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THE WRITERS' PROJECT

GreenSpeak: Conscious Living

Green is the color du jour, as the world wakes to how we all might tread more lightly as we go. Here are 10 ways each of us can live greener at work, at home and on the road.

- 1 Reconsider your commute:** Live as close as possible to work. Carpool, bus, metro, walk or bike if you can (even a day a week helps). Go hybrid. Or think about telecommuting if you can.
- 2 Green your office:** Encourage employees to drink filtered, not bottled, water by providing a clean water source. (And carry your water-to-go in a reusable metal bottle – more than 70 million plastic bottles get thrown away daily in the U.S.) Stock real flatware, not plastic. Buy recycled paper products, then recycle them again.
- 3 Recycle e-waste:** Computers, monitors, TVs, cell phones and other electronics are clogging landfills with toxic components, including lead. Contact your city about special recycling programs for e-waste or donate your old equipment to a non-profit.
- 4 Shop wise:** Estate sales, thrift stores and craigslist are great sources for something you need that doesn't need to be new. Other tips: Take your own reusable cloth or mesh bag when shopping. Buy fair-trade goods. Visit worldwatch.org for a "Good Stuff" guide.
- 5 Hype not:** Proceed with caution when reading product labels. Words like "sustainable," "natural" and "green" may be simply – yep – marketing buzz. Check *Consumer Reports* for eco-label intelligence: greenchoices.org/eco-labels/eco-good.cfm.
- 6 Save a tree:** Make packaging part of your purchase decision – choose those items with minimal wrapping. Donate your magazines by to hospitals, doctors' offices, shelters. Or trade favorite journals with neighbors and friends.
- 7 Eat your veggies:** A plant-based diet typically consumes fewer resources. According to the Earth Day Network, crop-based food requires 0.78 global hectares per ton to produce, compared to animal-based food, which needs 2.1 global hectares per ton.

Oh, and buy locally produced food – it reduces the fossil fuels needed to transport it.
- 8 Compost Away:** Turn your food scraps into garden compost. No room? Try indoor vermiculture (that's fancy lingo for worms). Visit smartgardening.com.
- 9 Wash cold.** One study says that if all U.S. washers used cold water, we'd save 30 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per year. Visit lindysues.com for more tips.
- 10 See the light:** Studies say that if every U.S. household replaced just one standard light bulb with a low-energy compact fluorescent bulb, we'd prevent enough greenhouse-gas pollution to equal taking one million cars off the road.

How to Calculate Your Impact

Like it or not, each of us contributes to global warming. To calculate your carbon footprint (the amount of CO₂ your actions generate) visit: <http://www.climatecrisis.net/takeaction/carboncalculator/>

Take a peek at your overall impact on the environment here: <http://www.earthday.net/footprint>

Sources include the Earth Day Network and Worldwatch Institute.

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