



Author Credit: Farmers Almanac

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In honor of Earth Day, here are 15 practical steps you can take toward living a more sustainable life and help protect the Earth:

Smart Heating and Cooling

#1 **Weather seal your home.** This is a big one. So much of the energy, most of us use to heat our homes just slips out through the cracks. Have an energy audit performed on your home—some communities and organizations even offer them for free—and insulate, insulate, insulate!

#2 **Put on a sweater.** Why heat up your whole home when you're just using one room? Dress for the season. Don't expect to be comfortable in shorts and a tank top when it's snowing outside. Put on layers, even indoors, and bundle up under blankets when you're not moving around.

#3 **Use your curtains and blinds.** Curtains are good for more than just privacy, they can also help you regulate the temperature inside your home. In the winter, open your curtains or blinds during the day to let in the sunlight and close them at night to keep in the heat. In the summertime, do the opposite.

#4 **Cool cooking.** During those Dog Days of Summer, try grilling outside or using the microwave more. It will help keep the heat out of the house so you don't have to crank the A/C.

Reduce Waste

#5 **Reduce.** Try to fix old things before buying new things. Buy used items whenever possible. Say "no" to drinking straws at the restaurant and plastic, single-use cutlery.

#6 **Reuse.** Whenever possible, opt for reusable versions of popular disposable items, including water bottles, coffee cups, diapers, razors. Reuse plastic food containers for storage. Don't just throw away unwanted items. Donate them. Repurpose them. Turn them into craft projects. Be creative.

#7

Recycle. We all know to do it by now, but a reminder never hurts. It can be so easy to just toss that one tin can into the trash, just this one time. By being conscientious about everything you throw in the trash, recycling will become second nature.

#8

Compost. When you say “recycle,” most people think of bottles, cans, and paper. Composting is nature’s original way of recycling — turning “trash” into healthy, new soil. You don’t need a complicated bin, just set aside a corner of your yard to dump out food scraps and yard debris, and turn it over every so often. Don’t have a yard? Many cities, towns, and community gardens have a public compost pile. Or try worm composting!



Eat Green



#9

Eat locally. By eating foods that are in season, and grown in your local area, you not only support your local ecosystems, but your food will also be fresher and require less fuel (and carbon output) to get to you. If possible grow your own vegetables.

#10

Eat less meat. Environmental advocates and health experts agree that Americans eat too much meat. Cutting out meat for even one day a week can help to reduce the environmental impacts of meat production, and it’s good for your health.



Change Behind the Wheel



#11

Drive less. Find ways to combine errands to make fewer trips. Most of us are working from home so this is helpful.

#12

Keep your car well maintained. A poorly running car is a gas-guzzling car, no matter what the owner’s manual says. Keep your tires properly inflated, and your engine tuned up, and follow your recommended maintenance schedule.



Remember Mom’s Advice



#13

Turn it off. If you leave a room, turn off the lights. Same with the television, the stereo, or any other appliance. Switch to LED lights.

#14

Be water-wise. Take shorter showers. Wait until you have a full load of laundry. Shut off the water when brushing your teeth or hand washing dishes.

#15

Hang it up. Instead of using the clothes dryer, hang clothes up to dry, whether inside or outside. You only need to toss clothes into the dryer for about 10 minutes if you miss that soft out-of-the-dryer feeling.



And a Bonus...

Beware of phantoms — Those little red or green lights you see when you turn off your computer, DVD player, TV, etc., require power to light up. Unplug these things when they’re not in use, or put them on a power strip you can switch on and off.

ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO THIS EARTH DAY

1. **Go On A Hike**
2. **Plant a Tree**
3. **Ditch the Lawn**, Grow A Garden Instead!
4. **Go Plogging** – pick up trash while out for a jog (remember to wear gloves)!