

# 29 Steps to a Greener Lifestyle

With all the buzz surrounding eco-friendly living, you may wonder where to start. But reducing your impact on the planet can be simple, and every action does make a difference. Want even more incentive to change? Most green actions will save you money, limit waste, enhance your health and even increase your overall physical activity—all while benefiting the planet.

	<p><b>1</b> <b>Recycle.</b> Most people can recycle more than they do. Paper, magazines, cardboard, cereal boxes, glass, aluminum foil and cans should go in your bin, not the trash.</p>	<p><b>2</b> <b>Use cloth napkins.</b> Disposable items hurt the environment, and that includes paper products like napkins. In the end, you'll save money and it looks more sophisticated.</p>	<p><b>3</b> <b>Visit the library.</b> Instead of buying books, CDs, movies and magazines, borrow them. The library is free, local and eco-friendly. Imagine how many resources are saved when hundreds of people share one book!</p>	<p><b>4</b> <b>Unplug.</b> It's not enough to simply turn off. When they're plugged in, they're still sucking in and wasting electricity. Get in the habit of unplugging chargers, TVs computers and more.</p>
<p><b>5</b> <b>Look for Energy Star.</b> Next time you have to replace an appliance or electronic device, consider an Energy Star product. It might cost more up front, but usually pays for itself in energy savings.</p>	<p><b>6</b> <b>Eat without meat.</b> The raising, processing, shipping and storage of meat can negatively impact the environment. Aim for a few meatless meals each week, choosing beans, nuts, and legumes for</p>	<p><b>7</b> <b>Bring your own bag.</b> Bring reusable bags everywhere, from the grocery to the mall. If you can't afford to buy bags, then reuse the plastic ones you already have. If you don't need a bag for your items, decline.</p>	<p><b>8</b> <b>Save water.</b> Turn it off while brushing your teeth. Install low flow showerheads &amp; the savings will add up! Consider using a rain barrel for plant and lawn watering.</p>	<p><b>9</b> <b>Beverage bottles, cups and cans are wasteful, even if recycled.</b> You'll save money and reduce waste by using a reusable bottle for water and drinks. Take one to the coffee shop too!</p>
<p><b>10</b> <b>Vote with your wallet.</b> Buy products from companies who care for the planet by using recycled packaging, solar-power, or eco-friendly ingredients and more. Patronize Douglas County Count Me Green businesses.</p>	<p><b>11</b> <b>Explore bamboo.</b> Floors, furniture, cutting boards and more can be made from bamboo, which is renewable and faster-growing than trees.</p>	<p><b>12</b> <b>Hang your laundry.</b> Your clothes dryer is one of the most energy consuming appliances in your house. Try hanging your clothes on lines outside.</p>	<p><b>13</b> <b>Size matters.</b> Smaller is better when it comes to cars and houses, among other things. Small sizes are more energy efficient, use fewer materials, produce less waste and cost less money.</p>	<p><b>14</b> <b>Clean green.</b> Household cleaners are often made with chemicals that harm your body and the planet. Instead, make your own with simple but effective products like lemon juice, baking soda and vinegar.</p>
<p><b>15</b> <b>Don't depend on oil.</b> Many products are made from petroleum—including plastics, soaps, and detergents. To really decrease your dependence on oil, look for plant-based cleaners and plastic alternatives like glass.</p>	<p><b>16</b> <b>Recharge.</b> Using rechargeable batteries is worth the investment. You'll get dozens of uses out of a single battery that would otherwise be used once. That saves you money, trips to the store, and waste.</p>	<p><b>17</b> <b>Eat seasonal</b> Seasonal foods are fresh and more nutritious. Plus, they don't have to travel far to get to your table and are rarely imported from far-away countries.</p>	<p><b>18</b> <b>Reduce packaging.</b> Look for products without excess packaging, like concentrated detergent. In the produce aisle, skip the plastic bags. Don't buy individual yogurt cups, buy one large tub.</p>	<p><b>19</b> <b>Repair things.</b> Pants with holes and broken toasters aren't trash. Instead of sending them to the landfill, sew, mend, and repair things when they break and use them longer</p>
<p><b>20</b> <b>Go organic.</b> Organic farming doesn't use chemical fertilizers or pesticides, which can pollute the air and water. Choose organic produce and cotton (it's the most heavily sprayed crop) when you can.</p>	<p><b>21</b> <b>Lower the water heater.</b> It consumes tons of energy by heating water even when not in use. By lowering it to 120 degrees, you'll save utilities too. Save more &amp; skip hot settings on your washer.</p>	<p><b>22</b> <b>Don't idle.</b> You'll save gas and emissions by parking and turning off the car instead of idling in the drive-thru. It also gives you an opportunity to add more steps to your day.</p>	<p><b>23</b> <b>Print sensibly.</b> If it's not necessary to print something, don't. Decrease your paper margins to save paper, &amp; print on both sides of paper. When the ink cartridges are empty, recycle them at any office supply store.</p>	<p><b>24</b> <b>Go natural.</b> Natural materials produce less waste and last longer than man-made materials like acrylics. Choose wool, cotton, leather, silk and linen over synthetics whenever possible.</p>
<p><b>25</b> <b>Search for secondhand.</b> Don't let someone else's perfectly good items go to waste. A gently used version of whatever you need exists. Auction websites and thrift stores make secondhand shopping easy and affordable.</p>	<p><b>26</b> <b>Write a check.</b> At the very least, donate what you can afford to organizations that help the environment. Visit CharityNavigator.org to find one.</p>	<p><b>27</b> <b>Drive less.</b> If you can walk or bike to your destination- do it! You'll get fit, save \$ and pollute less. Choosing public transportation and car pooling helps too!</p>	<p><b>28</b> <b>Invest in green energy.</b> Most utility companies give you the option to pay about \$5 extra a month, which is put directly into researching and Creating renewable energy.</p>	<p><b>29</b> <b>Consider compost.</b> Food scraps that end up in landfills can't decompose properly. But composting yard and kitchen waste is easy! And it naturally fertilizes your soil.</p>