

## ***Healthy Households***

People need clean, healthy habitats just like wildlife. Your yard isn't the only place where you can take action to decrease the pollution to our air, water and other resources. Look at your own household, for instance. The ways that you consume water and energy, the cleaning products you use and even the items you purchase, use and throw away can have a very significant health impact for you and wildlife.

In the sections below, you'll learn how easy it is to live a "greener," healthier lifestyle in and around your home. When you create a "green home" you do more than make the place where you live more livable. You do a service to your community, setting an example for your neighbors to follow.

You might want to experiment with one or two suggested actions to start with, and then add more until you are doing something in each section that is covered here.

## **Automobiles and Travel**

Is it possible to be an environmentally responsible citizen and still enjoy the luxury of automobiles? The answer depends largely on how we drive and care for our cars. There's no question that motor vehicle exhaust is a major source of environmental and health problems, from air pollution and global warming to water pollution and acid rain. Cars also create trash; tens of millions of used tires, batteries, oil filters and other goods are thrown away each year.

There are many steps you can take to lessen the environmental impacts of cars, starting with buying the most fuel-efficient car you can find.

### **What You Can Do**

#### **1. Care for Your Car**

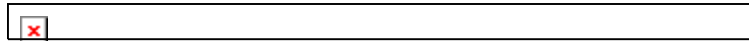
Keep your car tuned, tires inflated, filters cleaned and oil changed regularly. Check the air conditioner for leaks. Buy the lowest octane gas recommended in your owner's manual. Also, make sure your gas station recycles oil, tires and batteries and disposes of antifreeze properly.

#### **2. Drive Right**

Observe speed limits, accelerate smoothly and moderately, avoid tailgating or excessive idling. Try not to drive during peak periods.

#### **3. Don't Drive**

Walk, bike, skate, jog or take public transportation. Telecommute one or two days a week. Set up a carpool or vanpool service where you work.



## **Green Shopping**

The world's growing population is creating a mushrooming demand for more goods — including many cheaply-made, disposable products. Every new human life brought onto the Earth creates a need for food, clothing and shelter. Producing all those goods and services requires more and more energy. This use creates more waste and pollution.

The products and services we buy need not be destructive to the environment. By choosing carefully, we can have a positive impact on the environment without significantly compromising our way of life. That's "shopping green".

### **What You Can Do**

#### **4. Buy Less**

Purchase goods in bulk or in the largest size possible. Rent or borrow rather than buy, or buy cooperatively. When appropriate, buy reused, reconditioned or refurbished rather than new. Think about whether you really need more clutter.

#### **5. Shop Smart**

Avoid single-serving and disposable packaging. Avoid things you cannot (or will not) recycle. Buy reusable or refillable products, and those from companies with good environmental records. Seek out goods grown or manufactured locally.

### **Home Improvements**

Keeping your home in tip-top shape is one of the greenest things you can do. By keeping things tuned, painted, repaired and refurbished, you lengthen their useful lives and make them more efficient. But not every home-improvement product is good for the environment. Some paints, cleaners, glues and solvents can pollute the inside and outside air and harm you and your family's health. Check these products out before purchasing.

It's not just what we buy, it's how we use and dispose of it. Keeping hazardous waste out of the trash — where it can leak into the water supply or pollute the air — will ensure that your fix-up project is friendly to your home and everyone else's.

### **What You Can Do**

#### **6. Clean Green**

Buy nontoxic cleaners and other products and use them properly. Follow directions when storing or disposing of leftovers.

#### **7. Fix it Up**

Use low-impact products and materials. Install energy-efficient lights and appliances. Use woods from sustainably grown forests (look for independent certification labels).

### **Reducing Wastes**

Americans generate more trash per capita than people in any other country. On average, each American discards about 4.4 pounds of solid waste every day, only about a pound of which is recycled, composted, or otherwise recovered. The remainder goes to landfills or incinerators.

Where to dump trash is only one problem. More serious are the hazardous substances in our trash, including many common household items like batteries, motor oil, cleaning products, paints and others. These chemicals can pollute the air, soil and water, harming the earth and our health.

### **What You Can Do**

**8. Reduce Trash**

Avoid wasteful packaging and single-use products that can't easily be recycled. Buy reusable, repairable, rechargeable or refillable products, and those made from or packaged in recycled material.

**9. Eliminate Toxics**

Seek alternatives to caustic household cleaners, pesticides, paint removers and other products containing toxic chemicals. Carefully dispose of leftovers at a waste disposal facility in your community.

**10. Reuse and Recycle**

Try to reuse material before you recycle. Start a compost pile. Mulch or compost yard waste. Sell or donate used clothing, furnishings, books, appliances, etc. Borrow or rent rather than buy seldom used appliances.

**Energy Conservation**

We waste a lot of energy - and money. Most experts agree that we can easily cut pollution and home energy costs by using energy resources wisely.

**What You Can Do**

**11. Don't Waste Energy**

Lower your thermostat in winter and raise it in summer. Have your furnace and air conditioner serviced and cleaned. Turn down your water heater to 120° - 140°F. Check your refrigerator for leaky gaskets around the doors. Caulk, weather strip and insulate walls, attics, basement, windows, doors and pipes.

**12. Buy Energy Savers**

Install compact fluorescent light bulbs wherever practical. Add dimmers/timers to light switches where appropriate. Install a programmable thermostat. Purchase energy-saving appliances.

**Water Conservation**

By wasting less water, we leave more water for other uses, like recreation and fishing, and reduce the risk of pollution. Conserving water reduces health risks too. Wise water use can help improve the health of both people and the environment.

**What You Can Do**

**13. Don't Waste Water**

Install low-flow shower heads and faucet aerators. Fix leaky faucets and toilets. Water the lawn and garden with timers and drip hoses early or late in the day.

**14. Keep Water Clean**

Properly dispose of paints, motor oil and pesticides by recycling or sending to a hazardous waste collection site. Use low-impact gardening techniques that avoid pesticides and chemical fertilizers. Buy organic produce, grown with fewer pesticides.