

Sustainable September: ideas to give you a kick start in living sustainably

- Do only full loads of laundry and hang to dry when possible
 - Wash and dry laundry during “off periods” such as nights and weekends
 - Use a cold water cycle for your wash
 - Consider switching dryer sheets to reusable dryer balls
 - Use natural detergents that do not pollute our waterways
- Switch all lightbulbs to high efficiency LEDs or CFL bulbs
 - Turn off lights when not in the room
 - Use natural light as much as possible by opening curtains and blinds during the day
 - Put light switches on dimmers
- If you have a pet consider composting their waste instead of throwing it in the garbage
 - All pet waste and bedding can be composted but must be properly bagged in a certified compostable bag
 - Dog waste can be picked up using newspaper, compostable bags or paper bags and then put in a lined green bin
- Compost all food scraps, lint, hair, Kleenex and soiled paper products (pizza boxes)
 - [How to make your own homemade compost bin](#)
- Bring your own containers to restaurants for any leftovers for takeout
 - This also applies to bakeries, or any other food establishment for any take away foods
- Instead of purchasing pre-packaged foods, consider buying from bulk stores using reusable mesh or cotton bags, mason jars or other reusable containers
 - Bulk food stores will allow you to use your own containers just remember to get a staff member to weigh them for you first
 - [Get/Make reusable bags instead of disposable bags](#)
- Use a rain barrel to collect rain water to water plants, flowers and lawn
- Use ceiling fans or standalone fans instead of keeping the AC on high
 - Ceiling fans can also be reversed in Winter months to increase efficiencies and allow for better heat distribution
- Use low flow toilets and follow the “if it’s yellow let it mellow” principle
 - Install a [bidet on your toilet](#) for those pesky number 2s
- Walk, bike or carpool to work
- Reduce your carbon footprint by reusing items whenever possible; curb the need to buy new products and try to reuse or repurpose items you currently have
 - Donate to and shop at goodwill or thrift stores
 - Purchase second-hand through kijiji, facebook market place, freecycle or other online outlets before buying new items
 - If you have kids, consider buying their clothes second hand through consignment stores or parents getting rid of used clothing, toys and other items
- Don’t be lazy! Sort your garbage, compost and recyclables appropriately

- Download the app used by your region to help determine what goes where (ie. Region of Waterloo “waste whiz” app)
 - Rinse out all of your recyclable items before disposing of them
- Stop unwanted mail to save on paper and fuel in delivering them
 - For necessary mail, request the mailers to send online versions instead
 - Switch to online banking and credit card statements
 - Have bills sent electronically and use direct payments instead of mailing cheques
- Buy products with less packaging
 - Opt for products using bio-degradable packaging such as paper rather than plastic, which requires more time to disintegrate
 - Limit or avoid all Styrofoam use as it is not recyclable and has to be put in the garbage
 - See points 5 and 6 re: buying in bulk and using reusable containers
- Unplug electronics and small appliances when you are not using them
- Start using natural cleaning products
 - Use natural or homemade cleaners such as vinegar, baking soda, and citrus fruits. This will reduce the amount of packaging materials as well as the amount of chemicals thrown into the water system
 - [Make your own household cleaners](#)
 - Use cloth instead of paper to clean your kitchen by repurposing old towels, t-shirts and cutting them into small cleaning clothes
- Become more efficient with your errands; plan trips ahead of time and combine as many errands as possible into one trip to limit number of outings
- Ditch the plastic!
 - Switch to reusable bags and containers
 - Use reusable water bottles and coffee/tea mugs for beverages
 - Skip single use items (plastic straws, cutlery, and plastic bags)
- Bring your lunch to work
 - If you are going out for lunch bring your own take out container and ask them to use it while you are ordering
 - Make coffee at home instead of picking it up on the way
 - Brew your own actual coffee instead of using one time use pods or purchase recyclable or reusable pods
- Share with your friends or borrow
 - Things such as books, magazines, movies, games, and newspapers can be easily shared between friends and neighbours.
 - In the same way, if you need something temporarily, ask if a friend or neighbour would lend it to you
- Limit your one time paper usage
 - Use “sticky notes” or other note accessories on your computer/phone as a to-do list rather than writing things down on physical sticky notes.
 - Make grocery lists on your phone instead of writing them down on paper

- “Do I really need to print that”?
 - Consider saving documents in an organized manner instead of printing things off. Review the document retention policy for your particular role and question whether documents really need to be printed or if a saved soft copy is sufficient.
 - Scanning and saving documents on your computer is a much better sustainable habit than making copies to file away
- Make your own products
 - These days DIY is highly popular on the internet. Make use of it. Make your own non-toxic homemade cleaning products, natural body products, personal care products, and other utility products
 - See DIY section for extra suggestions and tips.
- Go plant based at least one day a week; livestock is one of the worlds largest sources of greenhouse gases
 - Plant a simple backyard garden or join a community garden
 - Even if you have a brown thumb you can plant your own herb garden as a start
- Support your local economy and shop at your local farmers market - don't forget to bring your own bags!
- When replacing appliances look for energy efficient models and use rechargeable batteries instead of disposables
- Continue learning about the environment through blogs, documentaries and books
- Be cognizant and try to limit your daily water usage
 - Turn off the tap when you're brushing your teeth
 - Timing your daily showers, be aware of how long you are in the shower and consider showering every other day (if possible)
 - Washing pots, pans and other large items instead of putting them in the dishwasher
- Consider using solar lights in outdoor spaces
 - If you have a pool consider using a solar pool cover to help warm your pool
 - Use solar holiday lights around your home during the holidays
- Consider buying some indoor plants to help purify air within your home (ie. Rubber plants, spider plant, pothos, peace lily, philodendron)

DIY Ideas for those interested in some extra sustainability fun:

- 1) [Tips to start low waste living](#)
- 2) [DIY Beeswax Wrap](#) (alternative to cling wrap)
- 3) [DIY Natural Candles](#)
- 4) [DIY Reusable Cleaning Wipes](#)
- 5) [Inexpensive DIY Raised Garden Beds](#)
- 6) [Smart and Easy Recycling Project Ideas for Kids](#)
- 7) [DIY Makeup Remover Wipes](#)
- 8) [DIY Reusable Produce Bags](#)
- 9) [DIY Lip Balm](#)
- 10) [DIY Soap](#)