

BIG GOALS, SMALL CHANGES:

Bringing the SDGs Home



UNA SCOTLAND

A Simple Guide to Sustainable Living





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Sustainable living

is a lifestyle that attempts to reduce use of the Earth's natural resources and one's personal resources. Practitioners of sustainable living often attempt to reduce their carbon footprint by altering methods of transportation, energy consumption, and diet. They aim to conduct their lives in ways that are consistent with sustainability, in natural balance and respectful of humanity's symbiotic relationship with the Earth's natural ecology and cycles. The practice and general philosophy of ecological living is highly interrelated with the overall principles of sustainable development.

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INTRODUCTION

Whether or not you have just been introduced to the idea of sustainable living or have been trying to better your lifestyle for a while now, this guide will be a great resource for you!

If you're just starting out, you can find all of the basics right here and do more research on topics that you are curious about. If you're a seasoned environmentalist, have a look through and perhaps you'll find something you've never considered before or get even more ideas to improve your lifestyle.

Where to Start?

From turning off the light in your kitchen to taking a shorter shower, it can often be difficult to imagine just how much your daily actions affect the environment in the bigger picture. A great way to start is to gain more awareness of your consumption in daily life through a few online tools:

- United Nations Carbon Footprint Calculator: Take a quick quiz to find out how your daily decisions add up and learn how you can address your own carbon footprint.
- WWF-UK Footprint Calculator: Alternatively, the WWF-UK has a similar program.
- Thames Water Water-saving Calculator: Similar to the last two, but with water as well as the energy consumed at the same time as water-related household activities. This quiz also gives you instant feedback on things you can do to decrease your water consumption!

What Next?

So you've taken the questionnaires and have a new perspective on your own lifestyle. Next, go through the guide and learn all the different ways you can make changes to your life to better our planet. It may be overwhelming at first because there is a never-ending list of to-do's, but all it takes is the first small change for you to begin your journey.

Small changes can make a big difference, and that's what this guide will help you with.

Regardless of whether or not you become a tiny home vegan, there is no *right* or *wrong*. Sustainable living is different for everybody—you just have to find out what it means for you. Never forget: every act counts!

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CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



home
HOME

The Basics

- ✓ **Buy rugs** to help retain heat inside and keep the thermostat low.
- ✓ **Plug air leaks** in windows and doors to maintain energy efficiency inside.
- ✓ **Turn off the lights** more frequently and try to use natural light when possible.
- ✓ **Turn off the wall socket switches** when not in use, especially during holidays and days when no one is home.

product tips:

Replace incandescent lightbulbs with energy-saving Compact Fluorescent Lightbulbs (CFL) or Light Emitting Diode (LED) bulbs.

OR Save electricity by plugging appliances into a power strip and turning them off completely when not in use.

OR Buy a smart power strip that automatically shuts down appliances such as TVs that go into standby mode.

- ✓ Looking for new appliances? **Buy products with EU energy labels** that indicate energy efficiency.



Check out [British Gas](#) for more energy-saving tips.

The Laundry

Between 15-40% of your home's water and energy is used in the laundry, so some simple changes can make a big difference in your home's sustainability.

- ✓ **Fill your washing machine with a full load of clothes**, and don't forget to use eco-mode if you have it!
- ✓ **Wash in cold water** instead of hot—this decreases your energy use and has the same results.

- ✓ **Hang clothes to dry** instead of using a dryer.

But don't put wet clothes on a radiator to dry, as it makes the boiler work harder than it needs to.

Replace:

- Plastic clothes pegs with stainless steel ones.
- Single-use dryer sheets with dryer balls.
- Conventional detergent with soap berries.

The Bathroom

- ✓ **Turn off the water** when you brush your teeth or shave.
- ✓ **Put a bucket in the shower** while you wait for the water to heat up. Use the water later for watering plants, flushing the toilet, or cleaning.

OR Shower with colder water!

- ✓ **Take shorter showers and less baths.**
- ✓ If you shave with a wet razor, **put a stopper in the sink** and do not leave the water running!
- ✓ **“If it’s yellow, let it mellow. If it’s brown, flush it down.”**

In 2018, the average consumption of toilet paper in the UK stood at 127 rolls per capita.

product tips:

Opt for...

- Organic cotton towels and dressing gowns, which are more sustainable, absorbent, and breathable.
- Organic cotton, bamboo or hemp shower curtains, which are durable and mildew-resistant.

Try out other *sustainable bathroom products*, including brushes and face cloths, here.

- Recycled toilet paper.
- Non-toxic, natural cleaning products.

OR Take it one step further and make your own cleaning products at home!

The Kitchen

- ✓ **Don’t rinse the dishes** before they go in the dishwasher.
- ✓ **Defrost your fridge and freezer** regularly to stop ice from building up.

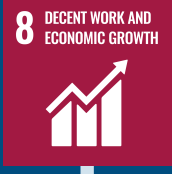
- ✓ **Load and unload your fridge** as quickly as possible.
- ✓ **Only fill the kettle with as much water as you need.**

Renovating your kitchen? Choose:

- Plastic-free kitchen essentials
- Stainless steel and glass when possible
- *Sustainable timber* (FSC-certified) from companies such as Eco Flooring, Drummonds, Woodworks by Ted Todd.

- A small modelled dishwasher if there aren’t many people in the house.
- Upcycled furniture and decor

★ Try to position your kitchen so your fridge and freezer aren’t close to cookers or direct sunlight to increase energy efficiency.



FOOD & DRINK

Buying Food

- ✓ **Try meal kits!** Although they come in more packaging, the reduction in food waste makes it more sustainable than preparing your own meals.

Here are some choices available in the UK.

Food and drink accounts for 20% of UK's CO2eq emissions and the sector produces 10 million tonnes of food waste annually.

If that's not an option...

- ✓ **Plan your foodshop** so that you are limiting the number of trips you take and taking advantage of your location.

For example, if you are going to a farmer's market, do the rest of your weekly shop in stores nearby.

- ✓ **Opt for:**

- Local produce and products.
- Minimally packaged foods and goods.
- Organic: not only more sustainable, but also healthier.



OR plant your own garden at home—no food miles, no packaging, no fossil fuels!

Food miles is the distance food is transported from the time of its production until it reaches the consumer and it is one factor used when assessing the environmental impact of food.

😊 Choose:

- Produce that is in season, so that you aren't consuming goods that are shipped from the other side of the world.
 - In the off season, choose preserved foods that are canned, dried, or frozen
- Less meat (or go vegetarian or vegan!)
 - Start small with [Meatless Monday](#)
- Vegan dairy alternatives like nut or soy milk.
- Pasture-raised products, which are better for us, the animals, and the land.
- Sustainable seafood by following the [Good Fish Guide](#).
- Food certifications, which indicate sustainable and ethical practices.

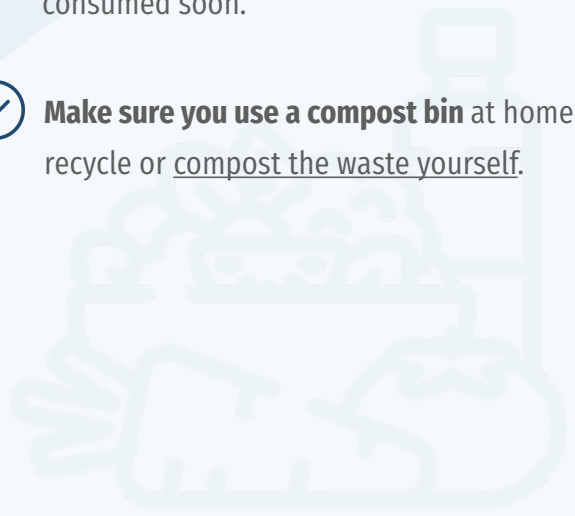
☹️ Avoid:

- Highly processed foods: more steps in manufacturing + international ingredients = higher carbon footprint!
- Marketing tricks that get you to buy more food for a 'cheaper' price, leaving you with more than you can consume.



Making & Saving Food

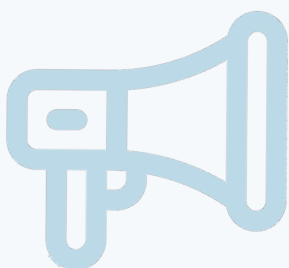
- ✓ **Avoid pre-heating the oven** unless a precise baking temperature is necessary.
- ✓ **Plan meals** so that you are left with minimal leftovers and waste.
- ✓ **Store your food properly** to maximise their lifespan and minimise potential rotten waste!
- ✓ **Save food and money by freezing leftover produce and takeaways** if they can't be consumed soon.
- product tip:*
Swap plastic wrap or cling film with **reusable beeswax wraps**.
- ✓ **Make sure you use a compost bin** at home to recycle or compost the waste yourself.



Eating Out & Takeaway

“ Seven million disposable coffee cups are thrown away each day in the UK. Most coffee cups are lined with plastic and are extremely difficult to recycle. ”

- ✓ **Choose restaurants** that apply the above rules for organic, sustainable, local foods!
- ✓ **Bring your own tupperware** for takeaways and leftovers.
- ✓ **Use reusable water bottles and coffee cups** —many shops offer a discount when you bring your own!
- ✓ **Avoid using single-use cutlery** when eating out or getting takeaway by bringing your own reusable cutlery or by opting out of taking them from the restaurant.



Ask restaurants and shops about their practices and let them know what you value. You have **POWER** as a **CONSUMER**!





PERSONAL *personal care* CARE

Changing Your Habits

- ✓ **Take shorter, colder showers.**
- ✓ **Air dry your hair** instead of using a blow dryer.
- ✓ **Turn the water off** while brushing your teeth and shampooing your hair.
- ✓ **Recycle your items when possible!**
 - Colgate has launched a free [recycling scheme](#) for all brands of toothbrushes and toothpastes.

Changing What You Buy

Did you know your favourite facial wipes are most likely made out of plastic? Over the past decade there has been a 400% increase in the number of wipes found along the UK coastlines.



Choose:

- Cruelty-free, which not only protects animals, but the environment and your skin as well!
- Natural ingredients to avoid exposing your skin to toxins and avoid companies that produce excessive emissions.
 - [Skin Deep](#) is a cosmetics database where you can look more closely at products' ingredients.
- Eco-friendly sex toys, condoms, lubricants, and more!



Avoid:

- Products with microbeads, tiny plastic particles that harm animals and the environment.



The average woman will use over 11,000 disposable, single-use menstrual products in her reproductive lifetime.



product tips:

Replace single-use and plastic products with sustainable alternatives for:

- Shampoo, conditioner and soap
- Oral care
- Facial cloths
- Razors
- Grooming products

Swap tampons and pads, a majority of which contain chlorine-bleached cottons and harmful substances, with:

- Period pants
- Reusable pads
- Menstrual cups

Many of these plastic-free products are made of bamboo, which requires no pesticides or fertilizer and little water and produces 35% more oxygen than trees.



PARENTHOOD

The Basics

- ✓ **Look for friends, family and neighbours** whose babies have outgrown their clothes and/or are willing to sell or give away their baby items.

- ✓ **Look for baby items being resold online or in secondhand shops.**

- ✓ Still can't find what you are looking for?
Purchase sustainable items!

Greentom produces prams that are made almost entirely out of recycled- and bio-plastic.

Making your own baby food is one of the most sustainable practices you can have while childrearing. Check out a list of baby food recipes [here](#).

product tips:

Opt for...

- *Sustainably-produced toys.*

[Babi Pur](#), [Green Toys](#), [Ethicalkidz](#), and [Toys to You](#) sell a variety of sustainable children's toys.

- [Reusable cloth nappies](#).

- [Reusable nursing pads](#).
- Biodegradable [baby wipes](#).
- Bibs made from [silicone](#), [hemp](#), [bamboo](#), or [organic cotton](#).
- Stainless steel or glass bottle, as [plastic leaching](#) is a real health concern for babies

More Children?

Yes!

Hold on to the things you already have and reuse them. If you end up having to buy anything, purchase second-hand or otherwise sustainable items.

No!

Donate or sell the items you will no longer be using. Perhaps you can think of friends or family members that would like to (re)use them.

For more information, check out a collection of articles on eco-friendly [motherhood](#).



FASHION & SHOPPING

fashion & shopping

Shop Sustainably

✓ **Bring your own bags** to prevent more single-use bags from coming into circulation whilst saving a couple pence.

✓ **Shop online.** Online shopping has a lower carbon footprint than traditional shopping.

One of the largest contributors to the fashion industry's climate footprint is from shopping trips themselves, which are normally by car, as well as the costs of packaging and shipping products to the stores.

Shop Consciously

✓ **Beware of greenwashing**, used by brands to falsely market themselves as environmentally friendly whilst maintaining unsustainable business practices.

Read more about how to spot greenwashing [here](#).

✓ Instead, **look for gold-standard certifications**, which indicate sustainable and ethical supply chains.

Slow fashion (as opposed to fast fashion) is an approach to fashion that involves buying better-quality garments that will last for longer and values fair treatment of people, animals and the planet.

✓ **Choose natural fabrics**, which can make a big difference in sustainability.

✓ **Opt for slow fashion brands.**

Resources like [Good on You](#) and [My Green Closet](#) research brands' practices and help us make decisions in becoming sustainable and ethical shoppers.

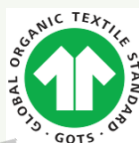
😊 **Choose:**

- Organic or recycled cotton
- Other recycled fabrics
- Organic hemp
- Organic linen

} Requires little water & no pesticides!

→ Every part of the plant is used & is fully biodegradable

Look for the **Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)**, which ensures organic status and environmentally and socially responsible manufacturing.



☹️ **Avoid:**

- Conventional cotton, one of the thirstiest and most chemical-intensive crops to grow
- Polyester and synthetic fibres, made with oil and plastic and shed microfibres into waterways
- Silk, which kills grubs in the process
- Viscose rayon (including bamboo rayon)

→ **Greenwashing alert!** Often advertised as a sustainable source because it is natural, but the production process is toxic and polluting

Shop Less (New)

Most of the impact of the fashion industry comes from the fact that the clothing was produced.

✓ **Resist the urge to fall for discounts and deals** that influence you to buy more than you actually need.

✓ **Shop second-hand** at charity and thrift shops or online through resale apps like [Depop](#).

✓ **Wear your clothes until they are worn out.**

OR [Sell them online](#) or to consignment retailers so someone else can benefit from them and all-in-all you can keep new goods from being purchased by putting your old ones out there.

OR [Use donation schemes](#), which accept clothes in any condition and will recycle any that can no longer be worn.

✓ **Create a capsule wardrobe** comprised of timeless, high-quality pieces that can be endlessly mixed and matched so you don't have to continuously buy new clothes.

✓ **Consider renting** instead if you have to use or wear an item that you know you will not be using or wearing frequently, such as formalwear.

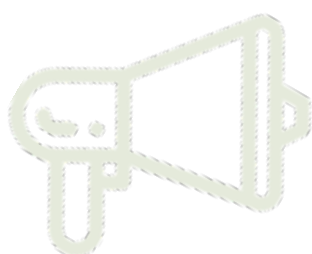
“ Britons binned clothes worth £12.5 billion last year as the rise of “throwaway” fashion led to 300,000 tonnes of textiles ending up in landfill. ”

-The Times UK

✓ **Take good care of the clothes** that you have to prolong their lifespan and reduce the need to purchase new ones.

- Don't wash them after having worn them once! Instead, air them out for 24 hours, allowing any odours to disappear.
- Use small bags to separate delicates from other items to protect them from wear and friction.
- Store clothing properly, including using the [right hangers](#).
- Air dry clothes, which not only preserves the fabrics, but also reduces energy consumption.
- Follow proper care instructions from the labels, which makes a huge difference in how long the piece can last.

See more clothing care tips [here](#).



You have **POWER** as a **CONSUMER**! Read more about the difference you can make as a consumer of fashion [here](#).



ON THE *in the move* MOVE

Daily Transportation

- ✓ **Bike, walk, or take public transportation when possible.**



Be an eco-friendly driver:

- Avoid quick accelerations; driving at a constant speed burns through fuel far less quickly, so using cruise control whenever possible is best.
- Try [Liftshare](#), which allows you to register your journeys and find possible ride sharers who are also on their way!
- Wash your car at a self-service or drive-through car wash, which are significantly more water-efficient than washing at home.
- Don't skip on car maintenance! Maintaining your car will help it emit less fumes.
- New car? Opt for the fuel-efficient model.

The transport industry release several million tons of greenhouse gases each year into the atmosphere, accounting between 25 and 30% of all greenhouse gas emissions.

Travel Sustainably

- ✓ **Apply regular sustainable practices to travel:** take public transportation, say no to plastic, etc.
- ✓ **Take direct flights where possible,** as take offs and landings cause most of a plane's carbon emissions.
- ✓ **Pack light,** as your luggage weight adds up to the carbon emissions.
- ✓ If you do fly, **you can 'offset' your carbon footprint** for every flight by donating money towards tree planting, conservation and alternative energy schemes through [Climate Neutral Now](#).
- ✓ **Fly economy class,** as business and first class can result to up to 5x larger of a carbon footprint.
- ✓ **Avoid large resorts,** which have negative impacts on the local environment due to their water and energy consumption.

Travel with Impact

Social impact travel is a growing trend in the travel industry that aims to support local economies and make a positive impact in host communities.

✓ Research your tour operators and accommodation hosts and ask the following:

- What are some of your eco-friendly practices?
- How do you help to protect and support wildlife or cultural heritage?
- Do you employ local guides and employees?

Check out these [ethical travel companies](#) that give back to local communities.

✓ Look for accreditation from regulatory bodies like:



According to a [United Nations report](#), the global travel industry makes \$7 trillion each year and represents 9% of global GDP. However, only 5% of that stays in local communities.

✓ Support the *real* local economy by purchasing locally-made artisan crafts, supporting in local-owned accommodation and restaurants.

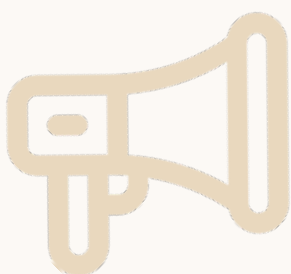
✓ Travel *slow* to make sure you can have the most valuable experience possible and immerse and engage with the local community and their culture.

✓ Reconsider participating in 'do-good' voluntourism, which benefit the traveller more than the community.

✓ Don't buy wildlife products like ivory or animal pelt or participate in experiences like elephant riding or dolphin swims that may only support harm of wildlife.

“ Rushing around famous sights and landmarks, and jumping to the next country was exhausting and unsatisfying. We wanted deeper, richer travel experiences. That's why we're *slow travellers*. ”

-Charlie from [Charlie on Travel](#)



You have **POWER** as a **CONSUMER**! Let businesses know that you're interested in sustainable travel and want to know their sustainability initiatives and goals.





Thank you for taking the next step
toward sustainable living and doing
your part to help achieve the
Sustainable Development Goals!

