

## Baby Steps to Living Green

These are easy ideas that ANYONE can try to make their world a little greener!! Thanks to Joanna Yarrow, many of these are excerpts from her book '1001 ways to save the Earth'

1. **Face the truth!** Watch Al Gore's documentary, 'An Inconvenient Truth' for some hard hitting details about global warming.
2. **Speak Up!** If you see something you think might be pollution, anything from trash dumped in a river to people littering on the highways, notify your local government agency.
3. **Lusher Lawns-** longer grass retains moisture better than short turf, so in hot weather, let your lawn grow to at least 1 ½ inches before cutting to avoid unnecessary watering.
4. **Offset your flight's CO2-** Aviation may soon account for 15% of all greenhouse gas emissions. When there is no alternative to flying, help mitigate the environmental costs by buying CO2 emission offsets, there is an option to do this during your booking process.
5. **Furniture** - When buying furniture, look for alternatives to rare and slow growing hardwood... there are many earth friendly choices made of bamboo, wheat, and Kirei products. Do some digging, you can't imagine the many great styles that are made without harvesting our forests.
6. **Newspaper** – it is one of the easiest materials to recycle, every time you recycle a pile of papers a yard high, you save a tree from the chop.
7. **Cold Climates** - Up to half the heat used in the home is lost through exterior walls. Ensure that walls and attics are properly insulated to minimize heating bills and to cut down on your CO2 emissions. Also, use a recycled or environmentally friendly insulating materials. Choose one not laced with chemicals... cotton insulation is a great alternative to traditional insulation.
8. **Beyond Fossil Fuel-** by 2030, global energy demand is projected to be 2/3's higher than it is today. Relying solely on fossil fuels isn't an option ... renewable energy sources such as wind, wave and solar power are increasingly viable alternatives... ask you local power company what alternative energy sources they have available.

9. **Virtuous Cycle-** Teach a child to ride a bike and set them up with a healthy, eco-friendly, economical habit for life... every four mile trip by bike rather than car prevents around 15 pounds of air pollution and builds a strong heart!
10. **Under pressure-** Rev up the cooking process by using a pressure cooker, it will cut cooking times and uses 50-75% less energy than a normal saucepan.
11. **A more seductive candlelight-**traditional paraffin-wax candles are petroleum-based, once lit they omit toxins such as acetone, benzene, lead and mercury into the air! Beeswax and soy candles are toxin free.
12. **Safer toys-** when buying toys for children steer clear of toys made from PVC, which can leach noxious chemicals when the surface is scratched, and emits carcinogenic toxins if burned.
13. **Glug down some organic milk-** if you are trying to go organic, milk is a great place to start! Organic milk contains much higher levels of nutrients, like 2/3 more omega 3 essential fatty acids than intensely farmed milk...plus, because the market shift to organic foods has been so significant, huge retailers such as Safeway have their own organic line!
14. **Cheers to cork!** When choosing wine, select real corks rather than plastic ones, these are a renewable resource peeled from a tree that continues living....when you are finished with them you can use them to light fires or add them to your compost pile.
15. **Changing Times-** your baby's likely to plow through around 5000 diapers before he or she is toilet trained, if you use disposables adding a ton of diapers to a landfill. So try reusable or biodegradable diapers, they are surprisingly streamlined and easy to handle.
16. **Buzz off!** Keep flying insects away with essential oils such as citronella, mint, eucalyptus and clove or go to [www.ecosmart.com](http://www.ecosmart.com), which has an entire line of insect repellants that are made entirely of essential oils!
17. **A slow thaw-** Plan ahead so you don't waste energy needed to use a microwave in defrosting frozen food. Ideally, let the fridge thaw it overnight.
18. **Unplug!** Appliances waste a lot of energy in 'stand-by' mode... anything with a glowing button that is not in use is wasting electricity! By unplugging these items rather than letting them

- idle, you can save up to 10% on your electricity bill. Don't forget your computer!
19. **Green your jeans!** Did you know that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a pound of fertilizers and pesticides are used to produce the average pair of jeans? You can look for jeans made of organic cotton, or visit the Nau website for an entire line of sustainable clothing! [www.nau.com](http://www.nau.com)
  20. **Automate your bill paying-** most bank websites have a 'go paperless' option and you can get you bills on line, saving paper and the fuel to deliver your bill by regular mail. It also makes paying your bills a breeze, no stamps needed!
  21. **Recycle old electrical equipment-** don't know what to do with your antiquated electrical equipment such as old cell phones? Take them into FedexKinkos, and they will recycle them for you! [www.fedexkinkos.com](http://www.fedexkinkos.com)
  22. **Use Bamboo!** The scope of products made from simple, easily renewable bamboo is staggering. From luxuriously soft towels, to countertops, flooring and rugs, bamboo is the way to go. An entire bamboo forest will regenerate itself within 5-6 years!
  23. **Dispose of disposables-** use sustainable alternatives rather than foil, plastic wraps, or paper towels, substitute a dish, lid or plate, for covering or an old rag for spills.
  24. **Lose the excessive packaging!** Unwrap these items at the store and ask politely to have the packaging recycled! One way is to never take home boxes for shoes - ask the store to recycle the box instead.
  25. **Build a 'Greener' house.** Before embarking on a building project, see what eco-friendly alternatives are available. You will be shocked to know that there is a 'green' alternative to nearly every building material that exists! Ask your retailer, they are becoming more popular all the time!
  26. **Every little scrap-**be sure to recycle ALL your magazines, newspaper, junk mail, anything paper! Every ton of paper reused leaves 17 trees standing and working hard to absorb CO2 on our behalf.
  27. **Keep a pitcher of H2O in the fridge-** sales of bottled water is on the rise even though it has to be transported from long distances to you... instead, avoid adding to packaging and transport of water by using in home methods to get the same results.

28. **Rail VS. Road-** try taking your next trip by rail rather than car. Not only is it more relaxing, you can read or do business work rather than focusing on the road.
29. **Use water wisely-** if you have an irrigation system, switch it to a drip system, which waters each plant individually, thereby, saving water. Also, there are grey water reclamation systems now available for the home, so you are using water from your home that has been decontaminated to water your lawn.
30. **Line Dry!** While in action, tumble driers use more energy than ANY other household appliance! So, if you have the choice, elect to line dry your clothes instead.
31. **Keep chemical waste out of waterways-** Never pour paints, used oil, cleaning solvents, polishes, pool chemicals, insecticides and other hazardous household chemicals down drains, sinks, or toilets... many of these poisons can end up in local waterways. Contact your local health department to get collection sites for these products. Also, you would be surprised to know that for every product listed here there is an eco-friendly alternative that works just as well as chemicals!
32. **Upgrade if you're going to watch TV-** Flat screen TV's use 30% less than their bulky old counterparts! They also give off less heat and fewer electronic emissions, making your TV room a healthier place.
33. **Transparent Logic-** Glass bottles are one of the easiest items to recycle. Not only does this save on resources like ash, sand, limestone (which is mined from our planet), and oil, recycling just one bottle saves enough energy to power a TV for 90 minutes!
34. **Refreshing thought-** use a glass at the water cooler instead of disposable plastic cup or paper cones.
35. **Buy local and seasonal-** Resist the supermarket "all-year-round-mentality and get back in tune with local and seasonal produce...You will reduce freight emissions and support local farmers at the same time.
36. **Buy locally sourced charcoal-** from a supplier who grows wood sustainably...Charcoal from places such as Indonesia has likely come from endangered forests.
37. **Since you're BBQing-** don't use lighter fluids or briquettes that are made from gasoline derivatives and can coat your food with harmful deposits.

38. **Wood is good!** Don't be tempted to use products like MDF that contain formaldehyde... there are now dozens of products in the market place that are just as user friendly that are made with non toxic soy adhesives!
39. **Donate you old computer-** more than 31 million computers are thrown away each year... not only does each computer take 7 quarts of crude oil to make, when they are disposed of in irresponsible ways, their components become environmental hazards with the release of lead, nickel, and cadmium.
40. **Natural latex** - For your next party or shower, use natural latex balloons if you plan on releasing them into the sky...once regular balloons have landed, they will linger for years as litter, choking cattle and wildlife.
41. **Over and over-** buy rewritable CD's and DVD's for copying files. These disks can be used over and over avoiding the need to purchase single use equivalents... Also, use a USB Flash drive or MP3 player to transport files.
42. **Make recycling easy-** at work, suggest that everyone have a recycling bin as well as a trash can to make the recycling process a snap. Or better yet, keep recycling containers at individual stations but centralize garbage, you will be amazed at how much less gets thrown away!
43. **Go the extra mile-** if you're going to the effort to save and recycle bottles, make sure their caps, corks, or other add-ons are removed so not to contaminate the potentially useful glass.
44. **The grass is greener-** a mower powered by gasoline can produce as much pollution per hour as 40 cars! Use an electric mower or better yet, good ole' elbow grease! For technogardeners, there is a self-guiding solar-powered mower!
45. **Do a Home Draft Audit-** hold a lit candle (soy candle, of course) next to your closed windows and doors... if the flame flickers, there is a gap that needs to be plugged.
46. **Better Battery habits-** most batteries leak toxic metals such as mercury, nickel and cadmium when you throw them away. Choose rechargeable alkaline manganese batteries, which are free from toxic metals.
47. **End of life considerations...for you fridge-** dumped fridges and freezers contain ozone depleting CFC's and HCFC's that can be professionally removed at the end of your appliance's life.

48. **Elect to vote-** your vote counts!! Find out which candidates are offering the best deal for the planet and give them your support!
49. **Don't be foiled-** aluminum production is a resource and energy intensive process, so use it sparingly... and when possible rinse and reuse. You can also purchase 100% recycled aluminum.
50. **Happy re-tire-ment-** old tires are being turned into amazing new products these days such as roofing tiles, playground mats, acoustical underlayment and mouse mats. Make sure your tires make it to the recycling center!
51. **Make plastic bag history-** the plastic bags used at most grocery stores take up to 500 years to decompose. Alternatively, you can bring your own bags when shopping, ask for paper, or better yet, ask your store to provide biodegradable bags made of cornstarch.
52. **If you must smoke, be considerate when extinguishing your butts** - put your cigarette butts in the trash so they don't choke birds or animals or poison them with tar if swallowed.
53. **Festive glow-**To get the most striking effect for the least electricity, hang LED (Light Emitting Diode) lights. These lights use 100 times less energy than some traditional Christmas lights.
54. **Never pour engine oil down the drain!** Many Jiffy Lubes will take your oil and recycle it for you. If you don't have one in your area, ask your local gas station or recycling center.... A single gallon of oil poured down the drain can contaminate millions of gallons of water.
55. **Make your own popcorn-** in inexpensive snack, it's easy to make and more healthy than the heavily packaged additive-laced commercial equivalents.
56. **Bring a bit of the farm into the city-** if you have the space, get a few laying hens and have your own fresh eggs everyday! Most cities allow up to three hens that need just a small, safe pen, and when let out they enjoy foraging for numerous garden pests including slugs and snails.
57. **Wind Power-**wind power generates electricity in more than 40 countries world wide and production capacity has grown by nearly 30% per year over the past decade. In average wind conditions, a domestic turbine can cut you electricity bill by a third.

58. **Keep the pressure up-** maintaining the appropriate pressure in your vehicle's tires will help minimize it's fuel use.
59. **Office clear out?**-If you have an office re-vamp, be sure to donate your old desks and cabinets to community groups, churches shelters, or schools so they don't end up in the landfill!
60. **Countertop baking-** if you often bake small meals, consider a toaster oven which uses less than half the electricity of a conventional oven.
61. **Runny nose?** Use a handkerchief rather than paper tissues...not only will this save trees but will be gentler on your nose.
62. **Breath of fresh air-** rather than watching TV to relax, spend some time out of doors engaged in carbon-neutral leisure activities.
63. **Virtual faxing-** use your computer to send and receive faxes rather than hard copies. That way the recipient can decide whether they need a hard copy or not...
64. **Junk faxes-** stop your home and work fax machines from receiving 'junk faxes' by barring unsolicited materials... make your fax numbers unavailable to junk spreaders!
65. **Return of the rake!!** Rake up dead leaves rather than blowing them... not only is it good exercise, you'll save the carbon emissions, and stop annoying the neighbors...
66. **Concentrate!** Try to purchase concentrated products whenever possible... this way you aren't paying for the extra pounds of water that you can easily add yourself!
67. **Leave your clippings on the lawn-**rather than throwing the lawn clippings away, let them rot back into the lawn as a natural fertilizer.
68. **Cooler rinse-** a washing machine uses up to 90%of its energy heating water. A warm wash and a cold rinse will work just as well on nearly all clothes.
69. **Scald your weeds-** try pouring boiling water on your weeds rather than using chemicals to get rid of them
70. **Make your own notepad-** keep a neat stack of scrap paper cut into quarters rather than buy new pads of post-its.
71. **Clear winner-** if you have an option, always choose products available in glass rather than plastic containers, it is less resource hungry to produce and easier to reuse and recycle.

72. **Box clever-** when purchasing eggs, buy the ones that come in cardboard boxes rather than plastic ones... these boxes are generally made from recycled wood pulp and can easily be recycled or composted.
73. **Reload your printer-**reconditioned toner cartridges are now available at major chains... each laser cartridge that's recycled conserves the equivalent of about a quart of oil! Plus, they are less expensive.
74. **Ethical insurance-** next time you get travel insurance on a rental car, get a quote from one of the increasing providers that pay carbon offsets on your behalf according to the distance you travel.
75. **Choose a sparky gas range-** when choosing a new stove, look for one with electronic (piezo) ignition, which should use about 40% less gas than model with a pilot light.
76. **Use the sun's power-** every two minutes the sun gives the Earth more energy than we use in a year. Photovoltaic (PV) technology, which turns solar energy into electricity, has increased 28% per year for the last fourteen years! Make sure your electricity provider is exploiting this resource and consider supplementing your power supply by installing PV panels on your roof.
77. **Make a positive difference-** "if many little people in many little places do many little deeds, they can change the face of the Earth"(African proverb). Never underestimate the impact of your actions.
78. **Recycle your car-**take your car to a registered scrap yard for environmentally sound dismantling... even the most beat up car still has some operational parts that can be salvaged and about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the rest of the car will be recyclable.
79. **Chop on a bamboo cutting board** – as mentioned earlier, this fast-growing sustainable and versatile material is extremely durable, naturally anti-bacterial and withstands regular washing.
80. **Crunch time-**lower your cereal's carbon footprint by dousing it with organic milk, which uses only a third of the energy needed to produce its nonorganic counterpart.
81. **Picture time-** no disposable cameras! Not only are digital cameras satisfying in that they show you the results immediately, most people only print the ones they really like.

About a quarter of disposable cameras end up in the landfill  
(workman publishing)

82. **Canvas bags**- canvas bags can be used in place of plastic bags which is a great way to reduce your consumption.
83. **Faucets** - Replace current faucets and showerheads with low flow alternatives thus saving your money and the earth's resources.