



Sustainable Steps You Can Take at Home

- Make a resolution to consume less resources and live more sustainably. Choose small, manageable goals.
- Avoid using disposable products (paper/plastic plates, cups, napkins, utensils). Reusable/washable products are more durable and save money and resources.
- Use rechargeable batteries. They can be used many times, until they don't hold a charge, and they can be recycled. Disposable batteries are very expensive and are a source of toxic chemicals. When batteries are thrown in our landfills, they can contaminate groundwater.
- Take reusable bags to the store. Canvas bags are inexpensive and use fewer resources than both plastic and paper bags.
- Make birthday and holiday cards from reused materials.
- Keeping the thermostat at 68 degrees (or lower) will save on heating bills and drastically reduce your carbon footprint. Wear a wool sweater or use a blanket to stay warm.
- Get an energy audit and identify areas where energy is being wasted. Utility companies will sometimes offer these for free. The Kill-A-Watt home energy meter projects the cost of running your appliances for a year. Look at your home appliances and how much energy they use.
- Research before buying new appliances. How long will the appliance last? Spending a little more now for a durable model can save money and resources in the future.
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) or LEDs. CFL's use 25% less energy than incandescent bulbs and LEDs use 75% less. These bulbs also produce far less waste heat, making them less of a fire hazard. CFL's do contain mercury, a toxic substance, but if bulbs are recycled, it can be removed and reused in new bulbs. If every house in the US replaced just one old bulb with a CFL, the carbon savings would be equivalent to taking 1,000,000 cars off the road.
- Wash clothes in cold water instead of hot water. Cold water cleans clothes just as well as hot water does; heating water is expensive and uses a lot of energy.
- Turn down your water heater to 120° to decrease how often it runs during the day. Every 10° reduction on a water heater translates to 500lbs of carbon savings a year.
- Check your toilet for leaks. Put 10 drops of food coloring in the tank. If color shows up in the toilet bowl without flushing, there is a leak that could be wasting up to 200 gallons of water each day.
- Install a low flow toilet to decrease the amount of water used. If a new toilet isn't possible, place a plastic bottle filled with sand in the toilet tank. Be sure to place it so it doesn't interfere with the mechanisms inside.
- Install "low flow" fixtures to shower heads and faucets to reduce water consumption.
- Repair leaky faucets. One drop per second wastes 20 gallons of water each day.
- Introduce native plant species to your yard. Native plants require less water than non-natives since they are adapted to the local environment and they provide habitat and food for native wildlife.





- Support local farmers. Farmers receive more money for their goods when you buy directly from them and money remains in the local economy, strengthening the area in which you live. Also, reducing how far food must travel saves fuel supplies and reduces the amount of CO2 entering the atmosphere. On average, our food travels 1000 miles from farm to plate.

- Use alternative transportation. Carpool, walk, or bike when possible.

- Spend more time outside.
- Unplug electronics not in use and reduce CO2 emissions by 1000lbs each year.
- Use fans and open windows instead of using air conditioners. Fans use less energy; air conditioners require more resources to manufacture, including dangerous chemicals that can damage the ozone layer.
- Conserve water by taking shorter showers; showers use 5-10 gallons of water per minute.
- Don't run the water the whole time while washing dishes or brushing teeth.
- Water plants during the cooler parts of the day to reduce water lost to evaporation.
- Use grey water (dishwater and sink water) to water plants (instead drinkable water).
- Composting kitchen scraps along with yard wastes will drastically reduce how much garbage you produce. Americans generate over 30 million tons of food waste every year and most of it goes to the landfill where it will not become nutrient rich soil. A home composting unit makes a terrific present for an eco-conscious relative or friend.
- Recycling is the easiest thing we can do to reduce our impact on our planet. Currently, only 24% of our municipal solid waste is recycled, even though 58.5% of it is recyclable. In 2006, 170,000,000,000 pounds of municipal solid waste was recycled, saving the energy equivalent of 10 billion gallons of gasoline.
- Dispose of chemicals and heavy metals at a Household Hazardous Waste drop-off location. Drop-offs will often accept batteries, electronics, old paint, cell phones, fluorescent bulbs, cleaning products, pesticides, and used motor oil.
- Preserve food for the winter months. Food preservation can provide delicious food year-round, free of preservatives, artificial flavors, and dyes.
- Make sure walls and ceilings are well-insulated.
- Replace old windows when possible. The decrease in heating bills offsets the cost and can reduce your carbon footprint by about 2000 pounds over the course of the year.
- Use shrinkable plastic sheets to cover windows for extra insulation.
- Minimize disposable holiday packaging. Over 250 million pounds of plastic packaging are sent to landfills after each holiday season and 33% of municipal solid waste is packaging materials.
- Wrap presents in old newspaper and look for wrapping paper that can be recycled.
- Use a real Christmas tree instead of an artificial one. Artificial trees require a lot energy to produce and are non-recyclable; real trees can decompose outside or be ground into mulch.

