

A Sustainability Guide for Everyday Folk

~5th Year Edition~

Live Healthier and Cheaper!



**Over 200 Suggestions Covering
Health, Food, Hygiene, Art, and More**

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Rad Cat Press

*Note that this guide was originally written for a single person as a quick brain dump of my collective knowledge of sustainable living in the city, though most information applies to those living in rural areas as well. Citations and comprehensive research were neglected, thus some information may be outdated, uncertain, or incomplete. Further research should be done on any given area. The beginnings of my environmental knowledge began years ago at the website Tree Hugger and many individual web searches for specific pieces of data.

0	-	True Sustainability – Personal Changes and Direct Action
I	-	Transportation
II	-	Free Things
III	-	Purchasing and Money
IV	-	Hygiene and Cleaning
V	-	Food
VI	-	Waste
VII	-	Physical and Mental Well-Being
VIII	-	False Advertising
IX	-	Ideological
X	-	Energy Saving
XI	-	Water
XII	-	Relationships and Parenting
XIII	-	Community Living
XIV	-	Non-Humans and Pets
XV	-	Arts and Crafting
XVI	-	Participating

True Sustainability: Personal Changes and Direct Action (the most important part to read)

There are several reasons why a person might want to pursue a sustainable lifestyle. For the person desiring harmony with nature and knowledge of living off the land, personal changes are at the core of their needs. Beyond personal fulfillment, persons pursuing this pathway will be great teachers as changing climates and environmental catastrophe force a larger portion of humanity to adopt sustainability into their lifestyles. This zine largely covers these personal changes.

For a person striving to create a sustainable society, emphasis must be placed beyond individual habits and instead rising up for and against various institutions. The individual is **not** the primary blame for the environmental catastrophes which have taken place in years past. Unfortunately, a vast majority of people in industrialized countries have grown up within an economic or cultural situation which prevents them from pursuing sustainable pathways. While what you buy and how you consume resources can be a powerful statement and marginally help the environment, a complex system of governments and corporations desiring wealth and power result in the majority of environmental destruction, and thus should be the target of those desiring a sustainable planet. These institutions like individuals blaming themselves because it leaves the institutions free to continue destroying. Do not blame yourself or your peers. **The most important step to a sustainable future right now is changing how corporations and governments are run rather than how you act.** Persons desiring this pathway must still be aware of the problems abound, and so I still urge them to read this zine, or at least the section on participating.

-I-

Transportation



*Get a conversion kit to make your car run on **bio-diesel or veggie oil**. You can also convert a bicycle to run very efficiently on gasoline or electricity and other forms of fuel.

***Increasing your MPG** - You can increase your miles per gallon by driving certain ways. I've even heard people doubling their MPG rating! Turn off the engine while going downhill. You can draft behind other vehicles to cut down on wind resistance. Vehicles have speeds at which they run most efficiently which people commonly say is 55 MPH, but it changes depending on the vehicle. Usu-

ally the low end of the RPM power band is most efficient. Above 40 MPH you should use the fan or air conditioner (if you must) instead of having a window open to reduce drag. The radio, cd player, and lights do not take up that much energy, but still consume some extra fuel. Stop and accelerate slowly to conserve your brakes and conserve a little more fuel. Carry less in your vehicle. Drive a car with manual transmission (stickshift).

*Use **car rental services** when you need a vehicle or a bigger vehicle instead of buying one.

*Drive a smaller car – These generally get better fuel mileage and need less raw materials to make.

*Buy a used car – the energy and money costs of a used vehicle generally are far less than buying a new vehicle. Do a cost comparison with gas mileage in the picture for a 5 year period.

***Ride a bicycle.** A bicycle is the single most efficient form of transportation in the world, maybe even more so than walking if you think about transporting materials and traveling great distances! The raw resources it takes to build a car could build hundreds of bicycles. There are folding bicycles that can be easily transported in a car or bus too.

***For transporting materials,** a rack can be attached to the bicycle with panniers (saddle bags), or a bicycle trailer can be used for hauling larger things. I've even seen people hauling a trailer home for sleeping in!

***Hitchhike** – Make a sign with a sharpie and some cardboard and get on the highway or an off-ramp! Read up on hitchhiking laws before going out. The west coast is one of the best places to hitchhike.

***Pick up hitchhikers or offer rideshares.**

***Rideshare** (Listings on Craigslist and other bulletins). This is more expensive than hitchhiking but much less than taking the bus. It's safer and less time intensive than hitchhiking too.

***Ride a motorcycle** if you don't need to transport much. They are very efficient.

***Utilize public transportation!** Trains, buses, subways, trolleys and the like.

***Carpool** with people at your work or announce you're starting one yourself!

***Try to avoid traveling long distances.** Localize your social groups and cultural interests!

-II-

Free Things



***Dumpster Diving** - Dumpsters are usually not as dirty as people will lead you to believe. Especially in college towns after fall and spring terms, dumpsters are laden with goodies. These include furniture, clothing, appliances, even laptops and hard drives. You can also find dumpsters with unblemished food behind grocers and bakeries.

***Make it yourself!** Generally for very cheap or free you can build furniture, make tools, or sew together clothing. Study the way native

peoples use(d) tools and ethnobotany, the way native peoples use(d) plants.

*Use paper from recycling bins for creating a daily planner, take notes on, or scribble on (just take a bunch of sheets and fold them in half to create a booklet).

***Free Cycle** (website) – People post 'for free' and 'wanted for free' ads in various locales.

***Craigslist** (website) – Many different sections, including free stuff in various locales.

***Backpage** (website) – Similar to Craigslist.

***Free Boxes** – A box left out next to the sidewalk with assorted goods generally means it's a box full of free things.

***Really Really Free Markets** (RRFM) – No money, trade, or barter allowed. People bring/take things like services, food, clothing and appliances, but no taking or bringing is necessary. Gener-

ally there's music and workshops and they are held in public spaces such as parks.

***Food Not Bombs (FNB)** – A group that collects donated or dumpstered food and cooks vegan meals for anyone who shows up. Generally they serve in public spaces. Unlike many free food services, the food is generally healthy and has no requirements attached. You can look up local FNB chapters online.

***Go camping!** You can legally set up a camp for two weeks in any national forest, and then change that location to reset the 2 week limit. You can also camp in state forests, but these often require fees.

-III-

Purchasing and Money



***Most things are easy to fix** – You can patch or mend old clothes, wood glue back together an instrument, cold weld metal objects, etc.

***Move your money into a credit union** - Credit unions locally invest your money and are not for profit (no one is making millions of dollars for no apparent reason).

***Buy things used from places like Craigslist (website), eBay (website), and thrift shops.**

***Buy local, think global -**

Support local and independent businesses and avoid buying from corporations. Even if products are slightly more expensive, more money goes to your community. Big corporations generally try to make money and gain power no matter what the social or environmental costs. They will often have smear campaigns to portray their actions as beneficial to a community or person. Research, research, research. There are so many layers of propaganda in our society. A good starting point is to watch the documentary, The Corporation, which can be watched online for free.

*Purchase products independently certified sustainable under the following names: Green, sweatshop free labor, not tested on animals, sustainably harvested wood (wood that isn't from a clear cut or old growth forest for furniture, paper, and construction materials).

*Some printer ink cartridges can be refilled, thus cutting

out a lot of waste.

***Borrow or rent** instead of buying new. There are car rentals, book rentals and exchanges, e-book versions of text books, and tool rentals.

*Stop wrapping your gifts. If you still want to wrap gifts, try paper bags with drawings over them and string to avoid the tape.

-IV-

Hygiene and Cleaning

Washing Yourself

***Sink showers** – The primary part of your body that smells are your armpits, so just wash those each morning and avoid doing the rest for at least a few days, if not weeks. You can fill a bowl with a few cups of water then soap up and rinse down. The rest of your body, including hair can also be washed in a similar way if you want to as well.

*To wash your whole body, fill a container with about 5 cups of water. Get a bar of soap wet and soap up, then rinse off by cupping your hand and splashing the water onto your body. Try to direct splashed water back into the container so you can reuse it in consecutive splashes. Now you can use this water for a

graywater toilet.

*Do not use anti-bacterial or anti-microbial soaps, they may negate effects of antibiotic medications (when you are really sick), and normal soap is just as effective.

*Look into the **hygiene hypothesis**, which says so many people these days are sick because they're too clean. There is smart sanitation and over-sanitation, learn about what level is right for you to be optimally healthy.

*Take your shower in the morning instead of at night because you'll be fresh when you actually need to be. Plus it's a good wake up alternative to stimulants like coffee.

*Soap, shampoo, and conditioner can be bought from some natural food stores in bulk thus avoiding the need for buying new packaging. Just bring in your own bottle to fill.

*Our skin is very porous and

absorbs a good deal of what we put onto it. Be very cautious with the ingredients of skin products like sunscreen lotion because many have been linked to cancer.

*Wash your hands with locally made bar soap to avoid the packaging and extra processing liquid soaps require.

*Use something like a pen cap to gently scoop ear wax out of your ear instead of using cotton swabs. Also, don't put your fingers into your ears, this compresses ear wax which would normally fall out naturally.

*Snot rocket: remove snot from your nose by plugging one nose channel and blowing out the other hard.

Toilet

*Use newspaper instead of toilet paper by tearing pieces off about the size of toilet paper. Some people crinkle the newspaper to make it softer too. Do not use large pieces as this can clog the toilet.

*Use two or three sheets of toilet paper per wipe, and fold it over the brown after each use. You can get 5 or 6 wipes out of these few sheets, and then go and get another few sheets and repeat wiping and folding.

*To avoid the spread of germs and possibly the need for washing your hands, open toilet seats and flush with your foot.

Tooth Care

*Eat fewer simple carbohydrates and sweets as these deteriorate your teeth faster.

*Wash teeth with a twig! Some people use sticks to brush their teeth. They take a twig and chew up the end, then brush. This works so long as you are primarily eating fruits and vegetables, versus sweets (including honey) and carbohydrates (especially bread).

*Reuse floss – Most floss is very durable and can be used many times.

*Use a toothbrush with a replaceable head.

Hair

*Drying off shaving blades will prolong the blade's life because water oxidizes with metal thus dulling the blade.

*Stop using shampoo! Look up No poo. Shampoo is often harsh on our hair and causes an over-compensating effect in oil production. In the adjusting period use baking soda. Just soak hair and use natural conditioners.

*Shaved head – Periodically shave your head to eliminate the constant need for hair products, water, or time managing it.

Cleaning Surfaces and Clothing

***Mopping** – Splash hot soapy water on the floor instead of filling a mop bucket. You really only need about 2 cups of water for a single room, then intermittent wringing out of the mop.

*Wring out sponges and

mops to increase their lifespan

*Reuse silverware and bowls that you don't eat animal products with. Bad germs, mold, and the like most always need moisture to grow. So long as you're eating all your food, then you can reuse your eating ware as much as you'd like. I go months with just one bowl and spoon that I never wash or rinse out. I'll eat directly out of the cooking device when it has animal products, or lightly spray off my dish otherwise.

*Bring a reusable drinking container, bowl, and your preferred utensil with you when eating out or going to potlucks. Many cafes will let you use your own drinking container, though it's more difficult at restaurants. It's just a matter of communicating “I don't need silverware,” or “Could you just fill this up instead?”

***Baking soda and vinegar** can be used to clean just about anything individually

or combined together for your face, hair, sink, floors, laundry, teeth, etc.

*Most clothing can be worn for more than one day, especially if you take a sink shower in the morning. Just let your clothing air out over night. Wear something else while engaging in physical activity.

*Wash your clothes by hand while you're taking a shower.

*Wash your clothes with two buckets: One with soapy water, and the other with rinsing water.

-V-

Food



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*Local and organic or biodynamic together are the best label indications of healthy and sustainably harvested food. However, organic and free range labels can be abused, so try to know your farmer at farm stands or on their farm and ask what sort of pesticides and fertilizers they use, how their animals are treated, etc.

*Become a **vegetarian localvore!** As long as you are buying animal products from farmers you know treat their animals well, in almost all cases your diet will be more sustainable than any other

while getting all your required nutrients. Organic free range eggs and raw goat milk are strongly suggested on top of fruit, veggies, nuts, and locally grown grains. After farming practices are taken into account, the closer the food source, the less transportation it requires and the more sustainable it is.

***Veganism** is usually not sustainable - I have never heard of a vegan getting all their nutrients from local, unprocessed sources, and more often hear about health issues arising from vegan diets. Billions of people do not have the importing privileges US Americans do and lack an agricultural growing climate to support themselves without animals. Some of the messages are great such as cutting out the many problems associated with animal agriculture, but there are alternatives such as hunting and gathering and free-range organic or biodynamic that would be better to support. Furthermore organic farms typically rely on non-human

manure for nutrients to grow their food, and farms that don't raise non-human animals must transport manure from other farms. We can respectfully treat non-human animals while benefiting from the nutrients they provide to the soil and our bodies. Also remember, unlocal and processed foods support the oil industry, which is vastly cruel to all. Thus a sustainable farm incorporates what is referred to as "animal husbandry," having non-human animals work within the practice of growing crops.

*Being a vegan, vegetarian, or omnivore can all be more or less sustainable if done mindfully, but vegetarianism is best.

*Processed and or packaged food are often bad. They contain cancerous preservatives, plastic that never deteriorates, and are expensive. Save your money, health and prevent pollution by eating whole foods!

***Cooking** – Cooking requires energy, but not all food can be digested raw and cooking can sometimes help release nutrients. Thus a mixture of raw and cooked food is important.

***Sprouting and soaking** seeds, grains, and nuts – Soaking helps a food become more digestible as well as increases a number of nutrients and decreases the time it needs to be cooked. Put seeds, beans, grains, or nuts into a glass jar and fill with water. Let sit for 8 – 12 hours then drain the water and rinse. Refill the container and let sit for another 8 hours before rinsing. Repeat until sprouts form. It's best to just soak nuts. Sprouting allows some foods normally requiring cooking to be eaten raw, though others are still poisonous or difficult to digest.

***Fermenting foods** – Fermented foods are very easy to digest and the bacterial cultures help increase your ability to digest other foods and ward off sickness.

***Food dumpsters** – Tons of good food is thrown out each day. Only about 50 percent of food grown for consumption is eventually eaten in North America. Bakeries especially throw out dozens of loaves of day-old bread, and grocers toss things that have just reached their expiration or have a small bruise but are not bad for days, weeks or even months to come. Most food does not require an expiration from the FDA, and some stores put an expiration date on food themselves. It is up to you to test food for freshness. Usually a visual test and a sniff test are adequate.

***Replace your grass or ornamental garden with food!** A 10x10 foot area might seem small, but can grow a large amount of your food in a given season.

***Urban foraging** – Some cities already have a host of food about like hazelnuts, dandelions, apples, figs, etc. Be careful with pesticides and fertilizers though and

collect things like dandelions away from the roadside which deposits heavy metals on the plants. If there aren't any nut or fruit trees about, plant them yourself!

*Pick up road kill if it's fresh (within the day), for their meat, fur, or bones. Just don't be seen by authorities, it's illegal.



***Food preservation** – Allows you to still depend on local food when things aren't growing in your climate. Smoking, canning, freezing, fermenting, and drying are some methods of food preservation. Smoking and drying (in the sun) are probably the most sustainable, though don't work for all foods. To keep food raw while drying, thus preserving the most nutrients, get a food dehydrator

with a temperature gauge that goes to 105 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

*If you have no yard, try **vertical gardening**, such as with hanging pots, indoor gardening, next to a window, or on the outside of your walls!

*Drink only water, eat everything else as a whole food. Juices lack the fiber of fruits and veggies and come in packaging. It also takes a lot of a given fruit or veggie to make juice with (though, I have heard they sometimes use the ones they wouldn't sell at the market), for instance when my friends made apple juice, 140 pounds of apples became just 8 gallons of juice! If you really want juice, make it fresh and dry the pulp into crackers or fruit leathers.

*Cans and glass bottles have an interesting ecological footprint. The ore for aluminum is mined by clear-cutting and blasting a site. It is more energy-efficient to

manufacture glass, but it is heavier (more energy in transportation) and harder to recycle. Aluminum however is very toxic in food. Thus, it's a toss up of which is more sustainable.

*For alcohol, drink locally brewed beer or wine. You can avoid the bottle and packaging by going to a bar, brewery, or by brewing your own alcohol at home.

***Gardening** – Gardening and growing your own food works against almost every social issue there is, playing into saving oil and keeping you healthy with fresh clean produce, exercise, sunlight, and soil bacteria. Gardening is very simple once you get the space you're going to garden ready (just remove the grass or “weeds” or cover it over with cardboard and layers of leaves for a season). A 10x10 foot plot is plenty of space to be growing all of your fruits and veggies at least for the summertime, if not beyond. You don't need much knowledge or re-

sources to start gardening. Plants just need nutrients, sunlight, and water. This translates into using some sort of fertilizer like compost, putting your garden in a well-lit area, and watering often. If you want to go deeper though, I suggest reading Masanobu Fukuoka's One Straw Revolution or any sort of permaculture guide for the most sustainable, logical, and time efficient approaches to gardening and farming. Some people hypothesize it would only take 1 / 4 of an acre to be growing all the food for a family of 4. On the Urban Homestead in Pasadena, CA, the residents there have grown over 6000 pounds of food on 1 / 5 of an acre in just one year!

*Garden pests and weeds can be dealt with without using chemicals by mulching, planting a wider diversity of plants and having flowers. Vinegar can also be used to kill some weeds, and powdered hot peppers can be applied to plants to deter insect pests.

*Avoid growing invasive species of plants because they can out-compete native species and destroy the ecosystem.

*Food is a primary component of our well being. Paired with some form of exercise like tai chi or yoga, I have heard numerous stories of people recovering from fatal illnesses such as cancer by changing the foods they eat.

*Drip irrigation saves the most water but also is petroleum based. Irrigation can save a lot of time and water though.

*Plant drought tolerant plants to save water.

*The food pyramid we were taught in school is based upon economic principles rather than scientifically based health principles, thus you should not eat according to what it says. Most of your diet should be fruits, veggies and nuts with a smaller portion, of beans, grains, and animal products.

***Vit B12** - Nutritional yeast, and raw milk are good sources of b12. Eggs are debatable but may give you some B12 if not eaten with the white. A small amount of B12 might also be obtained from unwashed vegetables. B12 is heat sensitive so even omnivores can miss it if they overcook their food. B12 deficiency results in pervasive anemia, it is important to be conscious of getting enough especially if removing meat from the diet.

*Goat milk and cheese is healthier and easier for humans to digest than cow's milk and cheese, so support goat farmers.

*Red meat should rarely be consumed, if at all. Cows, pigs, etc. require more energy to raise than smaller animals. Red meat has also been linked to numerous health disorders including cancer and arthritis. The high iron content of red meat can be obtained from other meats, liver, and poultry, or from plant sources such as nuts,

green leafy vegetables like spinach and kale, legumes like lentils and pinto beans, and from cooking in cast iron. Plant sources of iron should be eaten with a source of vitamin C, which helps the iron digest.

*If you must eat meat, look for grass fed, free range meat or hunt it yourself. Generally avoid cow products, as they are the least efficient conventionally grown input to output (about 7x the amount of food has to be fed the cow than is derived after the slaughter, as well as taking thousands of pounds of water and other problems). Prairie land is naturally grazed upon and burned though, so cows can actually help maintain a healthy ecosystem if bred and raised properly.

***Soy** - Eat soy sparingly. Most is grown with unsustainable practices like factory farming and genetically modified seeds. It also has a number of health risks attached. Fermented soy such as tempeh is much healthier, but

should also be eaten sparingly again due to how soy beans are grown.

***Composting** – Instead of throwing food scraps into the trash, compost it and create new nutrients for the soil! It is possible to compost inside of apartments without it smelling. Look into worm bins. You can put up ads for free compost online at sites like Craigslist or in newspapers, or use it yourself in potted plants. You can also ask if someone with a compost pile would let you put your food scraps in theirs.

*Buy into a community-supported agriculture (CSA). This is a weekly box of food directly from a farm of whatever is in season. It is cheaper than buying the food from the market, helps the farmer cut out a lot of costs like transportation and selling to a market, and gives you an interesting assortment of local whole food.

*Support cooperatives and buy from food co-ops.

*Cook large batches of food to provide for multiple meals, thus cutting down energy consumption.

*Most **expiration dates** do not reflect when a food actually goes bad. This is especially true for eggs and canned foods. Signs of bad food include mold and popped or expanded lids. Water can be added to stale bread and baked to make it taste normal.

*Do not purchase genetically modified (GMO) grown foods or GMO seeds. There is debate whether or not these are safe for human consumption, but the main problem is the companies that produce them such as Monsanto. Monsanto works inside and outside of the legal system in an attempt to stop organic seed production as well as people being able to grow food with seeds collected from previous seasons. This is devastating to small farmers.

*It is more efficient to grow

food on a small scale than on a big scale, so support small farms.

-VI-

Waste



with your local recycling company to see what they will take, as not all are the same. For food packaging, be sure to clean it out, as unclean recyclable items, or trash mixed in with recyclables, can result in the recycling company throwing out your recycling altogether.

*It is best to buy items without any packaging. Even things that are knowingly recyclable such as paper and plastic sometimes never get recycled even when put into the recycling bins, and it can still require a lot of energy to recycle them. You can buy used (and save money) at any thrift shop or on sites such as Craigslist or eBay, reuse bags, and buy food directly from the farmer so as to reuse milk and egg containers. Also many natural food stores allow for you to use your own containers for purchasing price per weight items such as grains and dried fruit.

*When you do need to buy packaged goods, check if the material is recyclable. Check

***Plastics** with a number surrounded by a recycling symbol does NOT mean it's recyclable. You need to check what plastics your recycling company will take.

*Try to “**upcycle**” your waste by recycling it into useful items such as bags or art. Putting a recyclable item into recycling does not mean that it will be recycled, so it is better to do yourself.

***Things you should be able to recycle include:** paper, cardboard, glass, metal, some plastic, some batteries, and light bulbs, so do not throw these things away.

*In more rural areas you can create **composting toilets**,

basically outhouses that are managed better. This allows you to recycle your nutrients. It's about a 2 year period before it's safe to use for plants. Look up humanure. Generally people urinate in a separate container, and throw sawdust or dirt over their poop to keep the smell down. The poop is also generally contained for fear of it contaminating ground water. Some places compost human waste on an industrial scale and sell it as a fertilizer for landscaping.

***Urine** – Urinate around your plants to provide them with a natural source of nitrogen and other nutrients, or collect your urine in a bucket to flush it down the toilet in one go at the end of the day. Urine was/is used as a very powerful sterile medicine. Fermented it was also used as a bleaching agent.

*Human and other animal fecal matter can also be put into a **bio-digester**, also known as an **anaerobic digester**, which will output safe

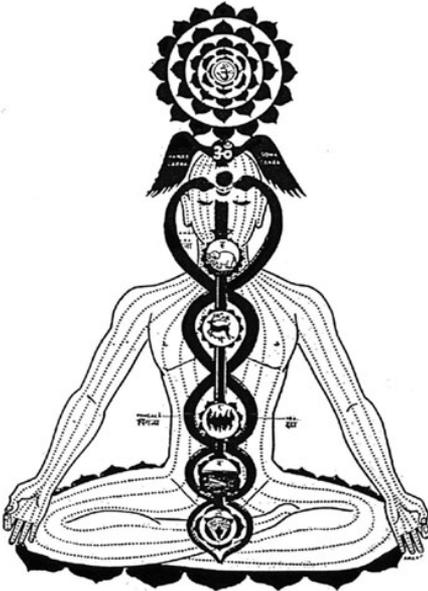
fertilizer and methane gas. The methane can be used for cooking, heating, or any other number of things.

*Use a tack board with paper from recycling bins for notes instead of a dry erase or chalk board.

***Dying and Funerals** – Get a green funeral with a composting coffin so all your nutrients go back to the earth. Cremation and standard burials are not sustainable.

-VII-

Physical and Mental Well- Being



*According to Dr. Mike Evans's "23 and ½ Hours" video, 30 minutes to 1 hour of exercise (even as light as walking) a few times a week to every day is the number one form of medicine, preventing more health prob-

lems and with the fewest side-effects than any pill or shot.

*High impact exercises may make your body feel good in the moment, but deteriorates the body in the long term and increases the possibility of over-straining something into a broken bone or sprained ligament. Calmer exercises such as yoga or tai chi are good alternatives to running on hard surfaces, high-impact martial arts, or weight lifting.

*You do not usually need western medicine to fight depression, illness, or bodily wounds. Western medicine, especially the United States' medical industry, is tied into all sorts of horrible things due to being tied to a profit-based system led by the insurance companies and pharmaceutical industry. For surgery, go to the emergency room, but for any drug there is usually a tea or plant that can do the same thing in your region. Also changing what you eat can adversely improve your health. Research

naturopathic medicine, ethnobotany, and healing foods.

*Consider the media and entertainment you voluntarily and involuntarily experience. Try going without media (no music, movies, fiction books, etc) and see what happens. Often these can be addictions creating an avoidance of emotions and thoughts. The same goes for news. What do you really need to know about? Are you drowning in the depression of global media and propaganda when you should be caring for your local community? You don't need it!

*For small wounds, scrapes and cuts, a small amount of plantago (more commonly known as plantain, not to be confused with the banana) can be chewed up, put directly on the wound, and left to dry. These grow all over the world, including everywhere in North America and often found in grassy and sunny areas. It is astringent, anti-toxic, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, anti-histamine, as

well as demulcent, expectorant, styptic and diuretic.

*For depression, especially during times of limited sunlight or when you're stuck indoors most the day, try supplementing with vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol-animal derived), which is the more readily used by our bodies than D2 (ergocalciferol-plant derived). D3 is absorbed when sunlight hits the atmosphere at a certain angle, and many of us live in areas where the sun is not situated properly to create this angle during the non-summer months. Fish oil will also have a similar benefit and includes omega-3 fatty acids which helps fight depression as well.

*5-HTP, a precursor to serotonin (a chemical that causes happiness) derived from an African plant, as well as St. John's Wort, have both been shown to effectively treat depression for some people. Read up on these medicines before using.

*M. Vaccae, a soil bacteria

found all over the world in soils with organic matter has been shown to effectively treat depression. Simple exposure is enough, so just start gardening!

*Natural Bug Repellent – Safe bug repellents can be from a variety of plant oils, but they have to be reapplied each hour or two. Boil down garlic in water and put the water into a spray bottle. Or combine a variety of 1 part essential oils (neem, cinnamon, eucalyptus, peppermint, citronella, rosemary) with 10-20 parts carrier oils (sunflower, olive, witch hazel) or an alcohol like vodka.

*Avoiding activities that puts your body in danger is a good way to avoid using western medicine.

*Buy carpets and clothing made from organic fiber. You could also avoid using carpet and get rugs instead for a wood floor. Most carpets and clothing contain toxins which absorb into the body or off-

gas into the air.

*Use natural paints made from mud or flour to avoid the health problems caused by regular paint off-gassing.

*Use cast iron, stainless steel, wood, ceramic, and glass to cook in, drink from, and eat with. Most all other materials leach out harmful toxins. Glass and wood are the most sustainable from these.

*During the winter, get outside as much as possible or at least open a window. Sickness during the winter is more prevalent not because of the cold, but because there are more people sharing germs inside than usual and the air is not being circulated with open windows.

*Instead of **sunscreen lotion**, cover up in a light layer or wear a wide-brimmed hat. You can also cover your exposed body in a thin layer of mud to protect from the sun.

*Grow plants indoors - Most all plants filter out air pollu-

tants, though some better than others. This is especially important with the toxins off-gassing from paints, carpets, and clothing.

-VIII-

False

Advertising

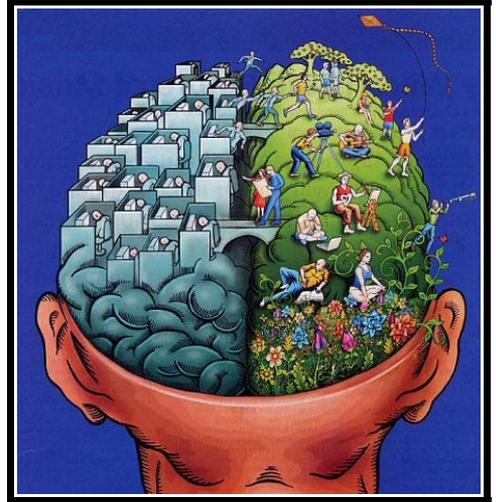
*“**Greenwashing**” is quite common these days, with companies trying to sound environmentally friendly while in fact using heavy toxins, sweatshop labor, or just actually making very unsustainable products. A number of different power sources are also made to sound green.

*Research is necessary before the purchase of any new item. Where did it come from? What is it made of? Can you recycle it? What other companies does the corporation own (example - Burts Bees is owned by Clorox)? What else does the company make? What is its life cycle or what process does it go through to break down (especially for “biodegradable” plastics)?

*Bamboo clothing is not ecologically friendly, though bamboo used in construction generally is.

-IX-

Ideological



*Ask yourself how whatever action or object you are taking into your life might be hurting another organism. Research is key. Put yourself into the shoes of the organisms around you. Everything is connected. Your actions influence everything in very direct and indirect ways. Imagine: You buy a computer, turn it on, and connect to the internet. The coal used to power the servers that store information on the internet and the metal used to make the computer have been mined.

The mining process begins by clear-cutting an area, then blasting the site so as to get deep into the earth. No mammals can live here, and it will take thousands of years for any healthy soil to develop again. Without plants to keep it in place, the rain carries coal and soil debris into the drinking water and into the streams that poison locals, fish, and other organisms. The burning coal makes the air unhealthy to breathe, and increases respiratory illnesses in people living around the coal-burning factory. As a result, people must spend large amounts of money in hospital fees trying to get better. This is just one example, and it goes on and on. If you buy a shirt, a pair of earrings, if you paint, etc, there are many things to be aware of.

*It can be very difficult to be wholly sustainable and maintain one's **cultural heritage**. You may have many feelings surrounding this, that although you would like to participate in the traditions you have been raised with, you

know many of them are not sustainable. Just try to be aware of your actions. Most traditions can be practiced more sustainably if some thinking goes into them.

*It is very difficult to be wholly sustainable and maintain one's ties to society. Some people go to remote intentional communities, but often neglect that while they may be wholly sustainable, their ability to spread awareness to others is drastically decreased. As things stand now with so much unawareness, maintaining parts of an unsustainable lifestyle while spreading awareness of a sustainable lifestyle is best.

*Environmental discrimination is the systematic placement of polluting industries next to poor neighborhoods.

*What is really sustainable? Many of the ideas in this guide, while more sustainable than the mainstream, are still not sustainable with the number of people we have on this planet. Try not to get into

guilt trips over not being sustainable enough. Awareness is key. It's not you who are at fault, you have been born into a society based on unsustainable principles. Change what you can, but do not lose yourself in negative emotions.

*Do as much as you can at a local level, but also be aware that while the consumer does largely control how goods are produced, a complex system between material wealth, the companies that produce goods, and the government work together to maintain our current unsustainable system. Actions that work to change any of these systems to favor the majority rather than the rich minority is key.

*Try not to get into ego trips over what you do sustainably that others do not. Suggest it to others from a health or money perspective. Not everyone can relate to caring about the forests, drinking water, or the like. Generally relating a piece of information to a person in such a way

that they see how it will help themselves is best.

***Death** is not bad or good, it is part of a cycle that allows new organisms to come to life. It is okay to die sooner by not taking medications or being hooked up to life-support machinery.

*Have friends that help motivate your desire to be sustainable.

*Read about **ethnobotany** and the lifestyles of native peoples past and present for many ideas on sustainable living.

-X-

Energy Saving



into your day instead of heating your house.

*Some power companies offer renewable energy options, buy into them.

*Mow your lawn with a **reel lawn mower**.

*Collect leaves with a rake and ask your yard maintenance company to do the same. Leaf blowers are inefficient, create noise pollution, and cause stress.

*Do anything to avoid using electricity except when absolutely necessary. Coal, oil, wind, natural gas, geo-thermal, solar, and hydro-electric – some are better than others, but production of electricity takes a toll on the environment at some point. Look into the life cycle of each and support the one or two that are most sustainable.

*Let your clothes air dry on a clothesline.

*Wear layers of clothing or integrate physical activities

*Install a **green roof**, the plants will help keep your house better insulated, reduce storm runoff, and lengthen the life of your rooftop. They also provides space for growing food when the ground has been covered up by cement and asphalt or is shady.

*Use **human powered tools**. There are human powered drills (auger drill), chainsaws, log splitters, blenders, jigsaws, sewing machines, and more. These are most often hand or bicycle powered.

*Do work in a public space that is already heated and lit up instead of at your home.

Cooking:

***Insulated cooking box** – Especially if you soak your beans and grains the night before, you can get them to a boil for 10 minutes then put them into an insulated box. A cardboard box with blankets on all sides works well. Put a thick blanket, maybe a comforter, on top then close the box and put another blanket or couch cushion over it. It will take the beans or grains longer to cook than keeping them on the stove, but you'll have used a lot of less energy.

***Crockpots** or slow cookers are probably the most efficient way to cook food with electricity. You can also try insulating these with a blanket to increase the efficiency even more.

***Rocket stoves** are a simple yet efficient way to burn small pieces of wood and cook food.

*In sunny times of the year, you can cook food using a **solar cooker**, which concentrates heat from the sun into a cooking vessel. They can be constructed using simple materials like aluminum foil, cardboard, and glass.

*Generally the slower you cook food the less energy it consumes.

Heating:

*Put blankets over doorways and windows to help seal the cracks that let cold air in.

*Heat smaller spaces by sectioning off parts of rooms with blankets.

*Get **weather stripping** for your doors and foam stripping for your windows.

*A water heating system can be created by running a long hose through a large hot compost with temperatures upwards of 100 – 140 degrees Fahrenheit.

Appliances, Tools, Hardware, Software

*A laptop's battery lifespan decreases the more you have it plugged in for. It is best to fully charge your laptop then let it drain until the battery is almost dead.

*When printing decrease your margin size and print double sided or on paper with one side already printed on (recycled paper). Recycled paper is perfectly safe to use in printers and uses much less energy to produce. You should also look for unbleached or chlorine-free paper to avoid the toxins bleach puts into the environment.

***House Windows** - Use bubble wrap or plastic sheeting to line your windows during the winter time or get curtains. Get windows that specifically let out less heat. Foam or mud insulate cracks.

*Set your screen saver to blank. Black takes the least energy for screens to show. This is always true, and you can even use a black version

of Google at <http://www.blackle.com/>.

*Print in black and white with eco-friendly inks.

*It is almost always better for the environment to continue using a device until it breaks. Washer machines, cars, and light bulbs are good examples. The raw materials, transportation, and manufacturing needed to create new devices generally costs more energy and money than just using your old device until it breaks.

*Turning on and off a device will shorten its lifespan, so you must gauge this with turning it off to conserve energy. For fluorescent light bulbs specifically, if you're going to turn the light back on within 15 minutes, you should leave it on. Incandescent bulbs should be turned off immediately since they're so inefficient. If you have a light that constantly goes on and off, use a LED light bulb.

***The Internet** – The internet

is very energy intensive. A proposed Facebook server site (where they store data) proposed for Oregon alone would consume energy enough to power over 40,000 homes. If you feel a need to create new data on the internet through websites or pictures on social networking sites, try to do so sparingly. The internet is an amazing technology and has so much knowledge and world connectivity attached to it, but data needs to be stored somewhere, and the servers used to access it are always running. That said, a majority of the space is taken up by pornography.

*Printed versus downloaded - With the energy (mostly coal in the US) required to keep computers and servers on and unsustainable practices of metal mining required to build computers and the internet infrastructure, I consider using paper made from sustainably harvested wood or recycled material very likely more sustainable than downloading internet docu-

ments.

*Many devices while off still drain a little bit of energy when they are plugged in. Either unplug devices when not in use, or get a power strip so you can just flip a switch to turn them off off.

Lighting:

*Wake and sleep with the rise and fall of the sun.

*Add more windows to your house to increase natural lighting.

*Use **LED light bulbs**, which can last a lifetime, don't have heavy metals like mercury in them, and use very little energy. If you don't like the light they cast, put some sort of shade over it.

Food Storage and Plants:

*Use or build a top-opening chest fridge and freezer, these lose much less cold than do front opening models when opened.

*Get cubby-drawers for your fridge so you're only access-

ing and exchanging heat with one compartment at a time.

*Learn about the benefits of certain “weeds” like dandelion and plantain (*plantago*) instead of removing them from your garden.

-XI-

Water



***Gray water toilets** – Use dish, shower, or rain water to flush your toilet. You can put a bucket beneath your sink and remove the connecting pipe. Read online for specifics.

***Flushing** - Leave urine in the toilet until it gets smelly or you poop.

*Put a water bottle full of water or a brick in your toilet tank, this makes it use less water per flush.

*Install water efficient heads for your faucets and shower.

*Install a rainwater catchment system for watering your garden or flushing the toilet.

*Lawn – if you have one, stop watering and fertilizing it.

-XII-

Relationships and

Parenting

*Adopt a child instead of giving birth to one.

*Use contraception or avoid it by having alternative types of sex that don't require genitals touching.

*Use plants for natural contraception and natural abortions, research this well and speak to people knowledgeable about herbology.

*Birth control pills can terribly screw up the body, come from pregnant horse pee, are tested on animals, and are made by the pharmaceutical industry. Natural alternatives to birth control pills should be used if possible.

*Breastfeeding is healthier for a baby and you avoid buying as much food. Cows

milk is not the best thing for humans and if consumed should be drunk raw or fermented into yogurt, cheese, or kefir.

*Expose your children to a wide variety of unprocessed foods.

*Borrow books from the library for teaching instead of buying computer software or buying new books.

*Buy toxin-free toys for children. Many toys have been made with lead-based paints or toxic adhesives that are not safe for mouthing on let alone touching. Unpainted wood toys are a good bet, or toys that make a note that they are child-safe and use non-toxic paint.

*Children raised in a healthy environment are shown to have far fewer developmental problems and illnesses later on in life. Raise a child in a colorful, dynamic and intricate environment.

-XIII-

Community

Living



*Community living is inherently more sustainable and cheaper than living by yourself. People share resources, cook larger batches of food, and more people use a single light. They also add a lot of security with the number of resources and skills everyone collectively has.

*Break your individualism. Many people are willing to help one another, especially if you have a good intention.

Wood working tools, wireless internet, yard tools, and the like can be collectively shared instead of everyone buying their own. Just ask!

*Break down your fences and share a garden plot!

*Check out <http://sites.google.com/site/scawiki/> for information including policies and organization of three successful student communities in Eugene, Oregon.

*Get more people to live with you! Build a yurt or let someone set up a tent in your yard.

-XIV-

Non-Humans &

Pets

*Cats can be considered an invasive species. Keep a bell on cats to warn native birds of their presence.

*No animal needs processed food to live. Dogs, cats, rabbits, etc can live on “human food”. Look up recipes for feeding them a balanced diet of whole foods instead of buying packaged, processed, and shipped foods.

*Sterilize domesticated pets.

*Many cities allow you to keep a specific number of egg-laying hens. Chickens eat compost, tear up grass fertilize the soil, and their eggs are very nutritious.

*Use biodegradable poop bags.

*Adopt pets.

-XV-

Arts and Craft- ing



paints, crayons, stencils, paper, etc.

*Stay away from using electric machines while making art, and think about art as a form of meditation rather than as a product.

***Natural art** - Make art from nature with twigs, berries, rocks, moss, and the like. Check out Andy Goldsworthy, a nature artist.

***Recycled Art** - Make art from your recycling or trash!

*Let go of the idea of permanence in art. Nothing lasts forever.

*Boil fallen walnuts with their outer green-black husks in a few cups of water to make walnut ink.

*Flour paste – A simple replacement glue, good for pasting paper to surfaces, can be made with 5 parts water and 1 part flour. Bring 4 parts water to a boil while you mix together 1 part water with 1 part flour, breaking up all clumps. Dump this into the boiling water and let it simmer for 2 or 3 minutes while stirring. Refrigerate between uses. It can last about a week and extra if salt is added.

*Most art supplies can be made at home including

Participating



*There are many groups fighting for a more sustainable future, and they need help in small and large ways. Talk to your neighbors, attend town council meetings, and vote. Your words have a lot of power at a local level.

*If your town doesn't have a specific resource, create it! For instance, a compost or recycling center. We need to start creating resources that would be useful now as well

as in a post-industrial future.

*When discussing sustainability with someone or advertising, relate the beneficial outcome directly to them and their friends' livelihoods. A huge problem with activists today is that many relate the beneficial outcome to the resource being extracted... For instance people trying to protect old growth forests say there will be no more large trees instead of saying the health of the people will be compromised through poorer water and air quality. Not everyone cares about forests, but almost everyone cares about their own personal well-being. **Appeal to needs and emotions!**

*Ask your city council to use eco-friendly products on public spaces like fertilizers on grasses and not to use pesticides.

*Participate in direct action and grassroots campaigns.

Thanks for reading!

**SUSTAINABILITY
COMMUNITY
SOCIAL CHANGE**



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