Home Location: If you are considering building a new home, seek out a location that has already been built on in the past (vs. building on "pristine" land).

- Energy Efficient Mortgages (U.S.): [EEM](#) 's let you borrow extra money to pay for energy efficient upgrades to your current home or a new or old home that you plan to buy.

- Building Materials: Building material ideas (no endorsement of any company intended):

- [Eco-Friendly Flooring Guide](#)

- [straw bale](#)

- bamboo -- two sites to check out: [Plyboo](#) and [Teragren](#)

- [true \(natural\) linoleum](#)

- previously used wood -- one site to check out: [Vintage Timber Works](#)

- cob -- three sites to check out: [Cob](#) , [Cob Cottage](#) , and [EcoBusiness-Cob Building](#)

Resources

- composite decking -- [The Latest Trend in Decking](#)

- [samples of sustainable flooring material](#)

- [rammed earth homes](#)

- [greenroofs.com](#) -- plant-based roofing

- sustainably harvested wood -- search for suppliers through the [Forest Stewardship](#)

Council

- Buy/Sell Green Home: If you are looking to buy or sell a green home, check out [ListedGreen](#)
- [Green Home Resource Guide](#)

Personal Finances

- Roadmap: [The New Roadmap Foundation's Your Money or Your Life program](#) offers a wonderful nine-step program for personal financial transformation.
- Investing: Information on environmentally and socially responsible investing can be found at:
 - [Socially Responsible Investing \(article/links\)](#)
 - [Social Investment Forum](#)
 - [GreenMoney Online Guide](#)
 - [Ethical Investment Research Service](#)

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Your Garden

Create a Backyard Wildlife Habitat

As people take over more and more of the land, we need to provide food, water, and shelter to the animals that are now relying on us for their survival.

- Backyard Wildlife Habitat: A backyard wildlife habitat or "naturescape" can be created in your own backyard. A miniature version can even be created on your patio or deck. Basic elements include fresh water (i.e., a bird bath and, if in a yard, water low to the ground); plants and feeders that provide nourishment for birds, insects, etc.; and rocks, trees, bushes and/or bird houses for shelter and nesting. Purchase plants that are native to your area. The National Wildlife Federation has an excellent program: [The Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program](#) which provides some helpful, detailed examples.

- Attracting Animals: Learn how to attract:
 - [Hummingbirds](#)
 - [Butterflies](#)
 - [Birds](#)
- Protecting Birds: The greatest danger to birds in your yard is window collisions. Audubon provides [tips for minimizing collisions](#) .
 - Resources: [How to Naturescape](#) provides inspiration and information on switching to native plants.

Gardening Tips

- Organic Gardening: Go organic!! - here are some [basics](#) .
- Native Garden: Learn about creating a Native Garden from [eNature](#) . Get to know the specific ecosystem your home is located in (e.g., Oak Woodland, Grasslands) and select plants native to this ecosystem.
- Xeriscape: Tips on how to grow an environmentally friendly lawn can be found at the [Xeriscape](#) .
- Climate-Friendly Gardens: Learn about becoming a [climate-friendly gardener](#) from UCS.
- Rain Garden: Create a [rain garden](#) on your property to reduce runoff into storm drains.
- Veggies in Containers: Tips on [growing great vegetables in containers](#) .
- Window Farms: Innovative way to [grow food from recycled containers](#) hanging in windows.
- Composting: Composting provides important nutrients for your organic garden. Learn more at [Wikipedia's Compost page](#) .
 - Free Dirt Exchange: Find free soil in your area for your landscaping project or garden through [Tons of Dirt](#) .
 - Worm Composting: Learn about worm composting (vermiculture) at [Earthworm FAQ](#) .
 - Mulching: Mulching mowers are available which will convert cut grass into a natural fertilizer.
 - Carbon Debt: Work off your carbon dioxide "debt" by [planting trees!](#) Find out how much you need to work off with the [Climate Change Calculator](#) .
- Pesticides: Learn about current toxicity and regulatory information for pesticides in the [AN Pesticide Database](#) .

- Resources: Links to great sites on everything from worm composting (vermiculture) to organic farming can be found at [Useful Links](#) .

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Your Work

- Recycling Program: If a recycling program has not already been started at your company, start one yourself (or improve the program already in place). Learn more at [Recycling in the Workplace](#)

- Recycled Material: Encourage the office/purchasing manager to purchase products containing recycled material (paper, plastic, etc.). Learn more at [Recycled Plastic Products \(U.S. and Canada\)](#)

- Materials Exchange: You can find exchange programs at [Recycler's World](#) and [State-specific Materials Exchange Programs](#) (U.S.)

- Product Design: [Better by Design](#) helps in designing environmentally friendly products.
- Green Purchasing: Learn about green purchases through:
 - [Responsible Purchasing Network](#)
 - [Green Seal of Approval](#)
 - [Purchasing environmentally-friendly building products](#) (free software)
 - [Environmental Yellow Pages](#)
 - [Green Pages Online](#)

- Energy Reduction: Schedule an energy audit through your local energy provider to determine how to reduce energy use. Learn more at [Energy Star for Small Business](#)

- Environmental Policy: Strategic Planning resources for defining your company's environmental policy:

- [Source Reduction](#)

- [Waste Prevention World](#)
- [WasteWi\\$e \(EPA\)](#)
- [National Environmental Performance Track \(EPA\)](#)
- [Other EPA Voluntary Programs](#)
- [Zero Emissions Research and Initiatives \(ZERI\)](#)
- [The Natural Step](#)
- [Natural Capitalism](#)
- [Biomimicry](#)
- [Cradle to Cradle](#)
- [CERES \(Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies\)](#)

- Green Meetings and Conventions: A growing number of businesses are greening their meetings and conventions. Get started with [10 Easy Tips](#).

Learn more through the

[EPA](#)

and the

[Green Meeting Industry Council](#)

- Green Building: Encourage your company to look into building or leasing space in a ["green" building](#). The EPA can provide information through their [Business Improvement program](#).

- Shipping: Whenever possible, choose [environmentally-friendly packaging material](#). If your company uses pallets to ship boxes stabilized with stretch wrap, strapping, or corner boards, look into switching to more environmentally-friendly unitizing systems such as [Lock n' Pop](#) (no endorsement intended).

- Junk Mail: Check into ways to [reduce business junk mail](#)

- Computers: [Buy refurbished computers for less](#). Also consider [donating used computer equipment](#). If you purchase new equipment, the [Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool](#) and [Guide to Greener Electronics](#) can help you make greener choices.

- Zero Waste: [EPA: Zero Waste](#) and [Zero Waste Alliance](#) provide information on shifting your business toward producing [zero waste](#).

- Reusing Ink Cartridges: [Cartridge World](#) will refill your printer cartridges at half retail price.
- Paper Use: Use both sides of each piece of paper -- for note taking or printing documents from your computer (at home or work). Create notepads by stapling together once-used paper.
- Lunch: [Pack a Waste-Free Lunch](#) whenever possible.
- Break Room: Ask co-workers to bring their unwanted cups, mugs, plates, cloth napkins, and silverware to work to replace disposable items in the break room.
- Green Hotels: Encourage your company to use the [Green Hotel Initiative's Best Practices Survey](#) to determine which hotels to book traveling employees or visitors at.
- Environmental Career: Looking for an environmental job? Check out:
 - [NRDC Green Jobs](#)
 - [Environmental Jobs and Careers](#)
 - [Environmental Career Opportunities](#)
 - [Green Jobs Ready](#)
 - [Business for Social Responsibility](#)
 - [Environmental Career.com](#)
 - [Green Dream Jobs](#)
 - [GreenBiz.com Job Listings](#)
 - [Environmental Jobs](#)
 - [Employment, Career, Volunteer Opportunities](#)
 - [WebDirectory Environmental Job Listing Sites](#)

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Online Newspaper and Magazine Sources

Consider switching to online news. If you enjoy reading newspapers and/or magazines offline better, consider reading them at a local library. If they don't carry a newspaper or magazine you like, find out if you can buy a subscription for the library (this is a great way to introduce sustainable/environmental magazines to people in your community).

Daily News

- [Democracy Now!](#)
- [World Views](#)
- [BBC News \(World Edition\)](#)
- [Independent News \(World News Section\)](#)
- [The Guardian \(World News Section\)](#)
- [The Times of India \(click on World\)](#)
- [Daily Yomuri \(English Edition\)](#)
- [Major News Wires](#)
- [U.S. Newspapers](#)
- [Newspapers outside of the U.S.](#)
- [World Press Review](#)
- [Newspapers.com](#)
- [Environmental News Network](#)

Weather

- [CNN Weather - Cable News Network](#)

Magazines

- [Adbusters](#)
- [The Animals Voice](#)
- [Earth Island Journal](#)
- [E - The Environmental Magazine](#)
- [Green Party of the United States News](#)
- [Grist Magazine](#)
- [Home Power -- The Hands-On Journal of Home-Made Power](#)
- [Mother Jones](#)
- [The Nation](#)
- [New Internationalist](#)
- [Ode](#)
- [People & the Planet](#)
- [The Progressive](#)
- [Project Censored](#)
- [Environmental Research Foundation](#)
- [Resurgence Magazine On-Line](#)
- [San Diego Earth Times \(great coverage of international issues\)](#)
- [Tomorrow](#)
- [TomPaine.common sense](#)
- [Truthout \(news, politics\)](#)
- [Utne Reader](#)
- [Vegetarian Times](#)
- [VegNews](#)
- [YES! A Journal of Positive Futures](#)

- [Z Magazine](#)

Public Online Radio

- [Democracy Now!](#)
- [Earth News Radio](#)
- [KPFA - Berkeley CA USA](#)
- [New Dimensions Media](#)

Public Online News Videos

- [Democracy Now!](#)
- [Bill Moyers \(click on 'WATCH & LISTEN'\)](#)
- [PBS NewsHour](#)
- [PBS Now](#)
- [PBS Washington Week](#)
- [PBS Frontline](#)
- [BBC News \(select a program\)](#)

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Eco Gifts and Eco Gift Ideas

- Ideas: Offer/ask for gifts that don't involve buying anything. For example, time together, a back rub, babysitting, offer to teach something you know how to do, donation to charity, seeds from your garden, tickets to an event (musical, lecture series, play, concert, etc.), nontoxic house cleaning service, gift certificates for [spas](#) , music downloads, [movie downloads](#) ,

etc. More ideas at:

[25 Great, Consumer-Less Gift Ideas](#)

- Other Eco Gift Ideas:
- Consider purchasing gifts from companies focused on providing products which use renewable energy sources (i.e., solar powered radio or outdoor lighting).
- Eco-Artware promotes [gifts made from reused and natural materials](#) .
- Shop for gifts at antique stores, estate sales or flea markets.
- Create environmentally friendly gift baskets filled with sustainable gift items (e.g., LED light bulbs, [plastic bag dryer](#) , [organic cotton socks/scarves/hats](#) /etc., [showerhead with](#)

for

[mist setting](#)

lowest flow showers,

[organic and/or vegan snack items](#)

,

[organic cotton towels](#)

,

[shade grown coffee](#)

,

[fair trade gifts](#)

,

[solar battery charger](#)

,

[solar radio/flashlight](#)

, a variety of nontoxic and biodegradable cleaning products or a

[nontoxic cleaning kit](#)

, etc.)

- Gifts that Give Back:
 - Ask for/give the gift that keeps on growing -- a [tree!](#) .
 - Make it a Fair Trade Holiday! Buy gifts through [Online Fair Trade Shops](#) .
 - Give [alternative charity gifts](#) (check out the great online alternative gifts at the bottom of the page). Another resource: [Charity Christmas Gifts](#) .
 - Feed a child in honour of someone you love and post their photo on the [Wall Against Hunger](#) (World Food Programme).
- Give the gift of a [Mosquito Net](#) to save someone from Malaria.
- Give [Gifts that Give More](#)
- If you are a school teacher, consider asking your students to bring in items that can be donated to a local charity that is distributing holiday gifts for underprivileged children.
- Find Gifts: [Green Pages Online](#) and the [List of Alternative Gift Fairs in the U.S.](#) can help you locate great gifts.
- Light Up with LEDs: If you are installing Christmas lights, consider purchasing more energy efficient Light-Emitting Diodes (LEDs). They have an average life span of 100,000 hours (vs. 1,500) and reduce energy consumption by up to 80-90%.
 - Gift Giving Policy: If you have a big family/lots of friends, come up with a plan to reduce the overall number of gifts given. One way is to randomly assign to each person only one other family member/friend to buy an eco gift for. Another (fun) example is for each person to buy and wrap one nice eco gift and then hold a party where everyone takes turns selecting their gift from the unselected (and already selected) gifts.
 - Gift Exemption Voucher: For someone you no longer want to exchange gifts with, print out

and send them the

[Gift Exemption Voucher](#) .

- Alternative Gift Registry: If you have a wedding, baby shower, or office holiday party coming up, register for gifts through the [Alternative Gift Registry](#) for an eco-friendly celebration.

- Fair Trade Wedding: [Great ideas](#) for creating a fair trade wedding celebration.

- Holiday Cards: If you are sending out holiday cards, you can find eco-friendly ones at [Conservatree](#)

. Thrift stores also carry donated Holiday cards during the holiday season. As an alternative to standard greeting cards, look into sending electronic greeting cards (check out

[tree e-greetings](#)

to plant a tree with each e-card) or making your own from waste paper.

- Greeting Cards: Great information and suggestions at [Greeting Card: Go Green or Go Online](#)

- Wrapping Paper: To reduce resource consumption from using new wrapping paper, you can find donated wrapping paper at thrift stores during the holiday season. Alternatively reusable gift bags, usable cloth (e.g., nice dish rags), old maps, decorated paper bags, any colorful pieces of material, [home-made gift bags](#) , or the Sunday comics can substitute for store-bought wrapping paper.

- Decorating Your Table: Consider decorating with soy candles and items from nature or seasonal fruit and vegetables in a bowl.

- Less Waste: The following sites provide great ideas for creating less waste during the holiday season:

- [Simplify the Holidays](#)

- [Deck the Halls with Less Waste This Year!](#)

- [Recycled Christmas](#)

- [How to Choose and Plant a Live Christmas Tree](#)

All Jobs for Environmental in USA

- <https://en-us.gigajob.com/Environmental-jobs-in-USA>

Source: <http://www.globalstewards.org/ecotips.htm>