

A Simple Guide To...

ORGANIC LIVING



10 Simple and Effective Tips On
How You Can Live Life Organically!

ORGANIC LIVING STARTS IN YOUR HOME

What does organic living actually mean? Yes, it does mean trying to eat as many organic foods as possible, but it also means a lot more.

Organic living also applies to trying to live your life with as few toxins and other pollutants as possible. This means both inside and outside of your home. Obviously you only have control over so much.

Some easy ways that you can include organic living into your lifestyle is to choose products with as few chemicals in them as possible. Trying to purchase 'Green' or 'Eco' labelled products is a really good start.

When decorating your home you can choose paints that have fewer chemicals in them. The same goes for purchasing new drapes or blinds for your home. Try to buy those that are made from natural products and with as few chemicals as possible. A good flooring alternative for your home is Bamboo flooring. This is extremely environmentally friendly and gives your home a warm and natural look.

When it comes to purchasing skin care products for your family you can make wise choices here too. Look for products which contain organic and natural ingredients. This could include products made with lavender oil, aloe vera, tea tree oil and even a variety of natural products like apples, coconut and lemon.

Cleaning products have tons of chemicals and other harmful ingredients in them. This is one area where you can make a huge impact on your

environment. Not using bleach for instance will make a big difference, especially if you live out in the country and have your own septic system.

Next time you go shopping take a look at the cleaning products and start to read the labels. There are probably tons of words that you can't pronounce on there. Instead look for those labelled 'green and eco friendly' and try those. Ones containing tea tree oil are exceptionally good cleaners.

Do you also know that you have the perfect natural cleaner in your own home? Vinegar is a great cleaner and is inexpensive to buy. The next time your pet or child spills something on your carpet reach for the vinegar first. Just pour some vinegar onto a damp cloth and pat the stain, if you do it immediately the stain will come out easily.

You can also mix vinegar and water to make your own natural cleaner. Try it to clean your toilet, bathroom and kitchen next time. You will be doing yourself and your family a huge favour by not having them inhale chemical fumes.

WHAT ARE ORGANIC FOODS?

Organic foods are those that are classified as foods which are grown without the use of any type of chemical interference. That is no pesticides are used while the product is growing and no preservatives are added during the manufacturing process.

The organic farming movement actually dates back to the 1940's to something known as the Green Revolution. This revolution helped to ease the numbers of people suffering from starvation and introduced new cereals and grains to many nations.

As well as spreading foods the Green Revolution spread technology around the world. Organic farming is now replacing some of the principles used during this revolutionary period. Less or no pesticides are being used to grow the same foods and this has resulted in a higher quality of product being produced.

In countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia organic foods are defined as foods that contain at least 95% of their listed ingredients as natural. They must be free from chemicals and synthetic food additives. They may contain pesticides as long as they are also not synthetic.

At one time organic foods could only be purchased from local farmers. Today more organic food is showing up in your local grocery store. In addition many natural food stores are being opened that focus on natural and organic foods. This wider availability makes it much easier to purchase organic foods than ever before.

BENEFITS OF ORGANIC FARMING

The largest benefit of organic farming is the reduction of synthetic pesticides and chemicals being released into the soil. This one practice alone has a huge environmental impact.

Organic farming also helps to protect the wildlife, insects and plants in their local areas. Plus organic farmers are actually better equipped to help sustain the ecosystem. They understand their environment and take steps to keep it healthy.

Organic farms have been shown to use less energy in their farming techniques and to produce less waste. This includes things like less packaging and creating waste from using chemical products.

Consumer Safety

The benefits to the consumer are huge in regards to organic foods. The fresh produce is normally shipped locally and arrives in stores quickly. There is less chance of diseases being passed through the foods which makes for everything being healthier to eat straight from the store!

Yes, organic foods do cost a little more but the prices are also dropping. If you look in your produce department you may find that a bag of organic carrots is only 25 – 50 cents more than regular carrots. That small amount is worth paying to protect your families health isn't it?

How to Cook Naturally

Cooking naturally may sound so simple but are you cooking this way? Or do you rely on pre-packaged and frozen dinners too much? If you are guilty of the latter, you are not alone. So many people today feel rushed and pressured and turn to convenience foods instead. No wonder the rate of cancer and other diseases are on the increase.

Cooking naturally is really easy and doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. The best way to start is by planning to cook one meal each day that contains lots of fresh ingredients. To keep the cost down only buy fresh ingredients which are in season locally. They are cheaper and fresher and it just makes plain sense to do so.

For instance in the fall use apples, squash and pumpkin to make all kinds of great recipes. You should try grilling butternut squash on the BBQ it is easy to scoop out afterwards and doesn't require the addition of butter. Spaghetti squash is a great alternative to noodles and even your kids will be happy to try them.

During the summer fresh berries are cheap and plentiful so use them to make healthy desserts and breakfast shakes. Try mixing a handful of strawberries along with plain yogurt and cottage cheese and then blend them up into a tasty treat.

Even if you feel rushed for time you can still cook naturally. Add a side salad to your dinner and grill or bake some chicken or fish. There are lots of meals that can be cooked in thirty minutes or less and be totally healthy.

On the weekends when you have a little more time you can make up a pot of chicken or vegetable soup. The next time you roast a turkey or chicken use the leftovers and make a healthy soup, it is delicious and low in fat.

Instead of ordering Pizza make your own by using English muffins or pitas for the base. Then add a selection of toppings or let each person build their own personal pizza. These pizzas only take minutes to bake and will be ready in the same time it would take to order in a pizza, except you are saving money and improving your diet.

It really doesn't take that much effort to start cooking more with natural ingredients. Next time you are out shopping pick up a couple of fruits and veggies and incorporate them into your meal plan.

ORGANIC GARDENING – HOW HARD IS IT?

Is your immediate reaction to organic gardening one that has you thinking that this is just way too hard? That is not an uncommon reaction. But don't worry organic gardening is easy and you don't have to have the preverbal green thumb to get good results.

You can start your organic gardening endeavours by growing some vegetables in flower pots. Most nurseries now carry organic soil and seeds which are easy to use. The main thing about gardening organically is that you don't want to use any chemicals on your plants.

Some easy things to grow in your garden include:

- Tomatoes
- Garlic
- Green and red peppers
- Cucumber
- Radishes
- Herbs

Plus they can all be grown in containers if you don't have a garden already in place. If you don't want to plant seeds then you can pick up seedlings in the spring from your local nursery.

If you decide to grow tomatoes you can feed them with compost, don't use manure as this produces less fruit. Some organic gardeners like to add seaweed powder to the tomato soil for added nutrition.

Your plants can still fall victim to pests and diseases but organic gardeners will find more natural solutions to deal with these problems. For example if your plants are being attacked by caterpillars or beetles you want to knock them off into soapy water, it is best to wear gloves when doing this to prevent any blisters from forming.

Growing other plants such as marigolds nearby your tomatoes and other vegetables helps to ward off invasive creatures. This includes larger animals such as deer, rabbits and those pesky squirrels.

Most plants and flowers require about an inch of water a week. You don't want to either over or under water your plants. This can produce results such as yellowing of the leaves and rot occurring in tomatoes. It is best to water early in the morning and try to avoid having the water touch the leaves of your vegetables too much. Remember some herbs such as Rosemary like hot and dry conditions so adjust your watering levels.

By taking the time to research how to grow your plants organically you will see that it is not that difficult. If you do run into problems there are plenty of natural plants solutions like using beer and dishes filled with soapy water to ward off unwanted critters. So don't be scared to start organic gardening! Go out experiment and just have fun.

NATURAL PRODUCTS – ARE THEY SAFER AND BETTER FOR YOUR FAMILY?

If you look at the market today you will see that there are a whole slew of natural and organic products now available. The problem is how can you tell if these products are really better for you or not? Actually, there are certain guidelines that manufacturers must adhere to for them to use the labels 'natural, organic, and eco'.

One of the main restrictions for manufacturers is that they must not use any type of synthetic fertilizers during their manufacturing process. This includes not using chemicals or dyes to enhance colors for example. In Canada products that are Natural or classified as Homeopathic Medicines or treatments have been regulated by The Natural Health Products Regulations since 2004 and will carry an 8 digit number on them. This allows consumers to feel safe about using these types of products.

Natural products are gaining in popularity as the manufacturing methods are not as harmful to the environment as traditional methods. Workers at the production plants do not have to inhale or touch chemicals and no local wildlife is endangered.

As much as everyone is into recycling some recycled materials still damage the environment. Products made organically will not do this and can be recycled safely without damaging the soil or local water tables.

There are tons of natural and organic products available and these include items like shampoos, skin and body lotions, baby items, natural hair colors

and both human and pet foods. All of these markets are huge and as more and more products become available the retailers have to compete for customers.

This price war is advantageous to you as the consumer as you have the upper hand when shopping. You can now afford to do price comparisons and look for the best specials and discounts.

With increased online shopping the prices of organic and natural products is even better. You don't have to worry about whether the store is local or not. Most online retailers offer low or sometimes free shipping and your items can be delivered to your front door within a matter of days.

Even at your local grocery store you will notice that the organic department is growing in size. This also includes more fresh breads and naturally produced deli meats and juices. These will be stored in the refrigerated section of your grocery store. Obviously foods with fewer preservatives will spoil faster and will require refrigeration at home.

Once you have tried organic foods and natural products for your family you will wonder why you never made the switch earlier.

USING NATURAL SUPPLEMENTS IN YOUR DIET

For many people trying to eat healthy can be a challenge. Who doesn't have a busy life, going to work and then coming home to take your children to various after school activities? No wonder people just eat and run and don't pay that much attention to what they are eating.

Eventually though, your busy lifestyle will catch up with you. You will start to feel tired and maybe begin to get sick more often. But there is something that you can do about this. You can add a few natural supplements to your diet.

This could be in the form of a natural vitamin or as a natural breakfast or lunch type of supplement. These supplements can provide you with more energy and nutrients and give you enough fuel to get through the day.

You may even be using supplements and vitamins but are not getting enough benefits from them. This could be due to the ingredients in the products. Natural or organic supplements will have less chemicals and preservatives in them. The result is that they will provide your body with more valuable nutrition and your body will respond accordingly.

It is very true that the quality of your supplements matter, you wouldn't run your car with low grade oil or bad gas would you? When purchasing a natural supplement whether in pill or powder form look at the list of ingredients and the instructions on how to take it. You can buy the best supplement in the world but if you don't take it correctly you won't receive the best benefits.

Some natural supplements are best taken on an empty stomach while others suggest that you eat a piece of fruit before taking them. Make sure you know how to take it, the proper serving size and how often the supplement can be safely used.

There are literally tons of natural supplements available on the market today. Some are meal replacements while others give you added calcium or protein. Body builders for example use natural supplements with added protein as this helps them build muscles more effectively.

Then of course there are natural supplements for weight loss. If you are not sure which supplements to choose think about the reason to wish to start using one? Is it to lose weight or maybe to just get better nutrition? If you have any major concerns then it is best to check with your family doctor before taking any natural supplements.

NATURAL REMEDIES FOR YOUR HOME AND BODY

Natural remedies can be used in many different ways. You can use them as cures for simple ailments like bee stings or insects bites to more advanced treatments for skin conditions and even helping to deal with menopause. Many individuals prefer to use natural ingredients in their household cleaners as a remedy to cut down on chemical use at home.

The health care industry today is a multimillion dollar industry but people are discovering that taking medications and prescriptions are not always the best solution. Many times taking one remedy only leads to another one appearing. Or you end up having to pay high prices for monthly medications which can really eat away at your income.

Air pollution is another huge area of concern and the inside of your home is often too air tight! This means that no fresh air enters your home and also no stale air exits. You and your family end up breathing stale air that could be full of contaminants. No wonder the instances of families who are suffering from the flu and colds are on the increase!

Using natural remedies for your home and your body isn't really that difficult. There are so many remedies available today that it might be worth trying some before visiting your doctor the next time for an expensive prescription.

For example if you are suffering from a bad bruise you should immediately apply ice around the area. This helps to reduce the severity of the bruise and helps to minimize the discoloration. Heat should then be applied to the

area to get your circulation moving, this helps to prevent the blood from pooling in one place.

If you really gave yourself a big bump on your arm or leg bandaging the area can also help to minimize the damage. By squeezing the tissue together quickly the bruise will usually not become so large and will start to heal faster.

When it comes to using natural or chemical free cleaners you probably have them in your kitchen cupboards already. Vinegar, baking soda and lemons are some of the most effective natural ingredients that are available. Plus they are economical and easy to use.

Pure vinegar is a wonderful toilet cleaner that will help get rid of those brown stains. Mix together vinegar and water and use to wash your floors, kitchen counters, fridge and stove. Use lemon juice to help dissolve hard water stains and as an air freshener. Use baking soda to replace your commercial abrasive cleaners to clean your bath tub and other hard to clean surfaces.

By using these natural remedies you can easily keep your home toxin free and healthier for your entire family.

WHY SWITCH TO ORGANIC CLOTHING

Organic clothing is becoming increasingly popular and easier to find. Due to the process of making organic clothes these clothes are typically more expensive than regular garments. Organic clothing is classified as clothing which is made from the following materials:

- Cotton
- Jute
- Silk
- Ramie
- Wool

For an item to be labelled as organic the item must not have been subjected to the use of chemicals during the manufacturing process. Did you know that it takes almost 1/3 pound of synthetic fertilizers to grow one pound of cotton in the U.S.? It takes just a little under 1 pound of cotton to produce one T-shirt, that's a lot of chemicals used in the process!

There are huge benefits to producing organic clothing and the main one is by not using chemicals which in turn could harm the environment. No animals or humans are exposed to high amounts of chemicals and no pieces of chemical fabrics are put back into land field or recycling plants.

To truly shop for organic clothing you should be aware that some items which use lots of dyes are not 'true' organic clothing. When purchasing bamboo fabric you want to keep in mind that this type of fabric is actually made through a process where the bamboo shoots and leaves must be

cooked in a strong chemical solution to make the fabric. So bamboo clothing may not totally meet the standards of ‘Organic Clothing’ one hundred percent.

There are lots of hemp and organic clothing available in many online retail stores today. Yoga clothing is very popular for people shopping for organic clothing along with baby and kids clothing. The reason for this is that natural types of clothing help reduce the occurrence of allergic reactions in children. Or if they already suffer from asthma or other breathing problems wearing organic clothes can really help improve their condition.

When shopping locally look for clothes that are labelled ‘eco friendly’ as well as those will be made with fewer chemicals if not totally chemical free. In addition to clothing it is possible to find organic bedding, hats and even purses available.

After you have purchased your new organic clothing be sure to read the care labels as you may find that they will need to be washed differently from your other clothes. Some may not be able to withstand the heat of the dryer and will need to be laid flat to dry. With a little extra care your organic clothes will stand up well compared to regular materials.

CHOOSING ORGANIC PRODUCTS FOR YOUR BABY

Typically organic baby products cost more than traditional products but even so more and more parents are choosing to go this route. Your next question is ultimately 'Why?'.

There are four main reasons why parents are choosing organic baby products today.

1. Environmental Concerns
2. Health Concerns
3. Organic Based Materials
4. Increase in Products Available

There is much more concern today about our environment and the people that learnt about our environment in school are now reaching the age at which they are having their own families. They have been educated on the importance of doing their part for the environment and are following through.

The health of our surroundings impacts our overall health and this is another reason why people are choosing organic products. They are attempting to surround themselves with clean, chemical free products as much as possible.

There are more organic based materials available today and this results in more products at cheaper prices. Organic items are still traditionally based higher than regular items but the gap between the two has been

decreased. It is still within many people's budget to purchase more organic products than ever before.

It is easier to find organic bedding, organic based toys and clothing in many stores now. Plus with so many people shopping on the internet organic products can be purchased regardless of your location.

Just take a look at your favourite baby store website. You will notice that many have sections for organic or natural products. This includes baby bedding, baby clothes, toys and bath products which are gentle on your baby and not cause rashes or allergic reactions.

This means that parents concerned with their baby's health can now use all kinds of natural and organic products. You can even purchase an organic crib mattress. Many baby clothes are made from organic cotton which is light weight, soft, smooth, and are non-allergenic and can be water absorbent. This material really prevents your baby from developing allergies as there are no animal products involved.

Many baby organic products tend to be a little more expensive so you may want to choose just a few products to use at first. We would highly recommend using natural bath products and sleepers, as your baby will be using a lot of these during those first few months.

Another great way of getting more organic baby products is to request them as gifts for your baby shower or as Christmas or Birthday presents.

TOP BENEFITS OF NATURAL AND ORGANIC PET FOODS

If you have been thinking about changing to an organic pet food you will notice an improvement in your pet's health. When people switch from regular foods to more natural or organic foods they notice a huge difference. As a pet owner you will quickly see visible changes in your pet too.

This can be from a shinier coat to them having more energy. The quality of food counts and it is important to feed your pet the best food that you can afford. Natural and organic pet foods are usually more expensive because they are made from quality ingredients. But you don't have to always feed them organic food.

Many vets often recommend feeding your dogs raw vegetables. They love carrots, peppers and even some fruits. Just be certain not to allow them to eat the seeds of apples, oranges and grapes. Celery is another veggie that dogs love to chew on and will help you save money on dog treats.

Feeding natural foods to your pets has certain benefits. One of the top benefits is that natural or organic foods will help to clear up skin ailments and allergies. The high grade of protein used in the food helps to boost your pet's immune system allowing their skin condition to improve.

You will notice that your pet is more active and has tons of energy. Again this is due mainly to the high quality of ingredients used, but also because organic pet food uses less or no fillers. You may also notice that you are

feeding your pet smaller portions and this helps to actually reduce the cost of the food. Even though you are spending more money per bag, each bag lasts you longer so you could potentially end up saving money by switching to organic food.

Your pet's digestive system will also improve and so will their bathroom habits! This is because the new food will contain more grains and quality fibre compared to traditional pet foods that contain more corn.

Even if your pet doesn't suffer from any major problems like diabetes switching now to a natural or organic based food can prevent these diseases from occurring. It has been shown that pets that are fed a more natural diet tend to live longer as well. Who doesn't want to keep their companion around as long as possible? May be it is time to start using more natural treats and food for your pet you have nothing to lose but a healthier pet to gain.