

5 GREEN

lifestyle changes that are positively habit-forming



Going green: It's more than an idea - it's a fundamental change you make to support the environment and reduce your carbon footprint. In making this change, you probably started with the small stuff. You turn the lights off when you're not in the room, unplug devices that aren't in use and adjust your thermostat temperature regularly.

It's a baseline, and you're off to a great start, but you can do so much more. Implementing a green approach can seem like a lot of work, and you may be worried that you won't be able to keep up with everything you want to do. The trick is to look at your green initiatives not as a to-do list but as a new lifestyle. Once you do that, your green efforts will become habits, and you'll forget how you went about your day without them.

To support your new green lifestyle, add these five positive habit-forming strategies.

1. Rent instead of buy. Whether you're sprucing up your yard or diving into a home improvement project, there are always machines and tools that you need but simply don't have. Too often that means buying these items, using them once and then stashing them in the garage or basement. Renting helps reduce the energy, pollution and waste that goes into making, storing and maintaining machines and tools. Renting is an easy and cost-effective way to locate just the right equipment - think aerators, chain saws, pressure washers and paint sprayers - while helping the environment. Visit RentalHQ.com to easily find a rental store near you.

2. Remove wasteful water use. The average American uses between 80 and 100 gallons of water each day, according to the United States Geological Survey. Fortunately, there are a number of water-saving habits you can embrace that will reduce your usage as well as your bill. Avoid running the dishwasher or washing machine until you have a full load. Turn the faucet off while brushing your teeth, and take a shower instead of a bath. Outside, you should avoid watering your lawn as much as possible and if you do, try to do so in the evening when the water can soak into the soil instead of evaporating in the afternoon heat.

3. Start the carpool. You and your co-workers have talked about this for years, but nothing ever comes of it because no one wants to take the initiative. Now's the time. Announce that you are starting a carpool - volunteer to drive the first week - and invite your friends to join you. This habit is more likely to stick if you all consistently rely on each other.

4. Adopt green, chemical-free lawn care practices. Everyone wants a lush, green lawn, and too many people use chemicals, fertilizers and unhealthy products to achieve their dream.

Resolve to eliminate lawn care habits that harm Mother Nature, such as chemical dethatchers, fertilizers and weed killers. Instead, rent a dethatching machine and aerator to improve your lawn's health naturally. You can even rent a chipper or grinder to turn yard debris like twigs, branches, fallen leaves and grass clippings into mulch for planting beds.

5. Make your own cleaning chemicals. Cleaning chemicals are a staple in every home; they're also rarely environmentally friendly. However, you can get the same cleaning benefits without the negative environmental impact by making your own cleaning chemicals from natural sources. Mineral oil and lemon juice combine to make a great furniture polish, just as vinegar and salt can be used to clean copper or brass. For an all-purpose cleaning solution, try liquid soap, baking soda and tap water. Recipes for these solutions and more are found easily online, so browse around and you'll discover the perfect natural solution for your needs.

A green lifestyle doesn't happen overnight, and while you've already set the initial stages in motion, there is more you can do. Adding a few of these green habits will help. Apply the tips offered above and your new green lifestyle will be effective and enjoyable before you know it.

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