

How to Live Green



Living our everyday lives without further damaging the environment is a way of life we should all be trying to achieve. There are simplistic things we can do as a step in the right direction towards a greener way of living.

Make small bite sized gestures on a day to day basis and you'll soon be living a greener lifestyle. See which of these you already do, and which you can adopt into your routine:

Monday: the School Run

If the weekday mornings are a frantic rush to get the family ready, and a stressful, rush hour drive to the school, consider changing your ways. Ok, so you might not be able to transform the daily difficulties of getting the family washed, dressed and breakfasted on time, but you may be able to cut out the car journey.

Walking or cycling to school is a good form of exercise and a great way to work out stress. Or you can share the load with fellow parents willing to club together to form a carpool. Check if your school currently runs such a scheme at [school-run](#) or take the initiative and start one up yourself.

Tuesday: Putting Out the Rubbish

Try and make recycling items as easy as possible in your household. Mark on the calendar when rubbish and recycled items are collected, to avoid forgetting a collection and having to throw excess recyclable goods in the bin.

Whenever you do throw something into the bin, try and always consider if it's an item that could actually be recycled. Most local councils now offer a doorstep collection service picking up some items such as glass and paper. Your local area should also have bring sites offering wider – and sometimes more unusual – recycling services, from hand tools and batteries to old pairs of spectacles.

Wednesday: the Weekly Shop

In order to minimise the likelihood of you forgetting an essential item and having to take a second trip, make sure you're equipped with a list of items when you go on a weekly shop. While you're putting the list in your bag, don't forget to put carrier bags or bags for life in there too. As an incentive to do this, some supermarkets are now awarding loyalty points to their greener customers who bring their own bags.

Consider the origin of the food produce you pick up. Try and go for locally produced items with minimal food miles, to help support farming in your area. Where possible, select meat and dairy items where the treatment of animals has been fair and humane, such as organic meat and free range eggs. Avoid overly packaged and overly processed food, and go for natural, healthy alternatives instead.

Thursday: Making Your Home Energy Efficient

Slash your energy bills by insulating your home properly with draught excluders and thick curtains to keep the heat in. Be brave and turn the thermostat down a degree or two – you'll probably not even notice the difference. Ensure energy guzzling products are kept in a good working condition. With fridges and freezers for example, shut doors tightly and quickly, and defrost regularly to keep them running efficiently.

You may also wish to consider larger projects such as cavity wall insulation or double glazing, as the initial investment will eventually pay for itself in savings in the long run.

Friday: Dinner Party

Impress your guests by hosting a green themed dinner party. You can prepare a delicious meal and still bear the environment in mind while you're cooking. When preparing vegetables – locally grown, or, even better, handpicked from your garden – wash them in a single bowl rather than under the tap. And only boil as much water as you need in the kettle.

Select your choice of meal carefully and avoid foods in short supply, such as certain types of fish. Look for natural foods that haven't been treated or processed. Heading down to your local farm shop or farmers' market is the best place to select your after-dinner cheeses.

Finally, wash up the dishes for a change instead of loading the dishwasher.

Saturday: Organise Your Paperwork

Use the weekend to get things in order, pay bills and look at bank statements. You can even do this with a greener approach. Use less paper to manage your accounts and paperwork – write on both sides and go for recycled paper. Opt for

your bank to stop sending your bank statements and view and manage your money online instead.

You can also sign up to stop receiving wasteful junk mail with the mailing preference service. This is offered by the Royal Mail and enables you to decide which letters you wish to receive.

Sunday: Relax

Today is the day to sit back and relax, and we're all entitled to take a day off. It is still possible to go about your Sunday with the environment in mind without it interfering in your rest and relaxation, though. Make the most of the local countryside on your doorstep by leaving the car at home and taking a gentle stroll instead, for example.

