

100 Sustainable Living Ideas

Our everyday choices affect the environment, our communities, and the overall quality of life we have. In an ideal world, we would all have unlimited resources and time to accomplish a complete lifestyle overhaul. However, change that lasts is often a journey and not an afternoon project! Taking the necessary steps to start living in an environment friendly way is a process. It starts with small, do-able tasks that can have a big impact on our world. Here's a list of 100 simple sustainable living ideas to try out.

1. Learn How to Fold Hospital Corners

The fitted sheets commonly used today contain elastic polymers. Next time you are due for a new bottom sheet, save money and the planet by purchasing a single top sheet.

2. Switch to Soap Bars

Reduce the amount of plastic packaging you purchase by switching to old fashioned bars of soap. Now you can buy shampoo, conditioner, moisturizers, exfoliants, and face wash in bar form.

3. Use Paper Bags for Dry Goods

Ditch the plastic ziplock bags for dry good items like granola, almonds, and banana chips.

4. Switch to Waxed Paper Bags for Wet Food Storage

Waxed paper baggies are great for items have that have the potential for going stale, leakage, or browning.

5. Use Glass Mason Jars Instead of Plastic Containers

Just go ahead and buy a crap ton of mason jars for everything because they're just so darned useful!

6. Get a Marble or Bamboo Soap Dish

Avoid plastic in your bathroom by switching to materials that are naturally sturdy.

7. Bamboo is Your Kitchens Best Friend

Bamboo is an affordable, renewable resource that can replace trivets, cutting boards, storage containers, utensils, and more in your kitchen.

8. Use a Glass Tea Kettle or Coffee Press

Cut down your electric bill and avoid steeping your coffee or tea in plastic by replacing your electric kettle and coffee makers with glass stovetop versions.

9. Get a Stainless Steel Percolator

Another great alternative to a plastic coffee maker is a stovetop percolator.

10. Try Wooden Clothes Pins Instead of Plastic Chip Clips

Wooden clothes pins are an affordable replacement for plastic and metal clips you use in the kitchen, office, and laundry room.

11. Use Natural Cooking Twine

Replace twist-ties and rubber bands with this affordable alternative.

12. Buy From Bulk Bins

Boycott excess packaging by taking your own reusable containers to the bulk bin aisle at your grocery store.

13. Buy Liquids Stored in Cardboard, Glass, or Metal

14. Use 100% Cotton Dish Rags Instead of Paper Towels

15. Buy Vinegar in a Glass Container to Use as a Multi-Purpose Cleaner

16. Use 100% Cotton Washcloths

Replace your plastic loofahs with this eco-friendly alternative.

17. Use Steel Wool instead of Plastic Sponges

18. Get Rid of Your Electric Coffee Grinder

Save energy and reduce the amount of plastic in your home by switching to an all wood or metal hand-crank coffee grinder. Or better yet, go to Kroger and use the coffee grinder there!

19. Replace Your Electric Food Processor

Switch to a mortar and pestle to save energy.

20. Buy Clothes Made from 100% Natural Materials

Most man-made fabrics are plastic derivatives. Natural alternatives include hemp, bamboo, cotton, linen, and leather.

21. Use Cloth Napkins Made from Natural Materials

22. Switch to Aluminum Foil or Wax Paper

Quit buying plastic wrap for the kitchen and opt for these more environmentally friendly solutions.

23. Replace Your Gift Wrap with Butcher Paper or Recycled Newspapers

Most wrapping paper is non-recyclable due to the shiny, BPA coating it has.

24. Start Buying E-Books or Audio Books

I love books as much as the next person, but for books that you know are going to be a one-time read, opt for the digital version.

25. Replace Grit Removing Cleaning Products with Baking Soda

26. Stop Buying Bottled Water

It could take a novel to list the ways in which bottled water is bad for the environment! Buy a sturdy stainless steel water bottle and never look back.

27. Buy a Spray Bottle (or 2) and Make Your Own Natural Cleaning Products

28. Say No to Plastic Clothes Hangers

When you're clothes shopping, ask the store to keep the hangers. This way they're likely to be reused in the store and won't end up in your trash bin.

29. Line Dry Your Clothes

Save energy and lengthen the lifespan of your clothes by hanging them up to dry.

30. Run the Tap on Cold

Use cold water whenever possible to reduce your energy bill and shorten the length of your water usage.

31. Set a Timer for Your Showers

Use your phone or an egg timer as a friendly reminder to save water.

32. Say No to Plastic Shopping Bags

Bring your own reusable tote or ask for paper when you're out shopping.

33. Stop Using the Plastic Food Bags in the Veggie Aisle

34. Repair Before You Replace

Whether it's sewing on a button, tightening a table leg, or adding a fresh coat of paint always look for a way to repair your belongings before you replace. Unless it's plastic. Then you should just look for a sustainable replacement!

35. Re-Sole and Repair Your Shoes

This isn't possible for all types of shoes (i.e. flip-flops), but if you have invested in a quality pair of shoes, it's worth looking into finding a local shoe repair shop.

36. Re-Purpose Before Shopping

Take a whirl through your home and look for creative solutions before you go out to buy a situation-specific item.

37. Hit the Charity & Thrift Shops

Buy used items whenever possible to save money and reduce the footprint of your belongings.

38. Donate or Re-gift Unwanted Items

It's so easy to chuck things out until you actually imagine - or see - your belongings sitting on top of a landfill. If you can't recycle or upcycle, pass it on to another person.

39. Opt for a Re-Fillable Milk Jug Service

40. Buy Eggs that Come in Cardboard Instead of Styrofoam

41. Use a Light Timer

If you are like me and terrible about remembering to shut off lights, swing by a hardware or garden store to purchase an outdoor timer.

42. Choose EnergyStar Rated Appliances

43. Purchase a Remote Controlled Power Strip

Stop your TV and electronics from being energy vampires by purchasing a power strip that has an on/off remote control.

44. Switch to CFL or LED Lightbulbs

45. Use Energy Efficient Cookware

Glass, ceramic, and metal cookware are the most energy efficient items to cook with.

46. Adjust Your Thermostat

Even if it's just by a few degrees higher or lower than you would prefer, adjusting the temperature a little can make a large impact on your energy usage.

47. Make Your Next Mattress Purchase Non-Toxic

When it's time to replace your mattress, opt for a chemical free mattress made from natural materials.

48. Ditch Disposable Razors

Buy a metal or wood razor that uses disposable blades to reduce plastic waste.

49. Launder Your Clothes with Soap Nuts

Not joking! This is a natural, sustainable, and low packaging alternative to the standard liquid laundry detergent that we commonly use.

50. Compost Your Scraps

Find out if there is an affordable compost pickup service near you or a compost pile you can deliver your items to each week.

51. Switch to Home Made Pesticides

The internet is chock full of homemade alternatives that save money and keep the chemicals at bay.

52. Switch to Recycled Toilet Paper

53. Turn Off the Lights & Electronics When You Leave

54. Opt Out of Paper Billing and Notices

55. Unplug Your TV

56. Unplug Your Computer

57. Buy Re-Usable Straws Instead of Disposables

58. Use Re-Chargeable Batteries

59. Donate or Recycle Old Devices

60. Get a Library Card

61. Take a Reusable Travel Mug to the Coffee Shop

62. Stop Buying Laundry Detergent in Plastic Containers

63. Line Small Trash Cans with Paper Bags

64. Use Wood, Glass, or Stone Cutting Boards

Ditch your plastic cutting boards and opt for natural materials.

65. Stop Buying CDs, DVDs, and CDRs

These items often come with a lot of packaging and are very difficult to recycle. Use a usb drive or electronic files whenever possible.

66. Stop Buying Q-Tips with Plastic

67. Say No to Paper Receipts

68. Paint Your Home with Natural Paints

69. Sign Up for Green Power

Find out if your local power station offers renewable energy plans. For example, I pay \$4 a month for 2% of my power to be sourced from wind power.

70. Determine Your Carbon Foot Print

Visit carbonfootprint.com to evaluate the size of your carbon footprint.

71. Switch From Liquid Dish Detergent to Powder that comes in a Cardboard Box

72. Quit Dying Your Hair

Going natural will save you time and money, make your hair look healthier, and literally stop chemicals from being dumped down the drain.

73. Stop Buying Canned Aerosol Shaving Cream & Beauty Products

74. Re-Think Your Christmas Tree

Look for alternatives to live or plastic trees. Last year I got a potted Norfolk Island Pinetree and it smells great!

75. Say No to Styrofoam Packaging

76. Stop Using Single-Use Coffee Pods

77. Stop Buying Coffee in Plastic Bags

Take your own container to the bulk bins or look for coffee that comes in tins or paper bags.

78. Invest in a Tea Sphere

Reduce your waste by using a tea sphere and buying tea leaves in bulk.

79. Switch to Paper Tape

80. Switch from Disposable Lighters to Matches

81. Try a No'Poo Hair Care Routine

82. Use A Cotton Laundry Bag Instead of a Synthetic One

83. Replace Your Plastic Laundry Basket with a Bamboo Bin

84. Try the 333 Capsule Wardrobe Challenge

85. Keep Potted Plants or Plant a Garden

Counter your carbon emissions and get fresh air by maintaining high oxygen producing plants in your home.

86. Opt for Organic Soil and Natural Fertilizers

87. Replace Plastic Laundry Hampers with a Natural Material Hamper

88. Avoid the Landfill

Always think twice about buying a product that can't be recycled or donated once used. Ask yourself if it is necessary to have something that will end up in a landfill.

89. Avoid Buying Items with Excess Packaging

90. Make Your Own Juice

91. Bake Your Own Bread or Buy Bread in Paper Bags

92. Recycle Your Junk Mail

93. Stop Buying Synthetic Textiles

94. Avoid Buying Disposable Products

95. Give Up Gum

Gum is actually made from plastic. Just ask Google.

96. Opt for a Plastic Free Toothbrush

97. Switch to a Bamboo Comb

98. Buy or Make Plastic-Free Hair Ties

99. Replace Your Plastic Shower Liner with a 100% Cotton Shower Curtain

100. Buy Cotton Rugs and Floor Mats

Having a rug on top of hardwood and concrete floors is proven to lower heating bills.

Made it this far? Great! I've made this list available as a free, downloadable document.