

A collection of eco-friendly items arranged on a light-colored surface. On the left is a cream-colored mesh shopping bag. Above it is a small, rectangular woven basket made of natural fibers. To the right of the basket are three bamboo cutlery items: a spoon, a fork, and a knife, all laid out vertically. In the center foreground is a tall, silver stainless steel water bottle with a matching lid. In the bottom right corner is a white reusable coffee cup with a white lid. The overall aesthetic is clean, minimalist, and sustainable.

Green Living

Greener Appliance Use

When your home's appliances break down and repairs cost more than a replacement, upgrading to more eco-friendly machines is one way to live greener.

If you're in the market, look for units with the Energy Star label. The federal program was introduced by a collaboration between the United States Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency to highlight home products deemed environmentally friendly.

To earn the label, products must meet specific criteria, including:

- Product categories must contribute significant energy savings nationwide.
- Certified products must deliver the features and performance demanded by consumers, in addition to increased energy efficiency.
- Product energy consumption and performance can be measured and verified with testing.

However, if buying new, energy-efficient appliance models isn't in your budget, adjusting how you use your current equipment helps the environment and your wallet. From the laundry room to the kitchen, modern devices can waste a lot of energy and



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water when they are used without environmental considerations.

Here are some ways to adjust how you use appliances more efficiently.

LAUNDRY ROOM

Doing regular chores like laundry can rack up a substantial amount of water and energy waste. One tip is to

wait until you have a full load of clothes. Your machines will use the same amount of energy when used under partial capacity.

The experts at the American Cleaning Institute also suggest washing laundry with cold water. Did you know that 90% of the energy used during a load is used to heat the water? When a household commits to

using cooler temperatures, it can eliminate about 1,600 pounds of carbon dioxide per year.

BATHROOM

While taking shorter showers is an excellent way to reduce water use, consider investing in a low-flow shower head for more efficiency. Motion sensor faucets may

seem like a good idea for commercial use, but residential properties can benefit from this feature. They are exceptional tools to cut the water source while you're brushing your teeth or washing your hands.

Also consider finding the temperature control knob on your water heater to reduce its energy use while operating.

Support Pollinators

While they're small in stature, pollinators like bees, butterflies and moths play an enormous role in maintaining the Earth's environment.

The United States Department of Agriculture suggests that humans and all of the planet's terrestrial ecosystems would not survive without these species. Do your part to help essential insects do their jobs by providing them with an attractive habitat and flowering plants.

If you're unfamiliar with the process, the Pollinator Partnership defines pollination as when a pollen grain moves from the male anther of a flower to its female stigma. This is the first step for producing seeds, fruits and new plants. While wind and water can assist during the transition, live animals efficiently move pollen from bloom to bloom.



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THE IMPACT OF POLLINATORS

Efforts from pollinators directly contribute to higher crop yields and more flavorful fruits. The United States Forest Service (USFS) reports that of the 1,400 types of crop plants worldwide, almost 80% require pollination by animals. Check out some other interesting facts about the process, as reported by the

USFS.

- More than half of the world's diet of fats and oils comes from animal-pollinated plants.
- More than 150 food crops in the country depend on pollinators.
- The USDA estimated that crops dependent on pollination are worth more than \$10 billion per year.

These helpful animals contribute to the creation of flowering plants that produce oxygen by utilizing carbon dioxide.

BUILD AN ATTRACTIVE HABITAT

Attracting pollinators to your garden can improve your blossoming flowers' appearance while boosting the num-

ber of fruits and vegetables that grow. It's also a great way to help out the environment by ensuring their species continue to thrive and support the ecosystem. Here are some ideas from the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service to bring the wildlife into your backyard.

- Avoid using pesticides that are toxic to non-pest species.
- Use a variety of colors and

shapes via plants and feeders to attract different pollinators.

- Choose plants that flower at varied times, providing nectar throughout the growing season.

The presence of pollinators is similar to the importance of sunlight, soil and water toward the growth of over 75% of the world's flowering plants.

Green Tips that Save Money

Committing to a greener life gives the Earth helping hands in its fight against pollution, resource depletion and greenhouse emissions.

You may have reservations as eco-friendly lifestyles often get the reputation of having expensive repercussions. However, there are simple and inexpensive changes you can make that will save you money.

A fun way to track your savings is by comparing your previous monthly bills with fees from greener living. Look at totals due for financial responsibilities, including utilities, water and groceries. Keep your additional funds in a separate account for a rainy-day fund or consider donating it to a trusted organization. Many groups use public funding to study and improve ways to make Earth more sustainable.

Here are some helpful tips to get you on the road to an eco-friendly life while saving money.

INVEST IN REUSABLE ACCESSORIES

Line your kitchen pantry with affordable, reusable cloths to avoid the need for paper napkins or towels. You may substitute traditional paper towels with recyclable options, but eliminating the need to recycle is preferred.

Ditching disposable napkins reduces your trash output, which cuts down on energy waste required to transport and process waste.

It would be best to consider

investing in reusable water bottles rather than sending plastic to the landfill or recycling center. According to the Water Project, landfills are already overflowing with approximately 2 million discarded water bottles.

INSULATE YOUR HOME

While receiving an insulation audit and repairing areas in your home, inadequate protection may require an initial investment; the savings, however, will eventually cover the cost. When your home cannot protect itself from winter's cold or intense summer heat, HVAC equipment must work harder, resulting in wasting energy.

A properly insulated building efficiently regulates the interior temperatures while cutting your carbon footprint and reducing electricity bills.

TRY TO REPAIR BROKEN DEVICES

Rather than disposing of a broken appliance, try your hand at DIY repair or hire an expert in the field.

Suppose you're experiencing common problems with your washer or dryer. In that case, there is likely literature available for an affordable, simple repair. Limit the amount of heavy equipment you deliver to the landfill by trying to fix it first.



Build an Eco-Friendly Home

Building a home is one of the most significant accomplishments for American homeowners.

It also provides a tremendous opportunity to construct it with green intentions, rather than retrofitting an already established house. Before settling on your blueprints and working with a construction company, consider ways to make your new home eco-friendlier and more sustainable for the distant future.

When searching for a contractor to build your home, it's essential to interview them about their familiarity with efficient construction. Make sure they are committed to using durable and eco-friendly materials. Building components made with harsh chemicals are harmful to the environment and can potentially present health hazards to occupants. Try to interview a few companies to find the best fit for your expectations.

CHOOSING A LOCATION

Many times, the first step of building a new home is choosing a suitable plot of land. The experts at Environmental Training Resource suggest that construction can directly impact the habitat of wildlife in the area. Work with your local and federal wildlife organizations professionals to ensure



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you are not planning to build on a site where vulnerable species live and breed.

ECO-FRIENDLY BUILDING MATERIALS

Environmentally friendly building materials can lessen the burden your new home causes to the integrity of Earth. Check out a few exceptional substances used to construct high-quality properties.

- **Recycled steel.** According

to the Steel Recycling Institute, all steel made in North America contains at least 28% recycled content.

- **Concrete ash.** The innovative concrete substitute is created by combining ash byproduct from coal combustion with cement. The result is a more robust, less harmful foundation.

- **Bamboo.** Consider using this fast-growing wood source for flooring and walls. Its incredible tensile strength

and availability make it exceptionally sustainable.

If your local home improvement store lacks coverage on eco-friendly materials, ask if they can special order them before construction begins.

EFFICIENT APPLIANCES

You will likely fit your home with brand-new appliances. You can do the environment and your budget a favor by investing in energy-efficient devices. Look for those with

low operating costs and incentives from utility providers to find significant savings.

QUALITY WINDOWS AND DOORS

Keeping the outside air out of your home is an efficient way to ensure your HVAC equipment isn't working too hard. Invest in secure windows and doors to create a strong seal against outdoor conditions and lessen the risk of leaks to develop.

Innovative Green Technology

Companies across the world are taking the initiative to promote sustainable living with innovative advancements.

While many creations are inspired to create cleaner practices for commercial businesses, developers offer products that give passionate Americans a way to do their part in their own homes. Check out a few of the highlights that hit the stage at this year's Consumer Electronics Show.

WATER RECYCLING SYSTEM

The Hydraloop took the win as the CES's Best of Innovation award in the Sustainability, Eco-Design and Smart Energy category. It is an intricate system that works to clean and disinfect discarded bath and washing machine water and give it a new purpose. After sanitizing, the fresh liquid is used to flush toilets, fill pools, or reuse in the washer. With proper use, the unit can reduce in-home water consumption by 45%.

A NEW TWIST ON AIR CONDITIONING

For years, traditional air conditioning systems have relied on chemically formulated gases to transform outside air into cooler temperatures. An innovation called

the HomeCool uses only natural elements to create a comfortable home atmosphere while producing zero emissions from its refrigerants.

The manufacturer behind the creation claims that it uses 90% less electricity than current systems by operating on natural gas, battery, solar power or hydrogen.

ENDLESS NOTEBOOK

According to the organization Green America, the United States uses enough paper in a single day to fill the 838 miles of the Library of Congress nearly five times. In the last 20 years, paper products' usage has increased from 92 million tons to a staggering 208 million.

An innovation called the Rocketbook Everlast is a 36-page notebook with the ability to wipe the slate clean. A bonus is that purchases of the Earth Edition results in a tree being planted on the purchaser's behalf.

SMART BATTERIES

Lithium batteries have long been present in smart devices like phones, laptops and tablets. A new power source is slated to be released in 2022 and will feature impressive innovations. A lithium-glass battery is set to boast twice the energy density of lithium-ion batteries whose capacity will increase with age. Other benefits include lower costs, faster charging time and non-flammable safety features.



Green Tips for College Students

It can be challenging to be conscientious of the environment with the busy schedule of a college student. Fortunately, there are multiple ways to navigate your educational career while living greener.

While living eco-friendly will help lessen your carbon footprint, it will also serve to save money.

If you're living on campus with a roommate, it's crucial to get them on the same page to strive for sustainable growth. Take a pledge to turn off the lights before leaving the dorm, unplug electronics when not in use and limit your water use.

One way to conveniently cut electronic costs is by plugging in commonly used devices like the power strip that can easily be switched off.

GETTING AROUND

Leave your car at home when traveling to different classes and buildings. If you live far from school, consider public transportation, then walk once you reach campus. When your home is nearby, get some fresh air and exercise by riding a bike or walking.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, motor vehicles collectively cause about 75% of carbon monoxide pollution in the United States. Limiting your need for an automobile is an excellent step in the right direction.

CUT DOWN ON PAPER

In college, you will undoubtedly take numerous notes during class and research.

Lessen your need for paper by investing in electronic devices that replace a notebook. Tablets, smartphones and laptops are all worthy companions to quickly log meaningful quotes and snippets of information that you need later.

Look for equipment that offers voice recordings to make the process even easier.

DONATE BELONGINGS

When moving before or after college, many students will find themselves with the belongings they can bring. Rather than sending clothing, furniture or electronics to the landfill, find a local second-hand store or nonprofit that accepts donations.

The Frontier Group suggests that nondurable (clothing, paper) and durable goods (furniture, appliances) make up over 40% of landfill waste in the United States.

These dumps are the third-largest source of anthropogenic methane in the country, a greenhouse gas that's 28 times more potent than carbon dioxide and does considerable damage to the environment.



Be a Responsible Pet Owner

You may not realize the impact your furry friends have on the environment.

While we look to our pets for comfort and companionship, your efforts as an owner may be creating a negative carbon paw print.

Choosing more environmentally friendly foods, toys and hygiene supplies can make them healthier and happier.

If you're interested in becoming a pet owner, consider adopting rather than shopping. According to the No Kill Advocacy Center, roughly one million dogs and cats are killed in United States shelters annually. Saving their lives can provide you with a forever friend while lessening the burden of kennels that don't always practice green methods.

CHOOSE ECO-FRIENDLY HYGIENE OPTIONS

Depending on your pet's demeanor, bath time can be a calming event or a dreadful process. Fortunately, you can positively impact the environment by supporting eco-friendly shampoos to use during the chore. Ingredients in green soaps should be biodegradable, which are natural-

ly eliminated in the water cycle. Those containing harsh chemicals and pollutants can cause contamination once the discarded liquid is drained.

Flea and tick products are another staple for healthy pets. Ask your vet about options that are safe and effective for animals and practice consistent hygiene methods, including the following:

- Regular bathing;
- Vacuuming and cleaning.
- Washing pet beds.

It's possible to eliminate the need for harsh chemicals in treatments with non-toxic flea control measures.

PICK UP AFTER YOUR PET

Animal feces, when disposed of improperly, can have adverse effects on human health and the environment. It's crucial to be conscientious when safely disposing of your pet's droppings. Here are some eco-friendly tips to consider

from the Natural Resources Defense Council

Whether your dog does his business outside of your home, during a walk or at a puppy park, picking up after them is crucial. When left outdoors, rain can carry pathogens from the waste into streams. A few components in feces, like nitrogen and phosphorus, contribute to slimy and sometimes toxic algae outbreaks dangerous to human and marine life.

Indoor cats require special attention when contemplating between types of litter. Search for biodegradable, non-toxic options and never flush their waste down the toilet. Feline feces sometimes contains dangerous parasites that significantly impact waterways and marine life.

Before disposing of droppings in your trash can, check whether your city offers a municipal waste composting program.



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