



# A to Z of sustainable working, living & eating

It takes only a few simple steps to change our behaviour into habits that make good economic and ecological sense. It is said that it takes the mind 21 days to absorb a new behaviour into a habit. Together with your family, friends and colleagues, try to adopt at least two of the following green economy tips each month, so that you become life-long champions of the green economy:



**A**ct now to save the future as well as rands and cents. Simple things like planning your trips in advance to find the **shortest route**, reduces your driving time and fuel use, should you get lost. When you are shopping with your children, teach them by example that using cloth bags and buying **energy saving bulbs** today actually saves money and the environment in the long term.

**B**ring a cloth bag to do all your shopping, but not just for groceries. Take a **cloth bag** on your trips to the mall when you shop for clothes, small electronics or other products. A sturdy, reusable bag will last for years, and only needs to be used five times to have a lower environmental impact than a plastic bag.

**C**heck energy requirements before you buy any new appliances for your home or office equipment. A cheap kettle, printer or stove might use a lot more energy than a slightly costlier option, which is more modern and energy **efficient**. Take the running costs into account when looking at the total cost of ownership. Think about how much heat new equipment could produce too and whether it could increase your air conditioning bills.



**D**on't let the tap run when brushing your teeth. You will save money on your monthly water bill in the long term if you use one cup to gargle or you only open the tap for a few seconds, only when you need to rinse off.

Dripping taps drain your pockets! Check the taps and pipes at home and the office for any leaks and drips. Leaking plumbing wastes a precious resource and also costs you money.

**E**nsure that all photocopying and printing in your home, school or office are produced in double-sided format on recycled paper. Question whether you need to produce copies at all. You will save money and trees.

**F**air trade is fabulous! Supporting fair trade schemes helps producers get a fair price and even ensures further investment into **improving their communities**. Look for Fair Trade products which ensure bio-prospecting (communities involved in growing indigenous material for trade or research) aren't exploited.

**G**row an **organic garden** and your own delicious food. The average home only needs a patch of ground about the size of a door, to grow a variety of vegetables and herbs to supplement their diet.

**Give greener gifts.** Consider giving seeds, vegetable seedlings, memberships to an environmental organization or adopting animals at a zoo or game park as a creative and greener option to traditional gifts.

**H**ang it out to dry. Traditional clothes driers are energy intensive. If possible, dry your washing on a clothesline outside. If this is not an option, dry your clothes with the spin cycle as it is 20 times less energy intensive as heat.

**I**mprove the insulation of your home – it will really help your energy consumption... and reduce your monthly bills!



**J**oin a local environmental or conservation group. You can team up with those around you and make a real difference for your community.

**K**eep your kettle energy efficient. When using a kettle, only boil as much water as you need. It will save electricity and boil water more quickly.

**L**ocal is lekker, so consume locally. You will help reduce the demand for cutting down forests in foreign countries to meet export demands. Locally grown food also has a shorter distance to travel from the field to your local shop, meaning less emissions from its transport and freezing to preserve it.

**M**obilise your networks! Message your friends on social networks about green living and tips. Your messages on Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube email signatures and other platforms can reach an ever widening global audience and help spread the news that Green is In! It doesn't matter how, just get the word out!

**N**ight lights or bright lights? Consider installing a motion sensing security light at your home, school or business. This kind of light will turn on when there is some movement in the area, rather than illuminating empty premises for hours on end.

**O**rganise lift clubs to work or school. Find out which of your colleagues or classmates live around you and organise a lift club. Sharing transport this way can help you save money, cut emissions and get to know your peers in an informal setting.

**P**lay outside! Encourage children to switch off the television or computer and play outside. Contact the Department of Environmental Affairs for more information about the Kids in Parks programme.

**Q**uantify how much money you could save each cold winter if you lowered the temperature inside your home by 2 degrees Celsius. It could reduce your energy consumption by 14 percent!

**R**educe, reuse, recycle. Reducing your consumption and impact helps take pressure off the world's natural resources. Reuse glass jars of jam, mayonnaise and other products to store odd and ends in your home. Recycle paper, cardboard, wood, glass, cans, tins, and plastic bottles. Compost food waste if you can.

**S**olar energy is hot news. Mzansi has an abundance of sunshine for most of the year. Turn your own home into a clean power station by fitting solar panels on the roof. This will cut down your monthly spend on power.

**T**ake a hike! Instead of a costly activity this weekend like going to the movies or shopping, why not take a walk, hike or have a picnic with friends at your local park or nature conservancy?



Go Green!



**U**nderstand your options. Learn about the small ways you, as an individual, can make a positive impact on the environment.

Use rainwater for your indoor plants – they love it, and you'll save water at the same time.

**V**ehicle maintenance can help go green. Have your vehicle checked and serviced regularly for oil leaks, tyre pressure and excessive exhaust emissions. A modern vehicle operating in peak condition will have less of a negative impact on the environment than a leaky, fuel guzzling and smoke emitting one.

**W**aste is wealth! Before you throw away bottles, paper, plastic containers and tins, consider recycling them to raise money for your school or making them available to someone less fortunate, who is a waste collector.

**X**-ray your activities and habits. Spend one week noting down all your daily activities that use up energy and have an impact on the environment. At the end of the week write down solutions for each item that can help to save energy and decrease any negative impacts.

**Y**outh Month is also Environment Month. Create platforms in your community or school for young people to learn and participate in environmental initiatives. If you are a young person lead by example to show your peers that caring for the environment is cool!

**Z**ip around your neighbourhood on your bike, kick-scooter or your own two feet. Get some fresh air by using your own energy to get to your local spaza shop, run errands or to visit friends.



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World Environment Day 2015  
Seven Billion Dreams.  
One Planet.  
Consume with Care.  
June 5