

# SIMPLY GREEN

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## *10 Simple Steps Toward Living Green*

Going green helps to protect the environment, conserves natural resources, and promotes good health. Here are ten simple steps to follow (with tips under each main headline) to help you get on your way to a more greener and hopefully happier life-style.

### Go Green by Using Plants

Houseplants do more than just make your home look pretty. They can actually serve as natural air filters for your house and can rid it of pollutants. Here is how to make the most of your houseplants:

- Keep one houseplant per every ten square yards to help keep the air clean in that area.
- Mix night synthesizing plants (like orchids) with regular plants to help them work around the clock to filter your home's air for cleaner breathing.
- Use a general mixture of plants to filter out as many pollutants as possible. Different plants can help with different pollutants. For example, philodendrons and aloe plants help clean formaldehyde out of the air. Formaldehyde is often found in everyday items such as cosmetics, carpet cleaners, fertilizers, cigarettes, fireplaces, paper, plastics, glues and adhesives, even as preservatives in some types of foods like fish and dried nuts.

### Use Homemade Remedies

Avoid using harsh chemicals in the house when you clean by making your own natural types of cleansers. Make your own natural detergents for the laundry (see [www.eHow.com](http://www.eHow.com) and type in Organic Natural Recipe for Laundry Soap) and use environmentally friendly solutions for pest control.

- For a natural drain cleaner, combine baking soda and vinegar, and flush down the drain along with boiling water.
- Use lemon juice around the house to remove mildew.
- Cornstarch works as an effective carpet cleaner.
- To rid your house of ants naturally, squeeze a lemon at their point of entry and leave the peel nearby as a further deterrent.
- Use flypaper if you are overrun with flies or better yet, make your own using yellow-colored paper smeared with honey.

### Be Conscious With Your Garbage

When throwing away garbage, know what is actually garbage, what can be recycled, and what is able to be composted. Try to be conscious about how much waste you will produce when you buy something. Know what items can be toxic and should not go in with the regular trash to avoid potential environmental concerns.

- Start a compost heap for disposing of kitchen and food waste. Make sure you know what types of items can be properly composted and how to add to and turn the mixture properly. For complete instructions about composting techniques visit our office's website at [www.preblecountyrecycles.org](http://www.preblecountyrecycles.org).
- Buy food in bulk to reduce excess packaging. Buy food in containers that can be reused or recycled.
- Use reusable coffee cups, water bottles, pens and razors.
- Don't throw away items that can be very toxic if they make it into the regular waste stream. Items such as these include: paint, paint thinner, car oil, light bulbs, computer parts, batteries, aerosol cans, and so forth. These items (along with many other potentially toxic ones) can be properly disposed of by utilizing the Household Hazardous Waste drop-off trailer (HHW trailer) located at the Preble County Landfill (4239 US Rt. 127 South in Eaton). It is free to drop off these items to the HHW trailer, citizens are required to stop in the landfill office to sign in and list items they are dropping off.

## Be Green at Work

- To reduce paper, use both sides when printing. Use scrap paper for miscellaneous memos. Try to reuse envelopes as much as possible. Consider purchasing a reusable mesh or cloth coffee filter for the coffee-maker at work to cut down on the use of disposable coffee filters.
- Reduce your waste and bring your own coffee mug or water bottle to work. This avoids the buying of and disposal of Styrofoam cups. Bring your lunch in a reusable container instead of using paper plates or baggies that must be thrown away.
- Be conscious of the type of office supplies you use and the amount of supplies that must be discarded. For example, use paperclips instead of less-environmentally friendly adhesive tape and use colored-pencils instead of solvent-based markers. Consider using mechanical pencils and refillable ink pens.

## Reuse, Reuse, Reuse

The more items we recycle, the less goes into the landfill saving valuable space which is meant for non-recyclable items.

- Take plastic bags back to the grocery store if they collect them for recycling (like to Wal-mart's collection bin near the entrance of the store). If the store does not recycle plastic bags, take your own back to bag up your new groceries or make use of reusable cloth bags to carry items home.
- Make crafts out of recycled items. Birdfeeders can be made from two-liter soda bottles. A decorative pencil holder can be made from a used tube from a roll of toilet paper. Fabric scraps can be sewn into quilts or made into items like vests, jackets, and purses.
- Instead of using paper towels, use reusable and washable household rags. Instead of throwing away plastic containers that take out food comes in, wash and save them to store future left-overs.
- Donate unwanted items such as clothes, shoes, and old appliances (like refrigerators) to local charities.
- Use rechargeable batteries whenever possible to avoid throwing toxic batteries into the garbage.

## Treat Your Body to Green Living

- Buy organic foods. Use beauty products that are made from all-natural ingredients such as herbal and flower extracts. Buy beauty products packaged in recyclable containers. Wear clothes made from natural fibers such as cotton, hemp, and wool and also made with all-natural dyes (such as vegetable dyes or herbal dyes).

## Think Locally

- Buy locally produced meat, produce, and dairy products. Since food travels at a lesser distance to get to you it doesn't need as much packaging or preservatives and is healthier for you. Less gas is used too. The food is often fresher, is not mass-produced (using less fertilizers and pesticides), and buying locally helps the farmers in your area while improving the neighborhood's economy.

## Drive Intelligently

You can reduce your gas consumption by following a few simple guidelines:

- Combine errands within the same neighborhoods to drive shorter distances. Use a map to find the shortest route from point to point.
- Carpool, take the bus or use human-powered modes of transportation such as walking or riding a bike. You can do errands and get your daily exercise!

## Green Your Holidays

- Consider using fabric bags to wrap gifts or use recycled or recyclable wrapping paper. Reuse and decorate old newspapers to make your own wrapping paper. Buy sturdy gift boxes that can be used year after year. Buy gifts with less packaging. Choose alternative gifts for people. You can offer to do a needed chore for them instead of giving them a physical gift that uses packaging and takes up space. An added plus is that the gift will come from your heart instead of a factory!