



greenliving

Getting Started Has Never Been Easier

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There is danger in reckless change; but greater
danger in blind conservatism.

-Henry George

Change is the price of survival.

-Winston Churchill

Living Green

What Is It?

What exactly is green living? Really, it comes down to one basic idea: the earth's resources need to be replenished at the same rate that we're using them. That means caring for the environment by taking steps to save it.

If you start to look at all the different kinds of resources we have – fossil fuels, lands, wildlife, forests, oceans, and air – you can see that everything is interconnected. Since that's true, what we use today impacts what we have available for use in the future.

Going green is about making different choices, choices that will make us and our planet a better place now and for generations in the future. We have a window of opportunity that we can use to start healing and repairing and restoring our ecosystems, from oceans and rivers to rain forests and grasslands.

Why Is It Important?

Edgar Mitchell, an Apollo 14 astronaut, spoke about it this way: " In the 20th century, we accelerated with the power of science and technology into a non-sustainable civilization – our most immediate threat is what we are doing to ourselves because of our ignorance and unwillingness as nations and individuals to confront the environmental problems. To confront the excesses of our civilization, of nonrenewable resources and pollution, threats of garbage piling up and our oceans being polluted. The big problem... Is our consumption patterns; more is better and money is the only real value that can make you happy. We have to change our thinking patterns and our approach to this if we are to survive."

Did you know that it took nature 100 million years to create the energy that we as a world use today in one year? I'm sure that you do know that asthma, cancer, and many other diseases are more prevalent today than ever in history. Many experts relate the increase in disease to the changes in our environment.

Lucky for us, we do have time to begin to change our environment. Each one of us needs to be responsible for the choices we make. Each one of us decide things every day that can have an impact on the entire planet. Many of these choices we take for granted, such as driving to work instead of taking mass transit, or buying packaged food instead of fresh or organic. Decisions like this may seem minor to us, but they are

anything but minor, especially when multiplied by the billions of people on this planet.

Living green can help restore the planet, and it can also help you in many other ways:

- **Saving money** – We are in the habit of consuming much more than we need. If we consume what we actually need, whether it's electricity or water or clothes or some other item, we will save money. Specific example? For every 1° central heating is turned up, the bill increases by 8%. Here's another: Putting a water filled bottle in the toilet tank decreases water consumption per flush by 30%.
- **Community support** – If we support the stores in our community that foster green living, we help those institutions stay profitable, we act in an environmentally and socially responsible way, and we send a message to less responsible companies that they need to change.
- **Health benefits** – If we live green through cycling or walking more often instead of driving and through making greener choices with the food we eat, it will improve our health in every way.

Many people don't know how to begin living green, but it isn't difficult at all. It's really a matter of making different choices about the way you do things every day. By the end of this

book, you will have all the information you need to begin living green in every area of your life.

Recycling

People are generally familiar with the term recycling. If you can't reuse or repurpose items, recycling is the next option. Recycling involves collecting items that are no longer useful in their current form and processing them, their parts, or some of their parts into raw materials from which new goods are made.

Have you ever wondered just how effective recycling is? Here's a statistic: recycling steel, aluminum, copper, lead, paper, and plastics can save between 65% and 95% of the energy it takes to produce new goods from these materials. Recycling not only reduces trash that goes to landfills and incinerators, but also reduces the amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere. EPA statistics for 2005 state that recycling prevented the release of 79 million tons of carbon into the air. That's about as much as would be produced annually by 39 million cars.

You can see that recycling is far better than simply throwing an item in the trash. States and cities are becoming greener all the time and making it easier for all of us to recycle.

Precycling

While we've all heard of recycling, you may not be familiar with the term "precycling." This concept was begun in 1989 in Berkeley California where the city initiated a campaign to encourage consumers to buy food packaged in biodegradable

or recyclable materials. In other words, we recycle items after we've bought and used them, but we precycle while we're shopping.

This may be the easiest way to live green. If we make the correct buying choices, we can prevent unwanted materials from getting into our system.

- Each American uses about 190 pounds of plastic per year. About 60 pounds of that is discarded as soon as the package is opened.
- 30% of all plastics are used for packaging, and Americans go through 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour.
- Packaging waste accounts for one third of all garbage in the landfills in America.
- About 5 million tons (more than half of all plastics we throw away each year) are packaging.

We can cut down on these numbers easily. Here are some things you can do, starting today, to decrease packaging waste through precycling:

- Buy in cardboard – not styrofoam – cartons.
- Buy cereal in boxes made of recycled cardboard. Those boxes are grey on the inside.

- Buy in bulk – it's cheaper and uses minimal packaging.
- We often have a choice of buying beverages in glass or aluminum containers rather than plastic. Choose glass or aluminum because it's easy to recycle. The same principle applies to buying sauces, condiments, baby food, spreads, and other items.
- When given a choice, avoid buying items in plastic containers.

Here's an amazing statistic to keep in mind: if 10% of Americans purchased products with less plastic packaging just 10% of the time, we could eliminate 144 million pounds of plastic from our landfills and reduce industrial pollution.

See, that isn't hard, is it? In the rest of this book, we'll take a look at other easy but important ways to begin living green.

Paper

Technology may be solving this problem for us to a large extent since more and more people are using computers or iPhones to get their news. If you still get newspapers at home, don't throw them out with the garbage anymore. Take them to your recycling center. Stack them up until you have a good pile, and make it a habit to recycle them.

Americans use 50 million tons of paper annually, and that means we consume more than 850 million trees. If we make new paper from recycled paper, it would use 30% to 55% less energy than making paper from trees. The related air pollution is reduced by 95%.

Cardboard Boxes

Cardboard boxes, especially corrugated ones, can be inexpensively recycled. You can recycle them into more cardboard, toilet paper, paper towels, furniture, manufactured wood, pressboard, cat litter, and other things.

Reusing and repurposing

- Reuse paper that's only been used on one side. You can do this with paper from your printer, using the second side for rough drafts. You can use it for a number of things like grocery lists, notes to yourself, or paper for your children to draw on.
- Use wrapping paper and gift bags again – be careful how you store it, and often wrapping paper can be reused. If you can't use all of it, you might be able to cut off the unusable portion and use the rest. Cut down all greeting cards to make gift tags.
- Liners – use old newspapers and magazines to line boxes, drawers, and cat litter trays.

Another way to look at saving paper is not to use it at all. We can substitute cloth items for paper items in several ways. For instance, try using fabric shopping bags for your groceries. They're reusable, and they keep tons of plastic and paper out of landfills each year. How about the paper towels that most of us use abundantly? Use cloth towels for kitchen cleanups, and you keep that extra paper out of the landfills and save yourself some money as well.

Glass

Each year we throw away 28 billion glass bottles and jars. Most glass is made of three basic components: white sand, soda, and lime. These materials are heated to about 2500°F. Then the mixture is cooled to 1800°F. The process takes 7600 BTUs of energy to produce a single island of class.

These startling statistics might surprise you:

- The energy safe from recycling one glass bottle would like a 100 W bulb for four hours
- All glass bottles and jars can be recycled.
- Glass produced from recycled glass instead of raw material reduces related air pollution by 20% and water pollution by 50%.
- It can take 3000 years for a glass container to decompose.

On the other hand, you'll be happy to know that all the glass you turn in for recycling actually is recycled. This means using up fewer natural resources. It also means much less waste – each ton of glass produced leaves 385 pounds of waste.

Many communities these days supply recycling bins to the homes. If this is not true of your community, you can easily recycle glass by keeping a box for it in a convenient place in your kitchen or on your back porch. It's easy to do and an easy habit to get into. Don't forget, you can find new ways to use old glass.

Metal Cans

Aluminum is the most abundant metal on earth. Hard to believe that it wasn't discovered until the 1820s. The aluminum beverage can first appeared in 1963, and now it's the single largest use of aluminum. Most food and drink cans made from aluminum or steel are recyclable. You can recycle used aluminum foil too.

An aluminum can that you throw out today could be found by your ancestors as much as 500 years from now. The energy saved from one recycled aluminum can could operate a television set for three hours. Making aluminum from recycled aluminum uses 90% less energy than making aluminum from scratch.

You can make money from recycling aluminum cans and other aluminum products. Can recycle machines will pay you a set amount for every pound of the cans you turn in. Recycle centers might pay you even better rates.

Plastic

Most plastics are recyclable but this is a little tricky because there are seven different types of plastics. Each plastic item is coded with a stamp of a triangle with the number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 inside it. The code usually appears on the bottom of the plastic product. Plastics with the numbers 1 or 2 are most easily recyclable.

Code 1

This is polyethylene terephthalate. It is used to make soft drink, juice, and toiletry bottles. It can be turned into T-shirt material and carpets.

Code 2

High density polyethylene. It is used to make milk jugs, detergent bottles, and bleach bottles. It can be turned into detergent bottles, binders, and fencing.

Code 3

This is polyvinyl chloride. It is used to make shampoo and mineral water bottles, house siding, and piping. It can be turned into new house siding, piping, and other building materials.

Code 4

This is low density polyethylene. It is used to make grocery, garbage, and bread bags. It can be turned into new bags.

Code 5

This is polypropylene. It is used to make margarine and dairy tubs. It can be turned into car parts and milk crates.

Code 6

This is polystyrene. It is used to make meal trays, coffee cups, and packaging. It can be turned into DVD cases and CD trays.

Code 7

This includes other plastics. They are used for catsup bottles, etc. and they can be turned into park and picnic benches.

Check with your local service providers about which plastics they take for recycling. Buy the products with those numbers if possible. Also, try to reduce the plastic that you buy and reuse plastic.

Water

70% of the earth's surface is water. That sounds like a lot, but our water supply is being threatened by pollution and careless usage. United Nation's statistics say that worldwide lack of fresh water and proper sanitation is killing 5 million people a year.

Even with global warming and the resulting melting Polar ice caps, most of that water goes into the salty sea. We dump huge amounts of waste into rivers, streams, and oceans. Much of that waste goes right into our water supply. On top of that, the infrastructure across the country in America is now at an advanced age and needs to be replaced.

We don't necessarily have control over water conservation on a national basis or even a community basis, but we can control how water is used in our homes, and there's a lot we can do about it. 75% of the water we use in our homes is used in the bathroom. Be sure to look at the chapters on the kitchen and bathroom to get some great tips about how conserving water can save the water and save you money, too.

Your Home

There's a lot you can do in your home to save energy through your choice of appliances, heating and air-conditioning, and your water tank. Buying energy-efficient appliances can save you a ton of money.

An Energy Star rated washing machine uses half the water and electricity used by less efficient models. Washing machines use about 14% of the water consumed in the home. You can save water by waiting till you have a full load of clothes to wash. Washers use 32 to 59 gallons of water for each cycle. Up to 90% of the energy used for washing clothes goes to heating the water. Here's something you might not know – the temperature of the rinse doesn't affect the cleaning of the clothes. A warm water wash and a cold rinse will work just as well as a hot water wash and a warm rinse on nearly all clothes.

An Energy Star dishwasher can reduce your energy usage by 25% and save water too. You'll save even more if you fill your dishwasher before running it and don't use the pre-rinse or the heat dry cycles.

Refrigerators with an energy Star rating can cut electricity use by 15% to 40%. Save even more energy by letting air circulate around the condenser coils in the back, by checking that the door seals are secure, and by setting the temperatures to 35 to 38°F and 0°F for the freezer. Clean the condenser coils on the

back or bottom of your refrigerator at least once a year. Keep the door gasket clean to make sure the seal is not broken.

Air conditioners – if we all raise the settings of our air conditioners by 6°, we could save 190,000 barrels of oil every day. Don't switch your air conditioner to a colder setting when you turn it on. It will cool the room any faster and it will waste energy. Clean or replace the filters once a month; otherwise the fan works harder and consumes more electricity.

Stoves/ovens – for gas stoves, an electronic ignition system will use about 40% less gas than a pilot light. The pilot light and burner should burn with a blue cone shaped flame. If the flames yellow, burners and ports are clogged and need to be cleaned.

Your local electric utility is a good source for information on energy conservation. They often provide low-cost home energy audits, and have literature that details tips about energy conservation.

The Kitchen

Besides choosing energy Star appliances for your home, there are many things you can do to increase your homes energy efficiency. Many of these things are fairly easy; it's just a matter of knowing what they are.

Using Clean Detergent

Over half the phosphates in our lakes and streams come from detergents. Phosphates and other chemicals in our detergents are used by manufacturers because they soften water and prevent dirt particles from being redeposited on clothes. The problem is the chemicals have side effects. As they are emptied into streams and lakes, the fertilized algae grow out of control. When the algae dies, it decays and eats up the oxygen needed by other plants and renew life. The result is that the lakes and streams can die.

Here are some alternatives:

- Choose a green detergent. There are many on the market these days, so it shouldn't be hard to find one area
- Use a detergent formulated to work in cold water.
- Avoid heavy duty detergents since they're likely to have more chemicals.
- Use your regular detergent but reduce the amount that you use in each wash cycle.

Use Green Cleaning Products

You'll see more and more green cleaning products available to use in your home. These are environmentally friendly products that don't use harsh chemicals to do the cleaning. They are made out of natural and safe materials that clean well without putting any dangerous chemicals into our water.

Some people use nothing but all-natural cleaning products. These can work as well or better than cleaning products you buy in the store:

1. Borax is a natural mineral that the disinfectant. It's great in the laundry and in the kitchen as well; it can whiten and brighten your clothes and soften them.

2. Baking soda is a mild abrasive and works very well as a window cleaner. You can get baking soda in volume at hardware stores. Here are some suggestions for use:

- brighten chrome fittings in the bathroom and kitchen with baking soda and water mixture
- clean worktops appliances and other services with some baking soda on a damp cloth
- clean your refrigerator with a solution of 3 tablespoons of baking soda dissolved in half a cup of warm water
- clean your oven by moistening the walls with a damp cloth, sprinkling baking soda on the surfaces, and leaving it for an hour before wiping it off.
- Soak dirty pots and pans in a basin of hot water with 2 to 3 tablespoons of baking soda for about an hour. Then clean them with an abrasive scrubber.
- For red wine or coffee stains – while they're still wet, pour soda water on the stain.
- use baking soda on mildew in the shower and on shower curtains with just enough water to make it into a paste. Then use an old toothbrush for cleaning the grout between the tiles in the shower

- Pour half a cup of baking soda down your kitchen or bathroom drain followed by half a cup of vinegar and then some boiling water. This combination breaks down fatty acids that block drains and helps them to stay smelling fresh.

3. Distilled white vinegar clears away grease and deodorizers. You can clean lime scale from bathtubs, sinks, and shower heads by soaking the showerhead in vinegar and then brushing the line box with an old toothbrush. You can use distilled white vinegar to wash your windows or to clean marks around the toilet bowl.

4. Lemon juice also works on lime on bathroom fixtures. If the stains are stubborn, leave the lemon juice on for a few minutes or soak the tissue in lemon juice and set it on the area.

Aerate Your Faucets

There's a very simple device that you can attach to the water faucets in your home to save water; it's a low-flow faucet aerator. The normal faucet flow is 3 to 5 gallons of water per minute with a low flow faucet aerator. You reduce this flow by 50%. The amazing thing is that even though the flow is reduced, it seems stronger because air is being mixed with the water

Installing these devices on kitchen and bathroom sink faucets can cut water usage by as much as 280 gallons per month. For

a typical family of 4, it's 3,300 gallons a year for one family. Imagine the savings if millions of families were to use these devices. These devices are easy to install. Anyone can do it.

Reusable Containers

Reusable containers are an easy way to cut down on plastic wrap usage and paper usage. They are plentiful, easy to find, and easy to use for storing food in your refrigerator.

Water Heaters

You might not pay any mind at all to your water heater. Out of sight, out of mind. But the amazing truth is that it's the second-largest energy user in the American home. Many people keep their water heaters at 180°, which is higher than it needs to be. This wastes energy by overheating your water, and it also shortens the life of the tank. For every 10° you turn the water heater down, you save 6% of the energy used.

- Turn your water heater down to 130° – that's hot enough to kill bacteria but still save energy.
- Insulate your water heater with a blanket made for water heaters. You can find one of these at most hardware stores. This is an especially good idea in unheated spaces like the basement. It will save you 7% to 8% of the energy you've been using for that water heater.
- Every two months drain about 2 quarts of water from the valve faucet located at the bottom of the tank. This helps

prevent accumulation of sediment and improves efficiency and the life of the heater.

Don't Use Styrofoam

Styrofoam is made from benzene which is a known carcinogen. It is then converted to styrene and then made into a foam product. It's non biodegradable and it possibly will be around 500 years from now. It's composed of quite a bit of air so it takes up a lot of space. A lot of the styrofoam finds its way into our rivers and oceans, and it's deadly to marine life. For example, when sea turtles eat styrofoam, it clogs their systems and they suffocate.

Just don't use it. From egg cartons to fast food restaurant cups, it's just not safe. Ask for paper cups and plates.

The Bathroom

We said it before but it bears repeating: about 75% of the water we use in our homes is used in the bathroom. This can be true in some surprising ways. For instance,

- If you leave the water running while you're brushing your teeth, you're wasting 3 to 5 gallons of water every minute it's on.
- If you shave with the water running, you're using about 10 to 20 gallons each time.

Some simple solutions:

- Brushing your teeth – wet and rinse your brush to use only half a gallon of water.
- Shaving – if you fill up the basin, you use a gallon of water, that's a savings of 14 gallons each time you shave.

Showers

If a family of four takes five-minute showers each day, they will use more than 700 gallons of water every week – that's a three-year supply of drinking water for one person.

A long hot shower is a luxury a lot of us do not want to give up. But there's a way around that. With a low flow showerhead you can reduce water use by 50%. Showers usually account for 32% of home water use, so by replacing the showerhead, you're saving 16% of total water usage in your home. Easy fix, right?

Toilets

A real shocker here: 40% of the pure water used in your house is flushed down the toilet. But you can quickly and easily reduce that amount by 15% to 40%.

The cheapest and simplest way to do this is with a displacement device. You put it in the toilet tank, and it reduces the amount of water the toilet tank can hold. It can

cut your annual water usage by thousands of gallons, it won't interfere with the flush at all, and you'll never notice it's there. Don't use a brick for this because small pieces can break off and damage your tank. Here's how you do it:

- Put a plastic bottle in your toilet tank (a juice bottle or dishwashing soap bottle or a soft drink bottle will work fine.)
- Soap off the label, fill the bottle with water, and place it in the tank. You can weigh it down with a few stones inside the bottle.
- Don't let the bottle interfere with the flushing mechanism.
- You might want to experiment with different sizes. Different toilets need different amounts of water to maintain the proper pressure for a successful flush. Your savings is 1 to 2 gallons per flush.

You can also put a displacement bag in your toilet tank. These are airbags specifically designed to displace toilet tank water. You just fill one with water and hang it on the inside of the tank. Some utilities give these out for free. You can also purchase them at plumbing supply and hardware stores. Your savings is 1 to 2 gallons per flush.

You can also install a toilet dam. It's a device that artificially makes your tank smaller. They're available at hardware and plumbing stores. Your savings would be 1 gallon of water per flush.

If the average toilets is flushed 8 times a day, that's a savings of 8 to 16 gallons every day and 2900 to 5800 gallons a year.

The Bedroom

Sheets and Pillowcases

An easy way to start reading your bedroom to make it a clean and healthy comfortable retreat is with your sheets and pillowcases and comforter. You must choose organic cotton or linen sheets and organic flannel for winter. These are becoming easy to find at most of the home goods stores.

Avoid petroleum-based polyester sheets or no iron sheets because the resins in these are toxic and they are not removed with washing.

Comforters

Choose a natural option for your comforter instead of synthetic poly-filled comforters which may be less expensive but are also less comfortable. Look for natural fibers like goose down or organic wool. If you're allergic to wool, choose organic cotton. These fibers will last you a lifetime.

Pillows

The best fabrics for pillows are organic cotton, wool, or natural latex. Not only are they more comfortable, but you will not be breathing in harmful pesticides or chemicals.

Drapes and curtains

Choose organic cotton or linen for you drapes and curtains to complete your healthy bedroom.

Clean your house with the cleaning supplies described in this book to complete your healthy, green bedroom.

Food - Getting Green and Getting Healthy

Food is such a personal thing. We enjoy it and we reward ourselves with it. But if your intention is to live green, there are some easy ways to go about changing some of your eating habits. First, here are some startling statistics you might want to be aware of:

1. If Americans reduce their meat intake by just 10%, the grains and soybeans saved would feed 60 million people each year.
2. To produce 1 pound of beef we need 16 pounds grain and soybeans, 2500 gallons of water, and the energy equal to 1 gallon of gasoline.
3. Livestock production accounts for more than half of all water consumed in the United States.
4. One third of the surface of North America is devoted to grazing.
5. Growing grains, vegetables, and fruits uses less than 5% as much raw materials as meat production.

Some simple things you can do right now:

- Even if you're a confirmed meat eater, it is possible to cut down on the amount of beef you eat.
- Try some vegetarian meals. You'd be surprised at how tasty they are, and you'll never know if you never try.
- Support your local farmers markets. Locally grown products generally have fewer pesticide residues than products shipped from long distances.

Most foods on grocery store shelves have artificial additives and preservatives. You can avoid these by reading labels and choosing products with natural ingredients or by eating foods fresh from the earth, both fruits and vegetables.

Eating more vegetables and less meat has a significant impact on the planet because it reduces the amount of fossil fuel needed to produce meat and it reduces the amount of animal waste being produced.

Clothing

Going green with clothing may be harder for some than for others because it gets down to buying fewer but better quality clothes, wearing them longer, and repairing, repurposing, and recycling them. That means buying products from natural materials, grown without the use of pesticides or chemicals.

Buying Green Clothing

To buy green clothing, you have to avoid buying synthetic clothing, even though it's very likely less expensive. The most popular synthetic materials – nylon and polyester – consist of petrochemicals. Processing them uses large amounts of oil, water, and energy as well as emitting greenhouse gases.

In contrast, these natural fabrics are organic and contain no synthetic materials:

- Linen is made from flax, which grows more easily than cotton.
- Organically grown cotton and wool, not genetically modified
- Recycled materials are a green choice even though some chemicals may have gone into their original production
- Silk is made from the saliva produced by the larvae of moths
- Soy creates soft, silk-like products when the leftovers from oil or tofu are processed and spun into fiber.

Maintaining Green Clothing

To maintain green clothing, you need to appreciate it enough to take great care of it. You can prolong the life of your clothing items by donating them, trading them, or keeping them for yourself. In every case the clothing items need gentle attention. Here's how:

- Wash clothes only when they need washing and line dry or air dry.
- Wash clothes inside out – it protects the fabric.
- Use cold water detergent with cold water when possible.
- Pretreat stains immediately
- Recraft your clothing into other usable items

If you have no further use for an item, don't forget to regift it. Facilities where you can donate are convenient, and you will be helping your fellow human beings and the planet.

Transportation

We're in the midst a few changes in the auto industry. Hybrid cars are becoming plentiful. Electric cars are an option. Even diesel is back and better than it ever was. The car buying public is demanding changes motivated by rising gas prices and environmental concerns. The federal government is increasing fuel economy standards, and every automaker will have to step up to improve efficiency of their cars over the next few years.

You may not be looking for a new car right now. If not, we can tell you how to best maintain your current car in the greenest way possible.

Things you can do right now:

If you're not ready to trade in your current vehicle right now, here are some things you can do to increase your car's efficiency.

- Keep your car tuned up. This is the easiest way to make your car more fuel-efficient. A poorly tuned car uses 9% more gasoline and emits 9% more toxic fumes.
- Pay attention to your gas mileage. This is important because if there's a sudden drop in the mileage you getting per gallon of gas, you can get the problem fixed quickly.

- Don't let your car idle when it's not necessary. It takes less gas to start a car than to keep idling.
- Keep the fuel filter clean. Clogged filters waste gas.
- Remove unnecessary items. Carrying excess weight uses gas. Did you know that an extra hundred pounds will decrease your fuel efficiency by more than 1%?

Here's another amazing statistic – if only 100,000 car owners regularly tuned up their vehicles, it would keep 90,000,000 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere... And that's less than 1% of the total drivers in the United States.

Tire Maintenance

It might surprise you, but tires have a big impact on the environment. When you maintain your tires properly, you help conserve energy and resources, save gasoline, and reduce the problems involved in throwing them away. Just to make a point, it takes half a barrel of crude oil to produce the rubber in one truck tire.

One thing you can do right now is to keep your tires inflated. Under-inflation can waste up to 5% of the cars you. We could save up to 2 billion gallons of gas a year with properly inflated tires.

Radial tires improve gas mileage, and steel belted tires are generally the most efficient.

Buy the longest lasting, most fuel-efficient tires possible. Make sure your tires are properly inflated, balanced, and rotated every 6 to 8000 miles.

Alternative Means of Transportation

If you're an American, you have to admit that we love our cars. Many of us own more than one vehicle per person, and we do little to control them. Nevertheless, if we really want to make a commitment to going green, we have to admit that driving is only one option among many.

Depending upon the city in which you live, you have many alternate means of transportation – buses, subways, trains, bicycles, or walking. If you can do it, even one day a week would make a big difference to the environment.

For instance, if only 1% of car owners chose not to drive their cars for one day a week, it would save approximately 42 million gallons of gas a year.

Have you ever thought of carpooling? It's a great way to reduce the number of drivers in highway lanes during rush hour and a great way to reduce the amount of toxic emissions in every urban city. Check with your fellow

workers and neighbors to find people heading in the same direction you are each morning and night. You might be able to take advantage of the high occupancy lanes on the highway and get home sooner each day.

Conclusion

Green Living isn't just about us. It is about our future. Our children's future, and their children's future. We can choose to continue our wasteful ways, or we can decide that a healthy environment is to become our legacy. It is the most valuable heirloom we can pass down to our families.

Living green might seem like a pebble compared to a boulder when it comes to the environment. While in some ways it is, don't forget that a pile of pebbles can quickly tower over a boulder.