

**14 ways to live a more sustainable lifestyle.**

Find out what you need to know about

sustainable living.

People are coming around to the understanding that we need to protect the Earth for future generations.

Everything you do in your day-to-day life has an impact on the planet, from the food you eat to the car you drive.

This doesn't mean you should only eat vegetables and start riding a bike everywhere. But you could try consuming less meat and only driving when necessary.

It's small changes like these that can help you to lessen your adverse impact on the environment.

**What is sustainable living?**

Sustainable living involves reducing the amount of Earth's resources that you use and so help protect it.

There are a several ways you can do this, including limiting the amount of energy you use, using ecologically friendly products and changing your diet — but we'll talk more about that later!

In a nutshell, to live a sustainable lifestyle you should try to have as little impact on the Earth as possible, while also trying to replace the resources that you do use.

**Why is living sustainably important?**

At the moment, we are consuming natural resources, using energy and creating waste at a rate that isn't sustainable.

This leads to environmental issues, such as pollution and climate change, which cause harm to the environment, wildlife and humans.

By making some small changes to your lifestyle, you can reduce your carbon footprint and help to tackle these issues.

**How to live a more sustainable life.**

If you want to live a more sustainable lifestyle but don’t know how, try following some of these tips:

**1. Save energy**

By using less energy, you will reduce carbon emissions. There are a number of ways you can save energy at home, including switching off standby appliances, turning your heating down and hanging clothes to dry instead of using a drier.

Following these energy-saving tips will reduce the amount of gas and electricity that you use.

**2. Eat less meat**

The production of meat is one of the biggest contributors to climate change and the pollution of landscapes and waterways. By eating less of it, you can help to reduce the impact that the meat industry has on the Earth.

**3. Use reusable alternatives**

Single-use products, particularly plastic ones, tend to end up in landfill and the ocean, causing harm to wildlife and the environment. Prevent this by using reusable and eco-friendly alternatives instead. See the later section on *‘Single use products’* for ideas on this.

**4. Go paperless**

To avoid wasting paper, choose to receive letters over email and only print off documents if necessary. You could also ask shops to send your receipt over email instead of printing it off.

**5. Use renewable energy**

If possible, consider powering your home using renewable energy to reduce your carbon emissions. Replacing your petrol or diesel-fuelled car with an electric one would also help to achieve this.

**6. Recycle and reuse**

Make sure you're recycling by putting your rubbish in the correct bins. Also, to reduce waste try to reuse products and items as many times as possible before binning them.

See the later section on *‘10 Home Items You Can Reuse’* for more ideas.

**7. Grow your own produce**

By growing your own fruit and vegetables, you can ensure you're not using pesticides that will contribute to water and air pollution. This will also help reduce the amount of fossil fuel used to transport food produce to supermarkets.

**8. Donate unused items**

To help reduce waste, if you don't use a product or wear a piece of clothing anymore, give it to a charity shop or someone you know who would make use of it.

**9. Save water**

You can save water in and around your home by making a number of small changes. Try installing a water butt and making use of grey water to avoid wasting drinking water. Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth.

**10. Buy fair trade products**

When a product has been Fairtrade certified it means it has been produced by a company committed to sustainable production. Keep an eye out for the Fairtrade mark on the packaging of products you buy.

**11. Drive less**

If it’s close enough, ride a bike or walk to your destination instead of driving– it’s better for the environment and your health. Using public transport is another good way to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**12. Don't waste food**

If you have leftovers, don’t throw them away. Save them for your lunch or tea the next day, or even freeze them. However, if they do go off, use them to create compost for your garden.

**13. Wear sustainable clothing**

The fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries in the world. To lessen the impact this trade has on the planet, you could buy more of your clothes from charity shops and sustainable clothing outlets.

**14. Use eco-friendly cleaning products**

Some cleaning products contain chemicals that can be harmful to the environment. By committing to using green eco-friendly cleaning products, you can help prevent these chemicals from harming the Earth.

**Single use products**

Trying to use less single-use products can be a challenge. After all, the reason you use them is because they’re so convenient, right?

But do you ever think about what happens to these products once you bin them? They tend to end up in landfill or the ocean, causing harm to the environment and wildlife.

You can help change this by opting to use reusable alternatives instead of their single-use counterpart – they do the job just as well!

Here’s a list of some great eco-friendly and reusable products you could try:

1. A reusable water bottle

Most of you probably have a reusable bottle in your cupboard somewhere, but whether you use it or not is a different matter.

If you start using a reusable bottle, you could prevent the use of more than 100 disposable plastic bottles every year, helping to stop so many of them from ending up in landfill and the ocean.

2. Toilet paper spray

Lots of people think wet wipes and baby wipes don’t contain plastic, but they do! An alternative to these products is toilet paper sprays.

By spraying this solution on a piece of toilet paper, you can achieve the same effect as a wipe without having such a negative impact on the environment.

Although, if you do insist on using wipes, make sure you put them in the bin and not down the toilet as they often lead to blockages.

3. Reusable straws

In the UK, an estimated 8.5 million straws get thrown away every year, creating a huge amount of plastic waste.

Lots of companies have begun banning plastic straws as part of their efforts to use less plastic.

So, if you use plastic straws at home, follow in their footsteps by purchasing a pack of reusable straws instead – you can get them in metal, glass, silicone and bamboo.

4. Reusable grocery bags

Otherwise known as’ bags for life’, reusable grocery bags can eliminate the need for single-use plastic bags.

However, it’s vital you reuse these bags otherwise they can end up adding to the problem.

Bags for life must be used at least four times to be better for the environment than single-use plastic ones, but you should aim to use yours as many times as possible!

5. Rechargeable batteries

Batteries contain a number of chemicals which can cause water and soil pollution when they end up in landfill.

Rechargeable batteries are a fantastic alternative – they are far better for the environment and can save you storage space and money.

All you need is a pack of rechargeable batteries and a battery charger, and then you’re set.

6. Wax wraps

When it comes to wrapping leftovers or sandwiches for work, lots of us use single-use products such as cling film and plastic bags – these products create unnecessary waste.

Invest in some reusable beeswax wraps for a more environmentally friendly way of wrapping your food.

If you have some spare time and are looking to save money, Good Housekeeping has put together a tutorial to help you make your own.

7. A bamboo toothbrush

Although plastic toothbrushes aren’t single use, it’s estimated that 3.6 billion of them are used across the world every year, with 80% of them ending up in the ocean.

These toothbrushes add to the already huge amount of plastic polluting the ocean, causing undue harm to marine life.

Try using a bamboo toothbrush instead. Unlike plastic, bamboo is biodegradable, so you can use one knowing it won’t sit in landfill or the ocean for thousands of years.

You can pick up these products online from a number of eco-friendly shops which specialise in selling reusable products.

**10 Home Items You Can Reuse Over and Over Again**

1. Glass Jars, Containers, or Cans

Glass and metal are easily recycled, but why not cut down on excess packaging and waste by reusing them? Glass jars and old coffee canisters make great containers for bulk pantry items, desk organizers, or bathroom containers. And there are a million ways to reuse mason jars beyond food canning — even many pasta sauce brands use jars that are ideal for food preservation. Got a lot of leftover narrow-necked beer bottles? Make them into a set of drinking glasses! Or how about a wine rack, or display shelves out of coffee cans?

2. Gallon Jugs, plastic soda bottles, takeaway and other plastic containers

Beyond using jugs and bottles to store homemade natural cleaners, with a little modification you can turn those plastic containers into useful household items like a plastic bottle broom! Make bird feeders out of old soda bottles, or food bins, shoe cubbies and dustpans/scoops out of plastic jugs. How about making reusable self-watering seed pots or a mobile phone charging station out of a shampoo bottle (browse the Internet to see how easy these things are)? And don’t throw out those takeaway containers! Many are sturdy, dishwasher safe, and excellent for reuse in the kitchen.

3. Newspapers, Magazines, and Paper Bags

Overrun by paper? There are lots of great ways to re-purpose all the paper in your life. Get creative and create amazing and useful woven baskets and trays out of magazines and newspapers. Recycle newspapers, grocery bags, and magazines as wrapping paper. How about some compostable seed pots? Or DIY envelopes out of outdated calendar pages? And if you’re really ambitious, make a gorgeous wood-like flooring with paper bags.

4. Clothes, Towels, and Bedding

Don’t throw out old towels, clothes, and bedding! Cut them up into washable cleaning rags! Or check out those excellent *Pinterest* ideas for ways to upcycle old clothes into new ones! Why not turn those torn t-shirts into beautiful braided rugs? If you’ve got sewing skills, turn old flannels into reusable dusters.

5. Seeds

At the end of the growing season, let a couple of your vegetables and flowers go to seed, collect the seeds and save them for next season for free! Search the Internet for everything you need to know about harvesting and saving seeds to reuse again and again!

6. Laundry Waste

# If you use them, don’t throw out those old dryer sheets! They make excellent dusting rags, especially for picking up pet hair. They work well scrubbing off soap scum and polishing chrome too! You can even make them into a dress if you’re really determined. Collect the lint from the dryer to make recycled paper or papier-mâché, or even compostable seed pots.

# 7. Plastic Bags

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# When the box of cereal is empty, save the inner bag, wash, dry, and cut it in order to wrap sandwiches. Plastic bags can be used as pet waste bags or rubbish bin liners, or you can reuse them at the grocery store.

8. Bathroom Items

Save old toothbrushes to scrub hard-to-reach places, like grout and underneath the fixtures on taps. Or clean old toothbrushes and reuse them as eyebrow brushes, hair colour applicators, or for cleaning tools, electronics, or other delicate or hard-to-clean items. Empty toothpaste tubes can be re-purposed as a funnel by cutting off the bottom, or as a frosting tube for icing cakes.

9. Broken Dishes

Collect broken china to re-tile outdoor tables, flower pots, paths, or as a unique border for your garden. Use broken china to make a key fob or jewellery. Plant small plants in old stained coffee mugs.

10. Old Furniture

Refinish or repair rather than throwing out old furniture. Re-purpose broken furniture or disassemble and reuse the wood. Hang drawers on the wall to create shelves, shadowboxes, or bulletin boards.

**The Internet is full of these and similar ideas, and handy explanations of how make them.**

With just a little ingenuity, you can cut down on your ecological footprint, save your pennies and re-purpose your rubbish.

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And don’t forget to turn the lights out when you leave the room!

Good introductions to the facts and impacts of climate change are:

• D**avid Attenborough’s programmes** available on BBC iPlayer <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer>

➢ Climate Change: The Facts

➢ Seven Worlds, One Planet

• **gov.co.uk websites on**

➢ Guidance: climate change explained <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/climate-change-explained>

➢ Met Office: what is climate change?

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/climate-change/what-is-climate-change>