



“The List of Ten” Ways to Improve the Environment, for LISTEN – Paris 2015

Simple Steps to Embracing an Improved Environment

You can make a difference to improve the environment, every single day, with a few fairly easy actions. Pick one or more, and see if you can inspire others to follow your lead! We all create impacts to the environment just through tasks and activities in our daily lives, therefore it only makes sense that we can each make a difference helping the planet by doing our bit to reduce our own ‘footprint’. Consume less and waste less, simple.

City Living

1. *Turn it off!:*

Lights, appliances, gadgets, air-conditioning or technology. Whatever you household object it is, if you are not using it, it does not need to be on, on standby, or switched on at the wall either! If unplugged, it will save electricity.

2. *Change your commute:*

If it is walking distance – walk. If not, try cycling. Car shares and public transport are the other ways to reduce your fuel usage individually.

3. *Avoid single-use and disposable plastic:*

Buy a stainless steel, or even glass, cup holder, instead of a new plastic bottle for your essential on-the-go daily water bottle.

4. *Buy Items with Recycled Content:*

Look out for items that have been made with pre-used or recycled materials, and buy them, instead of the ones which are “virgin,” with no recycled content. Once you start looking, you will be surprised what plastic can become and what future uses it can have! Try buying something that has been renewed or repurposed, and not brand new.

5. *But if you have to buy "new", then make sure you recycle:*

Eliminating plastic usage altogether can seem a little far-fetched, and by no means is this a 'simple step' that can be achieved in one day. So if you have to buy that plastic container or carrier bag, be sure to remember to recycle it. It is worth it.

6. *Saving Water:*

Leaving the tap running while you brush your teeth, shave or wash the dishes uses a lot of water. Even a leaking tap you only notice when you are in the bathroom can make a big difference to your water consumption! The less you use, the less expensive it is for you, so it is good for you, and the environment, if less water is put down the drain.

Even if you drain the water from pasta, do not let it uselessly seep away. You can hold a pan underneath to save the water, and use that to water your garden or house plants when the water cools down. Collecting rainwater is another convenient way to recycle water for use on household plants.

Installing Grey water filters are a great way to take steps to help the environment, but they come at a cost and do need maintenance. They work by filtering the non-dirty used water - such as when washing your hands – and divert it so it can be reused.

Oh and shower more, bath less; but we all knew that one.

7. *Careful with Chemicals:*

Harsh bleaches and chemical cleaners can have a serious impact on the environment over time. A little can go a long way with these substances, especially when used openly as they can cause air and water pollution, creating damaging consequences. Simply reduce consumption if you cannot replace the product entirely with a more natural substitute, and always ensure they are disposed of properly in appropriate toxic waste sites!

8. *Bin it:*

Another simple one; but it is so effective. You do not notice when it is done, but when it is not done, litter is all you see. Put your rubbish in the bin and you are keeping the environment clean and the reducing pollution in the air.

9. *Be more aware!*

Think about how much of all these resources you are using. In doing so you will make more conscious choices and more nature-friendly decisions. Aid others in taking the same positive steps to help the environment and raise awareness for the simplicity of the issue.

10. *Go Digital:*

Bills and banking can be done online in a completely paperless way, saving an abundance of trees that would have been used to send you your latest statement. Use your printer less, or read the morning headlines from the press online. And that junk mail that litters your mail box like clockwork.....unsubscribe from as much as possible! If you don't use it, you don't really need it!

Rural Areas

1. *Plant a tree:*

This is such an easy way to directly impact the environment positively. Trees give us oxygen; absorb carbon dioxide (CO₂), provide shade during summer months, and are essential habitats for numerous species! Make more of a difference by getting each member of the family to plant their own tree!

2. *Eat Locally:*

Eating locally supports your local community and business, enabling the area to grow and thrive. A beneficial consequence of this is it indirectly reduces the pollution caused from shipping and transportation.

3. *Make the most of your compost*

A double whammy of goodness: it finds a use for kitchen and plant waste and transforms it into food for your plants that help them with essential growth, thus also reducing quantities of rubbish that make it to landfills and cause air pollution.

4. *Set your thermostat 1-2 degrees lower:*

The small adjustment might make this seem not worth it, but each degree Celsius of temperature increase equals roughly a 3% decrease in energy consumption. So, 2 degrees higher would equal approximately 6% reduction in energy use. The difference made to your energy consumption will grow quickly!

You can also invest in thermostats that enable you to programme them to regulate temperature, depending on the time of day and required usage. Don't forget that just opening windows, or using fans, is even more cost effective than using air conditioning.

5. *Join an environment group!*

Within your local community, people's opinions and concerns might coincide more than you think. If there is not already an environmental group whom you can get involved with, start one! A unified reaction to an issue attracts more attention. It will be easier to create the change you want for environmental issues that effect and concern you personally and locally, when more people speak out together.

6. *Indispensable not in-disposable:*

Batteries, lightbulbs and a host of other household essentials have 'environmentally sustainable models, all designed to lower harmful emissions from their essential usage. Try to buy rechargeable 'green' batteries and compact fluorescent light bulbs. Remember to recycle what you can when these finally stop working, or at least make sure that they are disposed of properly.

Another example might be the decision you make as a consumer for cotton buds, which are produced either with a paperboard stick, or a plastic stick. Pick the one with the paperboard stick, and save a

tonne of petroleum energy that would otherwise have been wasted in making the plastic, and then thrown away.

7. *Do the dishes and the laundry, without a big water footprint*

Wash at 30°C and hang the clothes dry instead of using electricity and energy on the tumble dryer. Avoid wearing and washing one-a-day clothes, as it is easy to reduce household washing by encouraging everyone to wear clothing more than once! Washing mounts up quickly if everyone goes through clothing like there is an endless supply, increasing energy and water usage. Don't rinse dishes before loading the dishwasher, again saving water usage. Only preheat the oven when absolutely necessary, otherwise just turn it straight on when you put the food in. Always look through the glass rather than opening the oven door to check food! These are all easy ways to make a small change at home, and all effective if we each commit.

8. *Reuse and not recycle:*

Aim to re-use something before you throw it straight into recycling. Sure recycling something is far better than being put into landfill, but reusing it just once extends its lifecycle by double than what it would have been. If re-used for times, that is a quadruple savings! You can make the maxim use out of a product that was otherwise, probably used for a relatively disposable purpose. For example, old t-shirts can be used as household cleaners, thus eliminating the need to buy a new cloth, and finding a use for an item about to hit the trash!

9. *Lobby your local representative voice:*

Not enough space on public transport for your bike so you can commute to work in a more 'eco-friendly' and efficient way? Think the mass transit systems should make cost savings by taking measures to become greener? Want the next set of new-buildings to be made with a sustainable plan incorporating use of solar energy? Get involved with the work they are doing and, and encourage them for the results you want to see in your community.

10. *Save for a rainy day:*

If the forecast can be trusted, plan to clean your windows on a day where rain is forecast – saving overall water usage and waste. Make sure the plants get a look in too; it's free.

Embrace the alternatives.