

“How we go about our daily lives – what we eat, how we get to work, where we build our houses – has a transformative effect not just on our immediate surroundings, but on places as far away as the North Pole and Antarctica.”

From *365 Ways to Save the Earth* by Philippe Bourseiller

Home

- Have energy audit done on your house for insulation, leaking windows, etc. Fix accordingly. Auditor may suggest an attic fan to ease the air conditioning load in summer.
- Get hot water heater blanket. Lower the temperature on heater to 120 F. or less. Turn it off when away.
- Replace regular (non-dimmer) light bulbs with compact fluorescents; need changing less often, save electricity & money. If every U.S. household replaced one light bulb with a compact fluorescent light bulb, it would prevent an amount of pollution equal to removing one million cars from the road.
- Purchase a water bottle and fill it during the day rather than buying bottled water. Tap water is treated to be drinkable and is rigorously checked. It is also much cheaper, and another reason to not buy bottled water is the energy cost to make, transport and fill the bottles. If you must buy, refill the water bottles repeatedly before recycling them.
- Use white vinegar as a cleaning agent vs. more toxic commercial products, for example, use several spoonfuls of vinegar per gallon of water to wash windows; dry with newspaper. Buy phosphate-free soaps and detergents.
- Pick up a piece of trash from the street or sidewalk every day. If each of us did that, we would remove 290 million pieces per day.
- Install a programmable thermostat and turn down your heating by 5 degrees in winter. Ideal living room temp. is 68 F. and bedrooms are healthier at 64 F. Keep the thermostat high in the summer. Feel free to aggressively adjust your clothing accordingly. Turn down thermostat to 55 in winter and up to 80 in summer when away.
- Cool off without air-conditioning when possible. A fan uses 1/10th the energy; window shades, blinds, shutters, and the cool of night use no energy.
- Place a weight (small plastic bottle filled with water) in the toilet tank to conserve water with each flush, if you don't have a low-use water tank. Turn off tap when you brush your teeth, soap your hands, shave, wash the car, or hand-wash dishes or clothes (when tap is on, 5 to 15 gallons water flow out every minute). Wash laundry only when dirty. the world's need for water is growing faster than its population.
- Run the washing machine only when it is full, A washing machine uses 50 gallons of water per cycle. When replacing your washing machine, invest in a front-loading machine which generally uses 40% less water than top loaders.
- Call your utility to request green electricity (generated from water/wind power). If a Lawrence, NJ resident interested in solar, check out <http://sustainablelawrence.org/solar/index.html>

Shopping

- Support local businesses where your dollars benefit your own community.
- Take grocery bags (or tote bags) with you to store and reuse them until they almost fall apart.
- Avoid box stores. Buy more local products and produce; less transportation cost and packaging; you'll be supporting the local economy. Food often fresher and better tasting.
- Buy at least one product from an organic producer. Strawberries, apples and spinach are good choices because they retain the highest pesticide residue. Pesticides have contaminated groundwater in 38 states and last year killed 67 million birds.
- Use only white or natural-colored recyclable toilet paper (colored TP of any kind releases toxic dyes when it dissolves. Charmin and Cottonelle do not dissolve readily and are not made from re-cycled paper.)
- Say "no" to disposable products like paper dishes & napkins, plastic eating utensils & cups, disposable razors, fast food packaging, etc..
- Do NOT buy farmed fish such as bass, salmon, shrimp and trout, as doing so exhausts wild stocks more rapidly (producing 1 lb. of farmed salmon requires 3 lbs. wild fish as feed + chemicals and antibiotics). Also do not buy swordfish, turtle meat or ivory which are endangered, and learn what other fish are threatened by over-consumption.
- Buy Energy Star appliances (symbol means product meets strict environmental standards of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Qualified TVs use 3 watts or less per when off; computer monitors use less than 8 watts on standby and 60 watts during normal use.
- Buy used, sell used. Rediscover the joy of used goods, second-hand stores, garage sales, and bargaining.
- Use less wrapping paper. Each year, millions of trees end up as wrapping paper. Use ribbon or cord instead of sticky tape to fasten your gift-wrappings. Then you can reuse the wrapping paper instead of tearing it up and throwing it out.

Transportation

- Avoid your car as if your own health, environment and future depended on it. Use alternative transportation such as walking, bicycling, carpooling or riding mass transit. Shop at places close to home or try to do without it for one more day. If you have to drive, offer to do a neighbor's errands or shopping, too. Even better, own fewer cars -- save insurance and maintenance costs, plus environmental costs of manufacturing and eventual disposal.
- Drive more slowly. Gas mileage declines quickly above 60 miles an hour. Each 5-mile increase above 60 is like paying 10 cents a gallon more for gas.
- Properly dispose of car batteries at a local resource recovery center or by calling the department of public works to find out where to take it.
- Use public transportation. It saves over 855 million gallons of gasoline per year. Take the train rather than the plane for journeys less than 300 miles. The train or bus is usually the least polluting means of transportation for such distances.

- Do not use your car for short trips. Half of all car travel in America is for trips under three miles – an easy distance to bike or walk. A vehicle produces the most pollution when started from a cold engine. The catalytic converter is fully efficient only after driving a few miles.
- Ride a bicycle in the city. Cyclists sit higher up and breathe in less pollution.
- Buy retreaded tires and recycle old ones. Retreading uses half as much energy as making a new tire. Every year, about 281 million tires are scrapped. Production of a new car tire takes seven gallons of oil. Buy your tires from dealers who take part in collection programs and avoid those who don't.

Children

- Don't patronize fast food chains. If you visit fast food restaurants, think about what you are doing and make your children aware of the other results of mass-produced food: intensive, polluting agriculture, poor nutritional quality, mountains of non-recyclable packaging, and standardization of tastes.
- Buy organic food for your baby. If "going organic" for the whole family seems daunting, give priority to babies and young children. Pesticides can increase susceptibility to certain cancers by breaking down the immune system's resistance to cancer cells. Infants and children are among those at greatest risk.
- Do not throw out your children's old toys. When your child outgrows a toy, encourage your child to donate old toys to charities, or to children's hospitals or foundations, and explain the benefits of doing so.
- Adopt a pet from your local animal shelter. Read the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. If you decide you are ready for a pet, don't spend money at a pet shop, encouraging more pets to be raised. Each year millions of dogs enter shelters, yet of the 59 million dogs owned in the U.S., less than 1/5 are adopted from shelters. Give a homeless pet a new chance at life.
- Choose sustainable school supplies: metal or wood pencil sharpeners and rulers (neither varnished nor colored); these last longer and produce less pollution than plastic ones. Choose a solar powered calculator instead of a battery powered one. Buy folders and notebooks made from recycled paper. Above all, inventory last year's supplies for possible use before buying new.
- Educate your children. Explain to them that consumption has limits. Teach them concern about the environment. Be firm about saving electricity, turning off faucets, and turning off the computer when not in use. Set an example! Education often succeeds when there is a model to follow every day.

Gardening

- Minimize/eliminate lawns.
- Water more deeply and less frequently. Water only when it hasn't rained, not on a timer.
- Compost coffee grounds, eggshells, rinds, seeds, stems, etc. to use in flower and vegetable gardens and pots.
- Weed mechanically or by hand. Avoid using chemical weed killers. To remove weeds from your garden, hoe regularly, and pull weeds out before they seed.

- Hoing aerates the soil, and the rough surface of the hoed soil allows water to reach plant roots and drain better, rendering watering more efficient.
- Cover soil to keep it moist and to slow weed growth. You can mulch the soil around the base of plants, trees and bushes using hay, dried grass cuttings, leaves, wood shavings, chippings, etc.
 - Choose compost and natural fertilizers rather than chemical fertilizers. Nitrates cause algae growth and deplete oxygen, suffocating water life. Natural fertilizers (stone meal, bone meal, or wood ash) and compost from organic waste improve soil structure and fertility effectively.

Education/Political Action

- Deeply examine your consumptive lifestyle. What do you really need?
- National policies lag behind many states and indeed reflect blinders to the danger of global warming. Petition your Congressional representatives, engage in letter writing campaigns, challenge federal officials at Dept of Energy, EPA and other agencies to address global warming **now**.
- Support public education efforts such as recent movies, "An Inconvenient Truth," "Who Killed the Electric Car", and HBO's "Too Hot to Handle." The more people reached and educated, the more likely change will occur.
- Implement the Sierra Club's Cool Cities program in your city.
- Vote every chance you get and encourage our governmental and business leaders at every level to do the right things. They represent us, want our vote or our money, so let them know what is important to you.
- Do not forget that you cast votes several times each day by what you buy. These choices influence, sometimes even more than elections do, the way the economy is organized and society develops.
- Own a business? Consider becoming a member of 1% FOR THE PLANET by contributing at least 1% of net revenues to the environmental organization of your choice. Use of the member logo increases your company's visibility in a crowded marketplace. Check it out at www.onepercentfortheplanet.org.
- Invest in socially responsible companies. One in five adults can't read or write. Of these, 98% are in developing countries and two-thirds are women. In Sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 1 in 10 people aged 15 to 24 was infected with HIV, and 2.4 million people died of AIDS. In 1966, Indira Gandhi pointed out that the greatest source of pollution on earth was poverty. And yet 4% of the wealth accumulated by the 225 richest people in the world could educate, feed, and provide medical treatment for the entire population of the planet. Reward companies that acknowledge that social inequalities can be alleviated by their actions – invest in socially responsible companies.

Suggestions from Philo Elmer, Maria Geigel, Janet Hubbard, Nick Mellis, George Mullikin, Chris Piatek, Steve Weyer, Ruth Widmer, and 365 Ways to Save the Earth book.