



20

*Ways to  
Go Green  
@ School  
& in Life*

**Sustainable Students  
Sustainable Solutions**



## You're Part of the Solution

These days there's a *lot* of eco-talk being tossed around, along with inspiring actions. From Al Gore to campus sustainability advocates, folks are looking for ways to be part of the solution in creating a more sustainable society.

You may be wondering where you fit into the equation. Perhaps you don't own a composting toilet or know much about creating biofuel from dining hall waste. That's okay! Sometimes you need to start "small" by first exploring what you can do in your own corner of the world.

### Sustainability is...

... the ability to meet our needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.



And a good place to start is by asking yourself: What do I have a passion for and where would I like to focus my initial efforts? That's important! In today's "go green" society, there are plenty of "shoulds" being thrown your way and it can be tough to tune into your own voice. Maybe you are water-conscious or want to figure simple ways to decrease your energy consumption. Or maybe eating local is your thing to cut down on the number of miles your food has to travel.

We have 20 simple options laid out for you here. Consider these suggestions, chew on them a bit and then determine what sustainability means to *you*. You have every right to be concerned. After all, we're ultimately talking about your future. Tuning in and taking action to be better stewards of the earth can make us all part of a sustainable solution.

### Make Connections

To understand sustainability better, consider things like...

- food trucked thousands of miles to your plate releases carbon dioxide into the air and provides fewer profits to farmers
- using Styrofoam to-go containers in dining halls or restaurants leaves products that will sit in a landfill for a *very* long time
- running the water while you brush your teeth causes 3 to 5 gallons to literally go down the drain every minute

Make connections between actions and environmental consequences as you decide how to "go green" in your own life.



## 20 Ways to Go Green

As you determine how to go green in life, at school and as a member of society, here are 20 action options!

### Watch the Water

It's easy to waste many gallons of water in our everyday lives, as we use toilets, showers, sinks, tubs and more. However, it's also pretty easy to save water by:

- not running the faucet when brushing your teeth, shaving or washing your face
- keeping drinking water in the fridge instead of running the faucet until it gets cold enough
- taking quicker showers—and not shaving your legs in the shower, as that uses up *much* more water



### Water Savings

By turning off the water when we brush our teeth, shave or wash our face, we can easily save about 150 gallons of water each month!



### Beware of Phantom Loads

Appliances that are plugged in but not turned on still sap energy—up to 40% of the overall energy you use! Get rid of this “phantom load” by plugging

items into a power strip and turning off that strip when you're done.

You'll save a great deal of energy when you unplug:

- cell phone and iPod chargers
- computers, CD players and stereos
- TVs, DVD players and DVRs

So, turn it off AND unplug it for maximum energy savings!

### Wrap It Up

We sure do waste a lot of paper when we use wrapping paper one time and then chuck it. Instead:

- open gifts carefully so you can reuse the paper, whether to wrap another present, use as backing on a bulletin board or for crafting purposes
- consider using the colored Sunday comics as wrapping paper instead—that way, you can recycle the paper with your regular newspaper stash
- wrap gifts in useful, reusable items, like dish towels, scarves and socks—then it's two gifts in one!



### Put Your Computer to Sleep

Screen savers are fun, yet putting your computer in sleep mode instead can reduce energy by 60 to 70 percent.

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## Take a Paper Cut

You can cut back on paper use and abuse with the following tips:

- look for paper that is process-chlorine free (PCF) or totally-chlorine free (TCF)—that'll help prevent dioxins created by regular paper production from being released into waterways, then into fish, then into us, carcinogens and all
- also look for paper that has a high percentage of post-consumer recycled content
- don't print everything!
- use up old notebooks
- get used textbooks
- pay bills online
- use the back and front of your paper
- change the margins on your documents so they can print on one page instead of two

## Junk Mail Begone!

You can save a LOT of paper by removing your name from unwanted mailing lists. Head to [www.dmachoice.org/MPS](http://www.dmachoice.org/MPS) to find out how.

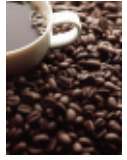


## Be Coffee Conscious

In order to sip a brew that's better for the environment, look for the following:

- **Shade Grown**—Many farmers now use full sun to grow their coffee

crops, yet this results in deforestation. Instead, coffee grown in shade saves trees and bird habitats.



- **Organic**—Coffee grown organically doesn't involve pesticides that can be harmful to workers and that can also get into the water system.
- **Fair Trade**—Items with the Fair Trade distinction mean that a fair share of the profits go directly to the farmers.

## Clean Green

Instead of using toxic cleaners that can contribute to indoor air pollution and contaminate water, check out natural-based cleaners instead. Or use natural household items to clean, such as baking soda, salt, lemon juice and vinegar. Find out how at [www.thegreenguide.com/doc/120/diy](http://www.thegreenguide.com/doc/120/diy).

## Living Off-Campus

Live "greener" by:

- ✓ keeping your thermostat down – just bundle up!
- ✓ installing a low-flow showerhead that uses 2.5 gallons of water/minute instead of 5 gallons
- ✓ having plants around to improve the air quality
- ✓ purchasing renewable energy, like wind power
- ✓ running full dishwasher loads
- ✓ having an energy audit done of your home

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## Buy Local

Much of our food travels an average of 1500 to 2500 miles to get to us – that’s a lot of carbon emissions! To reduce the transportation impact of food and other items, while also supporting your local economy, consider buying local. You can do this by:

- buying books at an independent bookstore instead of a megastore
- checking out local community gardens, farms and farmers markets
- being more aware of where your food comes from
- investigating local businesses to see what they have to offer

## Take Your Own To-Go

While this may feel funny at first, it can quickly become an easy habit: bringing your own to-go container to restaurants. When restaurants serve huge helpings and then give you Styrofoam to-go containers, you can prevent those landfill-sitters from going home on your watch! Bring along your own sealable bag or plastic container for leftovers. Yum!

## Buy Recycled

There are products available that use recycled materials, such as:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ tissues
- ✓ paper towels
- ✓ bags
- ✓ clothes



## Before You Toss It

When you’re ready to get rid of something, consider if it can be used again. Donate to a charity, organize an end-of-the-year “stuff drive” or have a garage sale.



You can also use recycled items found at garage sales and secondhand shops. There are many things out there that still have *plenty* of good use in them!

## Report It

If you see a faucet dripping, don’t look the other way. If the heat or air conditioning is up too high, don’t open a window to counteract it. Instead, report it so something can be done right away!

## Get Packaging Savvy

The amount of excess packaging tossed into our waste stream is alarming. Cut back by:

- buying things in bulk to reduce packaging
- avoiding items with excess packaging
- reusing some of the packaging the next time you mail something instead of just throwing it away

**Personal Packaging**  
Washing and reusing foil and plastic bags makes a lot of sense. They’re rarely “used up” after one outing!

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## Recycle Stuff

As we use stuff, it's important for us to recycle as much as we can. That includes:

- **printer cartridges**—drop them at your local office supply store or [www.recycleplace.com](http://www.recycleplace.com)
- **cell phones**—many are refurbished to benefit women in domestic violence shelters—visit [www.collectivegood.com](http://www.collectivegood.com), drop your phone at the *Body Shop* or visit [www.calltoprotect.org](http://www.calltoprotect.org)
- **TVs, PDAs, cameras, MP3 players, and more**—when you visit [www.recycleforbreastcancer.org](http://www.recycleforbreastcancer.org) they'll send you a prepaid shipping label, recycle your goods for a profit and then donate proceeds to a national breast cancer charity
- **batteries**—take regular ones to a local community recycling facility and drop worn out rechargeable batteries at Radio Shack
- **eyeglasses**—LensCrafters Stores will clean, repair and send old glasses to developing countries; the Lions Club

## Drip Dry

Clothes dryers use energy that can easily be saved by hanging your clothes to dry. Plus, your clothes often last longer if they're not subjected to the punishing heat of the dryer. So, get a drying rack and some hangers and hang it up!

## Second Life for Sneakers!

Send your old ones to Nike at [www.nikereuseashoe.com](http://www.nikereuseashoe.com). Their NikeGO campaign recycles the rubber, foam, and leather to make athletic flooring for kids. Or send gently used running shoes to [www.oneworldrunning.com](http://www.oneworldrunning.com) for distribution to athletes in Latin America and Africa.



collects and distributes them to folks in need, too

Sources: *Prevention* (April 2006); *World Ark* (Jan/Feb. 2008)

## Butts Out

Worldwide, 4.5 trillion cigarette butts are tossed on the ground every year. Yup, that's *trillion*. They release harmful chemicals while also making a giant mess. If you're a smoker, make a personal effort. And, if not, encourage your smoking friends to snuff out their butts in responsible locations. They *don't* just disappear and biodegrade.

## Do Full Loads

When washing clothes, maximize the effort by only running full loads. Clean the lint trap to help machines run efficiently, too. And wash clothes in cold or warm water to save even more energy. That didn't hurt a bit, did it?



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## Light the Night, Responsibly

By now, you've likely heard the virtues of those swirly CFLs (compact fluorescent bulbs) being touted. They save a vast amount of energy—about 75%—and can last 10 times longer than regular bulbs. So, why not give them a whirl?

Another simple way to save energy is to turn off lights when you're not using them. Enough said.

## Shut Downs

Save energy by getting in the shut down habit. Shut down:

- ✓ lights when you're leaving
- ✓ electronics that are sapping energy
- ✓ heaters or air conditioners when you're not around

## Use Person- vs. Car-Power

Let your legs take you where you need to go by committing to more walking and biking instead of always relying on car power. Rent a bike if you don't have one to tool around campus. Walk to a friend's house along a safe, well-lit route. The exercise will do you good while the reduction in carbon emissions will do the earth some good.

Don't forget about the beauty of public transportation, too!



## Small Writing = Big Savings

When you give someone a card, put their name in small writing in the stamp area. That way, it's easy for them to reuse the envelope, simply by putting a stamp over your writing.



## Reuse Envelopes

Many envelopes still have a lot of life left in them! When someone gives you a card or you get something in the mail that isn't too banged up, consider putting a blank label over the original address and then using that envelope again. You'll save paper *and* subtly send an environmental message at the same time that you're sending your mail message!

## Be Car Smart

When you do hop in a car, a few strategies can minimize your impact:

- inflate tires properly and you'll improve your gas mileage by 3 to 7 percent
- carpool with others when running errands and such so there are fewer cars on the road
- maintain your car regularly with oil changes and tune-ups so it's operating at maximum capacity

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## Bring Your Own

Simple habits like the following can have a big impact:

- Have a canvas or nylon bag at the ready when you go shopping. Then you won't contribute to the 500 billion to 1 trillion plastic bags consumed every year. They contaminate the soil and our waterways, plus it takes about 12 million barrels of oil annually in the U.S. alone to produce plastic bags.
- Keep reusable plates, mugs and silverware in your room or apartment instead of using disposable ones.
- Take along your own reusable mug or bottle so you don't have to use disposable cups.

## Stay Tuned in

Last but not least, keep on educating yourself so you can be a savvy consumer and a better steward of the earth.

- Read about sustainability issues

### Bottled Water

Billions of plastic water bottles are clogging up our landfills—and they'll be there for an awfully long time.

Every year, 150 billion liters of bottled water are consumed worldwide. So, consider using your reusable mug or bottle to fill up with water from the tap or water cooler instead. It's good!



## Keep on Learning

- ✓ [www.thegreenguide.com](http://www.thegreenguide.com)—general green info
- ✓ [www.myfootprint.org](http://www.myfootprint.org)—establish your ecological footprint
- ✓ [www.worldwatch.org/pubs/goodstuff/](http://www.worldwatch.org/pubs/goodstuff/)—a “Behind-the-Scenes Guide to the Things We Buy”
- ✓ [www.sustainabletable.org](http://www.sustainabletable.org)—the sustainable food movement
- ✓ [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)—Nature Conservancy and their Campaign for a Sustainable Planet

- Get involved on campus or in the community
- Attend a presentation you might not have previously tried
- Watch a film like “An Inconvenient Truth” or read a book like *The World Without Us* (2007)
- Discuss sustainability issues
- Choose class projects that involve sustainable topics

Going green happens in steps, depending on your interests and efforts. Gather information, engage in conversations and listen to your inner voice. Whatever you choose to begin with, it's just important that you do *something* to be part of the sustainable solution.