

## EarthLinks at the Roots: How to Live Sustainably

Now that we have look at the question of what is sustainability, today we'll do some **sustainability goal setting**. Keep in mind that we are trying to adopt sustainability as a lifestyle. If the goal you make today is to always recycle, make a more detailed plan: Do you have recycling pick up at your home? If not how can you obtain it? Research what is recyclable and what is not. Try to only buy products that are easier to recycle. Does your job have recycling options? If not how can you still recycle while at work? Can you go even farther than recycling and try to reuse or compost some items?

Whatever the plan is, remember that sustainable living is about using resources responsibly so as to create less waste and pollution that is detrimental to the environment, animals, ourselves, and our community.

### 5 steps towards sustainability:

**1) Minimize driving. Walk/bike more. Use public transportation or carpooling more often.**

*We've all heard this one before. Maybe we decide we'll bike to work one day, but then realize that it is more difficult than it sounds. The key is to find what works for you and the environment (while helping your health and your bank account).*



**2) Find out what in your house you can reuse.** *Maybe you could use your plastic grocery bags as garbage liners. Or maybe you realize that the dress you just ripped can be stitched back together instead of thrown out. Some people start collecting glass jars and use them as mugs, others washout their sandwich bags and reuse then over and over, and many people reuse the backside of paper instead of getting a new sheet, your goal is to produce less waste.*

**3) Purchase/Donate used items.** *Maybe you don't have the time to compost, but you can possibly store your used coffee grounds and bring them to EarthLinks or other organizations that can use them. It's often better to donate your old items to thrift stores or other second hand organizations so that they can be reused instead of thrown away. This also means that when you're looking for building supplies, you should stop by the Habitat for Humanity store that sells leftover parts before going to a retail store.*

**4) Buy environmentally friendly products.** *Sometimes, you might have to buy something new. At that point it is important to support stores and products that stress environmentally friendly practices. This pressures other companies to adopt those practices. In addition, you are minimizing your carbon footprint. This can mean buying eco-friendly clothing, cleaning products, office supplies, you name it.*

**5) Provide habitat for other creatures.** *This one is a little vague on purpose. Adopting a dog from a shelter provides a life for a creature already here instead of creating a demand to breed more animals. Providing a bird house, bat box, or bee box provides a safe place for pollinators that are key to Earth's natural production of plants. Giving them a safe place protects them from becoming endangered and allows them to maintain the environment.*

**The bottom line: Think about what you really need, and how much you are going to use. This applies to how long you take a shower, how much food to buy, choosing to not buy a new cellphone until your old one breaks, etc. When it comes to Earth, we only have one, and we can nourish what we have now -- but we can't just buy a new one tomorrow if we wear out our welcome today.**

