

A close-up photograph of two ladybugs on pink flowers. The ladybugs are orange with black spots and stripes. The flowers are light pink with darker pink veins. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green and pink.

EVERYDAY SUSTAINABILITY GUIDE

*7 Good-for-our-Planet Steps
That Are Easy to Take*



YOU'VE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE.

You want to do your part and help make our world a little greener, a little more sustainable. You want to do it to make your community more liveable right here, right now. You want to do it to put our planet on a better path for your kids and grandkids. You want to do it because it's the right thing to do.

But where do you start and what do you do?

You start right here. Read on for seven straightforward things you can do in your everyday life that science shows us will make a real difference.

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OR NOTHING”
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1

LEAVE
THAT
"ALL OR
NOTHING"
MINDSET
BEHIND



1

LEAVE THAT “ALL OR NOTHING” MINDSET BEHIND

Too often, people get tripped up by feeling like getting a little greener requires lots of drastic changes. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Picking just one specific thing to do that you're excited about and that's a little bit of a stretch for you, will go a long way. What's most important is that you stick with it — so don't be too hard on yourself if you let some other more minor things go.

Imagine if we could get every single person to shift just one behaviour — our collective actions have the power to transform this world of ours forever.

So say goodbye to that all or nothing mindset and find YOUR one thing you can do. Whether it's on our list or not.

Carbon Footprint 101

Many of these tips help you reduce your carbon footprint. Your footprint is the amount of carbon dioxide emissions—a major contributor to climate change—that you and your activities are responsible for.

Some emissions are very direct: carbon dioxide in the exhaust fumes of your car, or emissions caused by generating electricity from fossil fuels like coal, gas or diesel used in our homes.

But there are also less obvious ways that our daily activities expand our carbon footprint. For example, an apple grown 1,000 kilometres away has a higher footprint than one grown near you because transporting the far-away apple causes more carbon emissions.

That's why any step you take to reduce either those direct or indirect contributors to your carbon footprint can add up to helping combat climate change, one little bit at a time.

2

REDUCE YOUR FOOD WASTE

*Save Water,
Energy and
Your Wallet*

2

REDUCE YOUR FOOD WASTE

Our food and eating habits offer some of the best opportunities for reducing our environmental impact.

Consider the huge amounts of energy and water that go into growing our food. 92% of water consumed globally goes into growing food and fibre, and 24% of global greenhouse gases come from agriculture and associated deforestation (plus a bit from forestry).

Then think about this shocking fact: roughly one-third of all food produced for human consumption gets wasted! Since we don't see the water and energy used to produce the food, it's tough to visualise how much impact that waste has.

It's easy to see why reducing your food waste is a simple and meaningful step for lowering both your carbon footprint and wasted water. Consider planning your meals and only buying groceries you will use before they go bad. See our quick tips for staying ahead of food waste.

Rescue Food Before it Goes Bad

Ever eye up your leftovers guiltily? Or know those veggies in your crisper aren't going to last much longer but get stumped about how to use them up fast? Consider these ideas:

Stir-Fry It - Simply chop up any meat or vegetables, throw in some chopped garlic and sauté in a dash of sesame oil and soy sauce. Play with the flavours by adding extras like chilli or fresh herbs.

Salad It - A simple vinaigrette can transform any leftover raw veggies, cooked veggies, meat, eggs or grains into a sophisticated salad. Combine one part of your favourite vinegar (or even lemon or lime juice) with one-part oil. Add a squirt of mustard or tahini for a creamier dressing.

Roast It & Sauce It - Throw some veggies in a roasting dish tossed with some oil, dried herbs of your choosing, salt and pepper, cover and roast until soft in a 200° oven for 30-35 minutes. Cool slightly and puree in a food processor or blender with a little extra water if needed. Then use as a healthy pasta sauce.

Freeze It - Not just for leftovers you're sick of! Go ahead and freeze any ingredients you struggle to use all of, like tomato paste, fresh ginger, etc.

3

BECOME A CONSCIOUS CONSUMER

*Cut Back on
Buying Things
You Don't
Really Need*

3

BECOME A CONSCIOUS CONSUMER

Payday rolls around, and you have the urge to go shopping. Stop, and think about whether you really need to hand over your hard earned cash.

According to research, of the materials consumed, only 1% remain in use six months after sale¹. By becoming a conscious consumer, you can minimise your spend on unnecessary “stuff” while preventing more waste entering landfill.

And it’s not just about minimising landfill. Take for example the disposable fast fashion industry. As the second-largest user of water globally², it’s causing major harm to our planet. That’s not hard to imagine when about 7,000 litres of water is needed to produce one pair of jeans (the amount of water an adult drinks in 5-6 years)³.

When you consider the energy and resources that goes into sourcing raw materials, manufacturing and delivering it to the store, as well as the impact of the waste on our environment (either landfill or our oceans) – it makes you think twice about buying those jeans or that shiny new thing.

Tips For Buying Less

Visit Your Local Library

Instead of buying a book or a new toy for your child, visit your local library. They also have digital collections of audio books and movies to keep the whole family entertained.

“No spend” Challenge

Test yourself by not buying unnecessary items for a month. The basic rules are:

- Only buy what you need, when you need,
- Fix first, replace second,
- Give experiences over things.

If you’d like to challenge yourself further, try extending the “no spend” period.

Delay Gratification

To prevent impulsively buying that thing you don’t really need, give yourself a day or so to think about it. Once you have a fresh perspective, ask yourself if you’ll actually need this thing and how much use it’ll get.

If you still need it, you can use the wait time to shop around for the best deal, wait for a sale, or see if you can get it second-hand. You may even find that you can live without it afterall.

¹Annie Leonard, The Story of Stuff

²United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

³Sustainable Fashion Matterz

4

SHUT DOWN HIDDEN POWER HOGS



*Install Power
Saving Outlets*

4

SHUT DOWN HIDDEN POWER HOGS

Many of us now understand that our appliances use power even when they're turned off. According to the South Australian Government, the average household spends over \$250 per year for stand-by power.

It's easy enough to unplug your kettle when you're not using it, but unplugging the big power hogs like your microwave or washing machine can be harder — especially if electrical outlets are behind furniture or out of the way.

The wide variety of 'smart' standby power controller outlets are available to make shutting down passive energy use a snap. You can also use power boards with on/off switches to make it easier to turn individual appliances off. It takes little effort to convert your outlets to a more eco-friendly alternative.

How to Choose a Better Power Outlet

Here are some of the features you should consider when upgrading your power outlets to a greener alternative:

Price point – Options can range from \$10 to \$50. Decide on your budget and how many standby controllers/power boards you want to add to find the price range that's right for you.

Number of outlets – Think about how your appliances are situated, the amount of space available and what you'll be plugging in. Also, as the number of sockets in standby controllers can range from one to six, think about how many appliances will need to be plugged in at a single point.



5

EAT
MORE
PLANT-
BASED
FOODS

*Shift to One or
Two Plant-Based
Meals a Week*

5

EAT MORE PLANT- BASED FOODS

There's a reason mum always told you to eat your vegetables... It's good for your health and for the planet. Plant-based foods (fruits, veggies, grains and foods made from them) generally have a much lower carbon and water footprint than meat.

It doesn't have to be all or nothing. Shifting just one or two meals a week to incorporate more plant-based foods really adds up. It's important to recognise that in some parts of Australia farmers are investing in sustainable grazing of their stock as one important way to protect and manage natural grasslands, while in other places the increasing global demand for meat is driving deforestation.

So if or when you do eat meat, look for responsible producers who are working to transform their agricultural practices to be more ecologically sustainable.

Good Sources of Plant-Based Protein

Pulses (beans/lentils/peas) - High-protein foods with the lowest environmental impact. Some are complete proteins on their own (e.g. soy), and others complement grains to form complete proteins.

Nuts and seeds - While they use more water to grow than some other high-protein plant foods, they still offer a great way to get a little extra protein.

Meat alternatives - From foods like tofu that have been around for thousands of years, to newer products like veggie burgers and sausages, they're quick and easy protein sources.

And don't worry about it! Most people don't know that it's unusual to be protein deficient as long as you eat enough total calories. Even foods we don't think of as "high protein" like broccoli and potatoes have good amounts of protein per calorie.



6

SEAL UP ENERGY STEALERS

*Insulate and Caulk
Your Home*

6

SEAL UP ENERGY STEALERS

Did you know that draughts can account for up to 25% of a home's heat loss in winter or heat gain in summer?

Reducing draughts is an easy and cost effective way of reducing heating and cooling costs. Using less energy saves you money on your utility bills and reduces carbon emissions—a major cause of climate change.

Insulating and caulking makes a big difference. Caulking to properly seal windows, doors and other drafty spots is an easy do-it-yourself project (and pretty cheap for a hired handyperson to do if you're not a fan of home improvement projects). Upgrading your insulation will last for many years and, depending on how handy you are, may also be something you can do yourself.

Learn Your R-Value

R-Value is shorthand for any insulation's thermal resistance. The higher the R-value, the more effective the insulation. Depending on where you live, your type of home heating and cooling systems, and the specific area of your home you're insulating, you can determine the R-value you'll need.

The Department of the Environment's 'Your Home' website (www.yourhome.gov.au) offers great online resources for learning more about R-values and other information on environmentally sustainable homes.

A collage of various pieces of waste including plastic bottles, metal cans, and food containers. The items are scattered across the page, with a prominent green bottle in the center. The background is white, and the overall composition is a mix of different materials and colors.

7

WHEN
IN
DOUBT,
LEAVE
IT OUT

*Do Your
Homework
on What Can
and Can't Be
Recycled*

7

WHEN IN DOUBT, LEAVE IT OUT

Recycling saves millions of tonnes of carbon emissions each year, not to mention the added benefit of less resource extraction and landfill waste.

Most people don't realise that it's really important to learn what can and can't be recycled where you live. Trying to recycle things that aren't accepted can break equipment and increase costs significantly.

Do a little bit of homework with your local council to get official guidelines. Then commit to following them. You can also check out options for recycling things your community's program doesn't accept.

At the end of the day 'When in Doubt, Leave it Out' is the mantra to live by. If you have something non-recyclable but potentially usable, see if you can find it a new home.

For more information visit Planet Ark's recycling website that also links to your local council: recyclingnearyou.com.au.

Most Common Recycling Bin Spoilers

Community recycling programs vary and you should check the specific restrictions for where you live.

Here are some of the most common off-limits items that well-meaning people mistakenly try to recycle:

Soft Plastics

Any plastics that can be scrunched into a ball such as cling wrap, plastic packaging, plastic bags, bubble wrap and nappies.

Household Waste

Food, clothing, polystyrene, take away coffee cups, paper towels, crockery, green shopping bags, batteries.

Oily/Dirty Containers

Contaminants are so harmful to recycling that a whole load can sometimes be thrown out if there are just a few dirty containers. They don't need to be spotless but do rinse them out.

READY? SET? GET GREENER!

Armed with these simple tips for your everyday life, we know you're ready to go out and put them into action immediately.

Remember, it's most important that you focus on steps that you're excited about and that help you stretch a bit more beyond what you're already doing. Don't feel like you have to do everything at once. If something ends up being a major drag, give yourself permission to switch it up and push yourself in a different direction that may feel better.

Then spread the word with your positive enthusiasm. Your excitement has the power to inspire others to follow your lead. Our planet's facing big challenges and we need all hands on deck to create a more sustainable future.

That makes every person and every action you take an important step in the right direction.

Especially you! You're already on the right path by reading this guide.

So THANK YOU for standing with The Nature Conservancy and doing your part to help protect our one and only Earth.

Want to do more?

To support The Nature Conservancy's vital work putting the very best conservation science in action to take on the biggest challenges facing Australia today, donate online at www.natureaustralia.org.au



Tremendous thanks to **Jon Fisher**, **Senior Conservation Scientist** at The Nature Conservancy, for lending his expertise and passion to this guide. He is one of the 600 Nature Conservancy scientists who work to help build a future in which nature and people thrive together.