

Energy Saving Tips

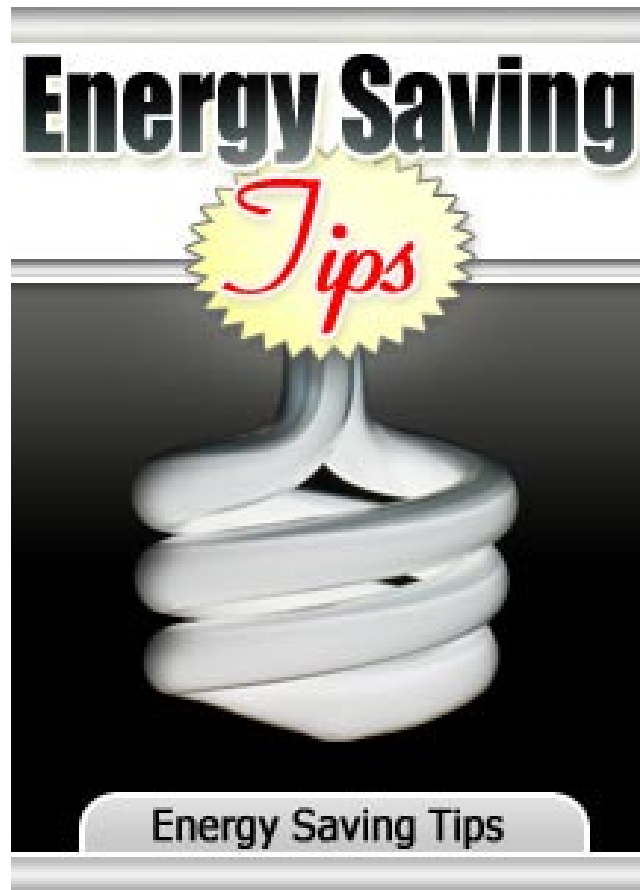


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How You Relate to the Environment

When most of us think about damage being done to the environment, or global warming, we often start pointing fingers at big industries. Now, it is true that they are doing more harm than good, in terms of the condition of our environment, but the truth is that we, as individuals, are also doing our share of harm.

In order to know how to do your part to save the environment, you must first understand what you are doing to harm it – even if you aren't a huge industry. The truth is that much of the damage being done to the environment isn't so much from big industries as it is a world full of people who do little to conserve non-renewable resources. These resources come from the earth, and in the process of getting those resources, the earth is being destroyed.

What this means is that each time you drive your car, you are hurting the environment. First, the car actually pollutes the air, and second the resources needed to make that car run come from the earth (oil, water, and gasoline). Each time you use an aerosol spray, you are harming the environment. Aerosols use CFC's, or greenhouse gases known as chlorofluorocarbons. This contributes to global warming, by trapping large amounts of heat.

Each time you write a letter on paper, or make out your shopping list, you are harming the environment. Paper comes from trees, and although many people view trees as renewable resources – because you can always plant more trees – we are cutting those trees down faster than we are replacing them. The same is true each time you smoke a cigarette, except smoking a cigarette harms the environment even more than making that shopping list.

You may actually think that you are already doing your part in saving the environment, because you have a lovely lawn. You keep your lawn perfectly trimmed. You have trees and hedges, which are also perfectly trimmed. But each time you crank up one of those gasoline powered lawn gadgets, you are harming the environment. The ways that you are probably doing more harm than good go on and on. In fact, if you brought a specialist into your home for a day and asked what you were doing to harm the environment, they would most likely tell you that everything that you were doing was wrong!

If that is the case, however, how can you possibly change your evil environmental destroying ways? Well, most of us aren't willing to give up the comforts in life, and most of us don't have to. What we must do is be more aware of the resources that we are consuming – the energy that we are using – and how it impacts the earth as we know it, as well as the future of the earth.

Why You Must Do Your Part to Save the Environment

If the truth is told, the reason why you must do your part to save the environment is because for every one person who is doing their part, there are probably about twenty other people who are not going to do their part. What this means is that the earth isn't going to last very much longer.

You may think that this isn't your problem...and in reality, it's not. The chances are good that if you are reading this now, you are old enough to be dead before the earth is completely destroyed. But are your children that old? What about your children's children, or their children – your great grandchildren? Will the earth still be inhabitable when they are adults? Will they even see adulthood?

So, even though you aren't working toward saving the environment for yourself, you at least owe future generations – your descendants – the opportunity to live in an environmentally sound world – don't you?

If you can't do it for them, then you must think of yourself. Today, there are more cases of cancer than ever before in the history of the world – despite medical advances. Most causes of cancer can be traced back to something in the environment – asbestos, cigarette smoke, pesticides, refineries, and other toxins – even electricity clusters.

So, if you can't think of future generations, and you can't think of the current population as a whole – a whole group of people who are all, essentially, in the same boat – at least think of your own health. The small changes that you make will not only have a huge impact on mankind and the earth, but they will also serve to enable you to live a healthier – longer – life.

If you can't think of your health, think about the foods that you enjoy. All food, essentially, starts with soil or grass, water, and sunshine. If the environment continues to decline, you better believe that the food sources are going to dry up – or at the very least become unsafe.

Finally, if you just can't see any good reason why you should conserve energy and save the environment, look towards your pocket book. That's right. By conserving energy and helping to save the environment, you will actually be saving yourself loads of money over the years.

No matter what reason you find to save the environment – whether it is noble and self sacrificing, or totally selfish and self-serving – just understand that you must do your part to save the environment...the chances are good that few other people are going to do this for you.

25 Ways to Conserve Energy in Your Home

Energy conservation and saving the environment begin at home. There are numerous small changes that you can make that will not only save the environment, but will also help you to save money. Here are 25 ways that you can conserve energy in your home, starting today.

1. Turn down the thermostat on your hot water heater. Seriously, how often do you wash your hands or bath in scalding hot water? Turn the thermostat down to at least 120 degrees, and lower if possible. This is also a money saver.
2. Do as your parents told you when you were younger. Turn off lights that are not needed! When you consume electricity, you are harming the environment. This is also a money saver.
3. Just as water doesn't have to be scalding, refrigerators don't have to be freezing. Set the temp in the fridge at about 36 degrees, and set the temp in the freezer at about 5 degrees. This saves you money.
4. Replace old, out dated appliances with Energy-Star compliant appliances. These use less energy...and they save you money. Make sure televisions, monitors, and other electronics are also Energy-Star compliant.
5. Set the thermostat on your air conditioner or heater on 68 in the winter and 78 in the summer – and then don't adjust it. This uses less energy, and of course, saves you money. While you should turn off the air or heat completely when leaving your home for extended periods of time, such as a vacation, you should avoid turning it off other times – believe it or not. It takes more energy to cool or heat the room when you do.
6. Unplug any appliances or other electronics that are not in use. Believe it or not, even if it isn't turned on, energy is still being fed to the appliance if it is plugged in, and this costs you money. Only plug them back in when you are ready to use them, and unplug them when you are finished with them.
7. Wash your clothing in cold water. It cleans just as good; it saves energy, and of course saves you money. The fact is, if you think that germs can only be removed with hot water, you would be wrong. The water doesn't get hot enough to kill the germs...even if you turn your hot water heater all the way up. Use cold water with a good laundry detergent.
8. Replace air conditioning filters once a month. When the filter is dirty, the unit has to work harder, which requires more energy, and costs you more money. Filters are dirt cheap.

9. You've probably been told that you can conserve energy by closing vents in unused rooms. This is absolutely not true. The fact is that when you do this, the unit actually works harder, and this takes more energy, which costs you more money – and it eventually hurts the environment. Leave those vents open, and keep the doors to those rooms open as well.
10. Line dry your clothes when possible, but if you must use your dryer, make sure that you clean the lint tray each and every time. This reduces the amount of drying time needed. Also, make sure that you open the dryer right away when it is finished, and that you don't just have completely dry clothes turning in the dryer...because you are too busy to fold them at the moment and you don't want them to wrinkle. This will all cost you money!
11. Take advantage of convenience foods and use your microwave more than you use your oven or stove top. The microwave cooks food in a very short amount of time, and uses way less energy than the stove uses. This saves you money, and it saves the environment.
12. Replace light fixtures with those that take fluorescent bulbs. Use smaller fluorescent fixtures, as these save energy, which saves you money, all while saving the environment. Fluorescent bulbs also last longer than regular bulbs, which saves you even more money.
13. Plant trees! Not only will you be increasing the oxygen in the air, and beautifying your lawn and community, but you will also eventually be shading your house, which will help to keep it insulated a bit better. You guessed it; this will save you money in the long run.
14. Put security lights and other lights on timers, or invest in motion sensor lighting outdoors. There is no need to leave the porch light burning all night.
15. If you must use your oven, realize that this also causes your air condition unit to work harder, and it also uses a great deal of energy even if you don't have air conditioning. Each time you open the oven door, you reduce the temperature inside by about thirty degrees, which means that the oven must work harder to heat back up.
16. Invest in new windows for your home. You may not see this as a savings right now, but it really is in the long run. Choose energy efficient windows, and in the long run, you will save loads of money on your heating and cooling bills.

17. Find out if Green Electricity is available in your area, and if it is, go with the green! Unfortunately, green electricity isn't yet available in all areas, but it will be eventually, so keep checking!
18. Remember your own power, and use your own power, instead of electricity, whenever possible. For instance, you can mash potatoes without a mixer. You can open cans with a handheld can opener. You can use a knife instead of a food processor. These are all small changes, and it really doesn't take long to do these things. These small changes can save you big money.
19. Invest in weather stripping around all doors and windows, and insulation for your home. If your home sits up on rafters or blocks, the open space below is costing you money, and harming the environment. Block it off, and insulate it as best as you can. It may be an expense now, but it will be a savings in the near future.
20. Purchase insulation for your hot water heater. Some experts suggest an insulated blanket, but in some cases, this could be dangerous. Instead, find insulation that is specifically meant for hot water heaters. This saves energy.
21. Use ceiling fans in your home. Turn it on when you are in the room – and turn it off when you leave the room. Ceiling fans move the air, and make it more comfortable, at a fraction of the cost of turning down the thermostat. They even save money in the winter time. Heat rises, and ceiling fans force the air back down to heat the room, which of course means that you don't have to turn that thermostat up.
22. Provide shade for your air conditioning unit. This helps it to operate more efficiently, which of course saves you money.
23. Dress appropriately for the season. When it's hot, wear cooler clothes. When it is cold, wear winter type clothing – indoors. This will enable you to keep the thermostat set right, without the need to make the house warmer or cooler.
24. Use the vacation setting on your hot water heater when you go on vacation. There is no need for hot water if you aren't home!
25. Computer manufacturers tell us that our computers last longer if we leave them turned on. The earth lasts longer if you turn them off when they are not in use. Computers are cheap...the earth is irreplaceable.

10 Ways to Reduce Toxins

We must reduce toxins because they are contributing to the deterioration of the ozone layer...you know, that little bit of gaseous space that protects us from deadly radiation?

The ozone layer is an important part of our lives, even though we rarely think about it, but trust me, if we don't take measures to protect it, we will be thinking about it a great deal, and not in a good way! Here are 10 ways to reduce toxins.

1. Use green products. These days, every single one of your household cleaning products can be replaced with a green, environmentally safe product. If you can't find replacements in your local stores, shop online. Because many of these green products don't use expensive chemicals, they are often cheaper than those chemical laden cleansers, and many of the manufacturers of green products donate a portion of their proceeds into protecting the environment.
2. Use paneling instead of paint or wallpaper. Paint is full of chemicals, and the glue that is used to apply wallpaper is also full of toxins. You will probably find that your family is safer with paneling as well. Note, however, that paneling does typically cost more than wallpaper or paint...but you've saved so much money in other areas of protecting the environment that you can afford it, and enjoy the health benefits, as the ozone layer will enjoy the health benefits.
3. If you have an older home with painted walls, the chances are good that the old paint contains lead, which is very harmful to you, your family, and of course the environment. DO NOT sand that old paint off, as that only compounds the problem. Instead, put paneling over the old paint, and leave it alone. The paneling will protect your family, and the environment, as long as the lead containing paint is not left exposed.
4. Use mouse traps instead of poisons, and instead of insect sprays and such, use herbs to scare the bugs away. This is correct. For every insect, there is an herb that will drive it away. The information can be found online, and if you grow the herbs yourself, you will not only be improving the environment, your lawn, and your community, you will be saving a great deal of money. You can grow herbs indoors or outdoors. Also note that many pets will take care of any rodent or insect problems that you may have, such as dogs and cats – and they don't use any chemicals at all. This is an added bonus, because you will be doing your part in protecting animals, and controlling the pet population in the process.

5. Avoid using mothballs when storing clothes and items. Instead, use cedar chips. They cost more, but they are more effective, and environmentally safer. There are also various herbs that can do the job, and these are preferable to cedar chips.
6. Mercury is bad! Remove all sources of mercury from your home. Mercury items should be taken to a drop-off facility for appropriate disposal. Instead of using old mercury thermometers, use digital thermometers that do not contain mercury. Call your local city hall to find out where to dispose of mercury containing items.
7. Purchase foods that are organically grown – or grow your own organic fruits, vegetables, and herbs. Not only are these healthier, organic methods of growing foods helps to save the environment. Be aware, however, that organically grown foods are often more expensive than non-organic foods. Also do your research and make sure that the foods that claim to be organic actually are. You can purchase organic fruits, vegetables, herbs, and even meats.
8. Test your home for Radon. Radon is harmful to your health and the environment. In terms of what Radon does to the environment, it can seep either up or down from the soil. If it seeps up, it is released into the atmosphere. If it seeps down, it can get in the groundwater, making water supplies dangerous. From a health standpoint, Radon has been linked to higher instances of cancer as well as a multitude of other health problems. Radon is a naturally occurring substance, and you cannot assume that there are not high levels of it in your home without proper testing.
9. Know what you are using! Learn to read labels, and learn to recognize the names of environmentally harmful chemicals – even if you can't pronounce them. Always go with the least harmful product, if you must buy any of these products at all.
10. Finally, if you must use something that contains toxins, use as little of it as possible – but only after you have honestly, thoroughly, searched for an alternative and not found one. Also note that even if there is not an alternative today, this doesn't mean that there won't be an alternative tomorrow. You might also consider making your own non-toxic products. Simply read the ingredients, and omit that which is harmful to the environment, or to your health.

10 Ways to Protect the Environment Outdoors

Picture yourself outdoors. You are camping, or working out in your garden, or simply taking a walk. You feel at one with nature...but are you harming that nature while you are at it? The chances are actually pretty good that you are harming the environment, even when your intention is to enjoy the atmosphere or to make it more beautiful.

Be more aware of what you are doing outdoors. Most people don't even think about how much they are harming the environment when they are making their yards more pleasing to the eye. Furthermore, people rarely take the time to enjoy their lawns and gardens anymore. Today, we want to use the highest powered equipment to get the job done in the least amount of time.

Stop thinking of it as work, and start thinking of it as a way to enjoy nature – as well as a way to get a fantastic workout. Get the whole family involved, and get out there for some much needed sunshine while the ozone layer is still protecting you...just be sure to wear your sun block. Here are ten ways that you can protect the environment when you are outdoors.

1. Get rid of that old gas powered lawn mower, and the riding lawn mower. Instead, use an electric lawnmower – if you must – and if you really want to do your part, and get a great workout, use a non-electric, non-gasoline powered mower. Instead of electric or gas powered trimmers, use old fashioned hedge trimmers. Instead of electric edger's, use the manual ones. Instead of weed eaters, get down on your hands and knees and pull those weeds. It's great exercise!
2. Do not bag the grass that has been cut! Sure, it makes your lawn look nicer, and it is easier than raking, but you aren't doing the environment any good at all. That cut grass needs to be left alone, so that it can decompose naturally, which in turn feeds nutrients to the soil.
3. If you must water your lawn, do it once a day, and do it early in the morning. Don't over water the lawn. Also note that it may not look that fabulous when it is under watered, but when the rains come – and they always eventually come – it will get its good healthy green color back again. Sometimes, it is best to let Mother Nature take care of nature.
4. Use a rake. Avoid using blowers and such. These only stir up dust, and they aren't very good for the environment. Raking is fine, and its great exercise. If you don't want to do it, hire a neighborhood kid to do it for you.

5. Create a compost pile or bin. This compost makes great, natural fertilizer, and it enables you to recycle your waste, as long as the waste was 'natural' to begin with. Compost piles are very easy to create. The environment will thank you – and so will your gardens later on.
6. Don't burn leaves! Put them in the compost pile instead, and let them decompose naturally. This only makes the compost better, and fires – naturally occurring or not – are not good for the environment. If you feel the need to burn something, burn fallen branches that take longer to decompose than leaves do....however, see number 7 below before you strike that match.
7. Don't burn fallen branches and such either. If these items are too big for your compost pile, take them to your local recycling plant. Most areas have such plants, and they should be utilized. You can also purchase, or rent, a wood chipper to dispose of these larger items, and you can recycle these branches and such to be used in your garden to keep weeds down. If nothing else, get an axe (not a chain saw), and cut them up so that they fit in the compost pile.
8. Don't use pesticides – not even for your roses. Instead, learn about herbs, and plant needed herbs to keep pests away from those prized roses and such. Marigolds will ward off many pests in the garden, and they are quite lovely as well. Also, use a mixture of aromatic herbs for greater enjoyment. Pesticides are not only bad for the environment; they are bad for you and your family – and your pets – as well.
9. You may not want bugs and certain wild life in your yard, but there is some wild life that will only add to the beauty of your yard. Use plants and flowers that attract the wild life that you want, as well as plants and flowers that ward off the ones that you don't want. These days, creating a wild life habitat in your yard is not only the right thing to do, in terms of preserving wild life, but it is a very popular past time as well.
10. Instead of using weed killer, use wood chips. Wood chips are not only safer than weed killer, they are also better for your plants because they have the ability to hold moisture, while preventing erosion. Wood chips can be created from fallen branches and such, or purchased in your local gardening center. Just make sure that the ones that you purchase are 'recycled,' meaning that no trees were cut down for the purpose of producing them.

15 Ways to Reduce Waste

Landfills are filling up, and this is becoming a major problem all over the world. It could be that you live out in the country and you don't see this problem. It could be that you actually burn your trash, because you don't have regular trash pickup out in the country...but burning trash releases toxins in the air more than you realize.

You must find ways to reduce the waste that you and your family produce. Not only is it a 'space' issue, it is also a pollution issue, and what you may not realize is that it is a resource issue. Paper products should be recycled whenever possible, and plastic products can also be recycled. Here are 15 ways to reduce waste produced by you and your family.

1. Use rechargeable batteries. Batteries do not decompose, and furthermore, they eventually seep harmful chemicals into the soil. Rechargeable batteries, of course, cost more than regular batteries, but in the long run, you actually save money. Be sure to buy a good recharging unit as well, instead of a cheap unit that will have to be tossed out sooner, rather than later.
2. Bring your own bag when you shop. Use a canvas bag – or several canvas bags when you shop. When asked 'paper or plastic' say neither, thank you very much. You will be amazed at how many trees are wasted each year, and how many toxins are released into the air due to plastic and paper bags that are used to sack merchandise.
3. Repair items instead of throwing them out. This includes everything from appliances to shoes...yes - there are still shoe repair shops around. If the item cannot be repaired, can you find another use for it?
4. Enjoy dinner with cloth or linen napkins – instead of paper napkins. Also, use wash clothes, dish rags, and sponges instead of paper towels. Again, you will be amazed at the number of trees that you and your family – alone – save each year.
5. Avoid using paper plates, paper cups, and plastic utensils...even when they really are more convenient. Sometimes, we have to sacrifice what is convenient in order to save that which matters most – ourselves and our earth. You might reason that you save water by using these disposable items, but when you look at the big picture, these convenience items do more harm than good, because in most cases, they are not biodegradable.

6. Avoid using foil and plastic wrap to store or cover foods. Instead, use reusable storage containers with lids. Foil is not biodegradable, and it can take centuries for plastic to fully degrade.
7. Reuse packaging supplies, such as boxes and bubble wrap. Yes, we are all tempted to pop those bubbles, but that wrap is better reused instead. Store these items if you don't need them right away. Boxes can be folded flat.
8. Use festive boxes and bags to wrap gifts, and be sure that you collect those items when the gifts are opened, so that they can be reused. If anyone gives you a funny look, tell them that you are doing your part to save the environment. You don't need to feel silly, but they should feel silly for giving you the funny look.
9. Sometimes excessive packaging is necessary, as in the case of medications, and sometimes it is not. When you shop, think about the waste that the new item produces, in the form of packaging, and try to select items that have little or no packaging instead.
10. Make it a habit to read consumer reports before you purchase major items. Choose the products that have few repair needs, or those that need no repair at all. Sometimes, this means that you need to pay a higher price, but in the long run, you save money – and the environment by not having to throw that item out too soon, if ever at all.
11. When you do receive merchandise in bags, make sure that you save them. Do not throw them out! Find out if your local recycler can recycle them, and if not, save them for your own use...but again, try to use your own canvas bag when possible.
12. Buy in bulk, and fill smaller containers over and over again whenever possible. This includes everything from drinking water to shampoo to food products. You will reduce the waste produced by packaging materials greatly by doing this.
13. Use your compost bin. Be sure not to put anything 'unnatural' in it, such as paper waste and such, or meat products, but use it freely for vegetable scraps and liquid scraps.
14. Instead of buying new wood or plastic furniture, try to find used items that are still in great condition. Save a tree, save the environment, save money.
15. Before you toss whatever is in your hand in the wastebasket, look at it and think. Does it have any further use?

15 Ways to Conserve and Protect Water Supplies

Water is a precious commodity that we waste unnecessarily each and every day. We often, mistakenly, think of water as a renewable resource, and while it is renewable, it is not renewable at the rate that we actually use it. Our fresh water supplies are getting low.

When you save water, you are saving a natural resource that is, in fact, limited. There are multiple things that you can do to cut down on the amount of water that you use in your home. Here are 15 of them.

1. Stop all drips and leaks – immediately. This not only saves you money, but it also means that we have more water supply for the future. Just because it rains, this does not mean that our water supplies are being fully replenished!
2. Use water saving devices on every faucet in your home, and your toilet. These save loads of water – and money – in the long run. There are also devices that save water and purify the water as well.
3. Sometimes hand washing dishes is more efficient than using the dishwasher. If you just have a few dishes, hand wash them, or wait to run the dishwasher load until the unit is full of dishes.
4. When you do wash dishes, turn the water off! Fill up a sink for washing, and a sink for rinsing. You will be amazed at the water that you save. Also note that you do not need a full sink of water for dishwashing...half a sink of water will do nicely.
5. Get rid of old toilets and get a new one that is more efficient. These use a great deal less water, and actually have fewer problems than those old toilets.
6. Don't wash your car with the hose in the driveway. Instead, take it to an automated car wash if possible. These use a lot less water than you would if you did it yourself. Even if you use the non-automated car wash, you are better off.
7. Keep your water pipes clean. Don't dump grease and such down the drain. Remember that a lot of water that is used travels through the pipes all the way to the water treatment plant – to be recycled.

8. Turn off the water to your washing machine when it is not in use. This helps to prevent unnoticed leaks. Also, check the fittings once every three to six months and replace them before they spring a leak.
9. Use the lowest water settings possible on your washing machine and on your dishwasher. Something that is just worn once should be worn at least once more before it is washed. Furthermore, you save money – and water - by washing full loads of laundry, just like you save by washing full loads of dishes.
10. During droughts, your community officials will likely have water usage guidelines. Make sure that you follow these, and if possible, use even less water than is recommended. Remember that when such guidelines are issued, it is an indication that a drought has brought on a water shortage in your area. Water is more precious than most of us realize.
11. Set water usage guidelines in your own home, even when there isn't a drought. Limit shower time for each family member to ten minutes. You will be amazed at the money that you save in terms of water bills and fuel or power bills (most people take hot or warm showers).
12. Shower more often than you take a bath. Although the water is running, you will actually use less. Furthermore, you can turn the water off when you are soaping up, shaving, or shampooing. Never allow water to just run without it actually being used.
13. Get a shower head that allows for low water flow, but make sure that you have great water pressure. You won't notice any lack of water. If you don't have great water pressure, call a plumber – or your water department – to find out why.
14. You don't have to water your lawn at all...but even if you feel the need to, you don't have to water it every single day, or more than once a day. It will be just fine, and if it turns a little brown, that's okay too....it will come alive again when it rains.
15. When you turn on the water, train yourself to see gold or silver, instead of water. If you start thinking of it in terms of 'money going down the drain,' you will find that you automatically use less water, and this will be reflected on your water bill.

15 Ways to Reduce Air Pollution

Air pollution is a problem that has been around for decades, but instead of getting better, it only seems to get worse. It is true that industries are finding cleaner ways of doing business, but individuals add to the problem, and therefore must take steps to be a part of the solution as well.

Pollution in our air not only contributes to the ozone layer problem, but it is also a contributing factor in many illnesses that we experience today, including fatal illnesses, such as cancer. Here are 15 things that you can do to reduce air pollution for a better community, a better world, and a healthier you.

1. Turn off any electrical equipment that is not in use. You can't see electricity, but it is there, and it does contribute to air pollution. It isn't as 'clean' as we would like it to be.
2. Fires contribute to air pollution...even those cozy campfires. In fact, if you must start a fire, a big blaze that burns out quickly is less polluting than a small slow burning fire.
3. If you must start a fire, only use wood in your fire, and make sure that it is seasoned. Never burn paper, rubber, plastic, aluminum, tin, or chemicals. Green wood should never be used in a fire.
4. Replace your wood burning stove with a stove manufactured after 1990, as these stoves are designed to meet federal guidelines concerning emissions, whereas wood burning stoves manufactured before 1990 are not.
5. Keep tabs on the quality of the air in your local area. This information can be obtained from the evening news, as well as from online weather reporting services. Only use your fireplace or wood burning stove when the air quality is good.
6. Use solar power, instead of fuel based power, whenever possible. These days, it is easier – and cheaper – than ever to convert a home so that solar energy can be used. This is a great way to cut your power bills and to save the environment at the same time. Sunshine doesn't charge anything for its use.
7. Never use lighter fluid or any other propellant if you can avoid it. Ignite things with electric sparks instead of fuel. Such devices are sold these days, and they save the environment.

8. Park your car and walk. If you can't walk, ride a bike. If you can't ride a bike, ride a moped or motorcycle. If you can't do that, use public transportation. Avoid using 'single person' transportation, such as taxi cabs. Busses seem to pollute the air, but a bus can carry a lot of people, and if you put each of those people in a single car, there would be even more pollution. Subways are the best alternative, if you cannot walk.
9. If none of the modes of transportation listed above are possible for you, carpool. You can carpool to and from work, carpool kids, carpool to the grocery store, carpool to entertainment...everything that involves getting in a vehicle and going can involve a carpool.
10. Recycle your printer ink cartridges. This can be done at your post office, in most areas. This is very important to the environment!
11. When using chemicals such as paint thinners or varnishes, choose those that are labeled as low VOC, or Volatile Organic Compounds. Those that have high VOC not only add to pollution, but they are very bad for your health if you are inhaling even a little bit of it.
12. Avoid using aerosols of any type. These days, most products that are sold in aerosol cans are sold in other forms as well. Save the ozone layer, and use those alternatives, even if they aren't quite as convenient.
13. Take advantage of any telecommuting opportunities or alternate work day/time opportunities that may be offered at your place of business. If you are not aware of such opportunities, ask your employer about it. If this is not an option at your place of employment, you might try suggesting it to other co-workers, find out if there is an interest, and present that interest to your boss.
14. Keep your vehicle in good repair. Have it tuned up regularly, and have the emissions tested to ensure that your vehicle is not adding to the pollution problem anymore than is necessary. Make sure that all problems are fixed correctly right away. Not only will this help your vehicle to last longer, but it will cut down on pollution. Repairs may seem expensive, but they save you tons of money in the long run as well.
15. When you see other vehicles that are smoking or emitting odors, contact your state or local air pollution agency to report the vehicle. The only information that you need is the license plate number. From there, the agency will contact the owner to get the problem resolved in an effort to keep the air clean.

10 Ways to Do Your Part Away from Home

Doing your part to protect the environment extends beyond your home. It is important to take steps to protect our environment even when you are not at home. Of course, the environment benefits from this, but there are other benefits as well.

We are a society that likes to do the 'in' or 'popular' thing. Most of us don't like to admit that, but keeping up with the Joneses or wearing the latest fashions is important to us...more than we like to admit even to ourselves. When people see you taking steps to protect the environment, they are more likely to take those same steps as well. Here are 10 ways that you can do your part to protect our environment when you are away from home.

1. Don't litter. Carry a bag in your car for your trash. Keep a zip lock bag in your purse in case you have waste and there is no trash bin around. If you throw a cigarette down on the ground, you are littering. In 2007, during the Keep America Beautiful campaign, more than 2.8 million pounds of litter was collected in the United States.
2. When you see litter - whether it is yours or not - pick it up and put it where it belongs. Protecting the environment is everyone's job. If you see someone littering, report them to the authorities.
3. Carry your own reusable coffee mug. When you purchase coffee, use that mug, instead of those Styrofoam cups that are a real problem for the environment, or paper cups that waste trees.
4. Don't pick the flowers! When you are in the park, or at a business that has beautiful landscaping, avoid picking the flowers. These not only add to the beauty of the place, but they also contribute to a cleaner, healthier environment. Enjoy them with your eyes, and not your hands.
5. Carry your lunch in an 'adult' lunch bag, not a paper bag. You will save money by not eating out for lunch, but you will also be saving the environment when you don't go to restaurants that serve your lunch in a bag, complete with paper wrappers and paper cups.
6. Shop at garage sales, yard sales, and thrift stores. You will be amazed at the amount of money you save, and you will also be astonished at the perfectly good items that people are willing to part with at bargain prices. You will be doing your pocket book, and the environment, a huge favor.

7. On the flip side of buying used items, make sure that when you purchase new items, you are buying the best quality possible, as this typically means that you will get more use out of the item. Most people view this as a money saving tip, but it is also an environment saving tip. Paying more now usually means paying less later.
8. Refuse to do business with companies that are known for not respecting the environment. Simply refuse to buy their products, and let others know that you won't be buying them and why. If enough people do this, sooner or later those companies will get the message and change their ways – or close their doors. Research the companies and manufacturers that you regularly do business with.
9. Share with others. When you purchase a newspaper or magazine, and you finish reading it, offer it to someone else. Just make sure that they will pass it along, or recycle it as well. Let them know that you are trying to save the environment. Donate clothing and household items to charity as well.
10. Join the efforts to keep your community clean. Find out about clean up days, or organize one yourself. This is a great way to meet new people, reacquaint yourself with old friends, and help your community – and the earth – all at the same time. Call your city hall for more information on clean up efforts in your area.

If you really look at all of the ways that you can help to save the environment – for whatever reason you are willing to do that – you will see that these really are not big changes to make in your life.

Sure, there will be some things that are not as convenient to you or your life when you make these changes, but again, sometimes you must sacrifice what is convenient for what is right, what is safer, and what is more healthy. It's easy to toss things away without thinking about it. It's harder to stop and think before you toss. It's easy to eat out at lunch, and harder to prepare and pack a lunch. It's easier to use a snow blower, and harder to use a snow shovel.

What it all comes down to, however, is how important the things that matter in life are to you. Your kids matter. Even if you don't yet have kids or grandkids, they still matter to you, and because they do matter to you – because they are important – the world that you leave them is equally important. We work very hard to provide the best of everything for our children...why shouldn't we work to leave them the best environment - the best world possible?

Environmental Protection Resources

Air & Waste Management Association
www.awma.org

The Alliance to Save Energy
www.ase.org

American Forest Foundation
www.plt.org

American Solar Energy Society
www.ases.org

National Fuel Cell Education Program
www.nfcep.org

Energy Education Group
www.energyforkeeps.org

Fuel Cells 2000
www.fuelcells.org

National Energy Education Development
www.need.org

Propane Education & Research Council
www.usepropane.com

Renewable Fuels Association
www.ethanolRFA.org

The Wilds
www.thewilds.org

US Department of Energy
www.eere.energy.gov/education
www.hydrogen.energy.gov
www.eere.energy.gov/cleancities
www.eere.energy.gov/afdc/
www.blm.gov
www.mms.gov/mmskids

US Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov