

21 Simple Steps to Save the Planet

By Paul Tick

Switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs and shut the lights behind you.

Use lights only for specific task areas rather than trying to light a whole room.

Shut the power surge switch on the computer and other appliances when they are not in use.

Use the front and backs of paper for printing non-formal documents.

Pull the plug on all “instant on” appliances when not in use.

Air dry dishes rather than dry in the dishwasher.

Skip the dishwasher and wash by hand (but don't let the water keep running between dishes).

Use front end clothes washer and dryers (save water and electric /gas).

Use a clothes line or drying rack to dry clothes whenever possible.

If you use outdoor lights, attach a motion sensor so they are on only as needed.

Avoid using air conditioners, especially central air conditioners. Use window fans or ceiling fans only when needed.

In winter, keep thermostat low and dress warmly indoors, use heavy blankets at night.

Insulate and weather strip your home.

Drive a small car but, walk, bike ride, carpool, bus when possible.

Drive at slower speeds. Accelerate and brake slowly, except in emergencies.

Mow lawns with hand mower or electric mowers (plant native trees, flowers and bushes to replace as much lawn as possible).

Compost your kitchen scraps.

Stay out of malls, buy local.

Use wind energy and solar energy.

Join an environmental activist group and get active.

Support only political leaders with positive environmental records.

RECIPES FOR A HEALTHY KITCHEN AND A HEALTHY PLANET

Paul Tick

It's not just what you eat that will make you and our planet healthy, it is also how you buy, store, and prepare the things that you eat. The way we work in our kitchens can have an impact on our planet and how we think about it. Have fun while you make changes in your kitchen, the most active room in the home. While you make the changes also remember that those that save you energy will also save you money.

- Gas stoves are more efficient than electric ones and less polluting.
- When heating a pot or pan, never turn the flame on so high that the flame “licks” the sides of the pot or pan.
- Cover pots and pans to keep heat in to save energy and to reduce cooking time.
- Lightly steamed vegetables are healthier and taste better and take less energy to prepare than over-cooked vegetables. Raw vegetables are often the healthiest of all.
- Use a pressure cooker for beans and grains.
- Use leftover water from the steamed vegetables to make soup or, after cooling, use it to water house or garden plants—it is filled with nutrients and saves water.
- Use a tabletop oven when possible rather than heating your large oven, for small meals.
- Use countertop filtered water instead of purchased bottled water.
- When purchasing appliances make sure they have an Energy Star label on them.
- Don't overload the refrigerator; your food needs to have cold air circulate around it to stay fresh and to maximize refrigerator efficiency. The freezer, however, should stay packed but not so much that air vents in it are blocked.
- Decide what you want to eat before opening the refrigerator and searching for your favorite snack. This will allow you to open and close the door more quickly and save cold air from escaping.
- Use glass containers for food storage rather than plastic when possible as chemicals from the plastic may leach into your foods and drinks.
- Cover foods that are stored in the refrigerator, as this will keep them fresher and will minimize moisture release into the refrigerator.
- Change kitchen bulbs to compact fluorescent. (And do this in the rest of the house too.)
- Use dish soaps with all natural ingredients that are not tested on animals.
- Use white vinegar for general kitchen cleaning. Some don't like the smell so go easy on it. It is especially useful for killing germs without damaging human or pet health. A bit of baking soda can be added to make an abrasive when needed.
- Whenever possible buy organic foods, foods produced by local farmers and small businesses and fair trade goods. Or if possible, grow your own!
- Garbage disposals are not sustainable. Better to compost your kitchen scraps.
- Composting will make great organic fertilizer for your vegetables, flowers, trees and shrubs and will keep tremendous amounts of waster from the landfills.
- The old environmental saying, “Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle” in that order, is more important today than ever before.

Learn more at: http://cornucopia.org/index.php/dairy_brand_ratings and <http://www.nrdc.org/air/energy/genenergy.asp> and <http://www.getenergyactive.org/fuel/state.htm>