

# Ideas for Environmental Sustainability

Here are ideas from the Enact (Ecoteam) guide for better environmental sustainability. The Ecoteam program was created by [Global Action Plan for the Earth](#).

## Garbage:



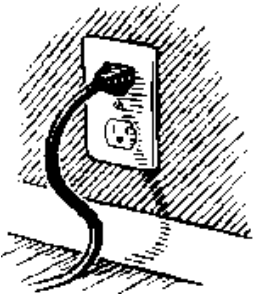
- Recycle! Madison and Middleton now recycle any plastic with a number on it. See information for [Madison](#) or [Middleton](#).
- Buy products that use recycled materials (post-consumer content) or have little/no packaging.
- Reduce the amount of new shopping bags that you use: Bring your own bags. Some places give discounts for doing this.  
Canvas; Re-use existing plastic or paper bags
- Don't bag small purchases if possible
- Compost non-meat food waste.  
Fruits; Vegetables; Bread/grains
- Cut down on junk mail. It costs \$1. Use this site or write to the following address:  
Mail Preference Service, Direct Marketing Association  
P.O. Box 9008  
Farmingdale, NY 11735
- Use cloth napkins
- Use reusable eating utensils, dinnerware.
- Repair items instead of throwing them away whenever possible. Instead of throwing another's treasure as trash, check out the Madison Stuff Exchange.
- Share infrequently used items with family, neighbors or friends instead of everyone buying their own.
- Planting Trees

## Water:



- Find and fix any leaks in your home.
- Use a toilet dam or place something in the tank so that it uses 40% less water.
- When buying new, purchase low flow toilets.
- Use low-flow shower heads.
- Don't run the water unless necessary when:
  - Washing hands – turn on the faucet to get hands wet, turn off the water, lather, then turn on to rinse.
  - Brushing teeth
- Shaving
- Only run the dishwasher when full.
- If you have two sinks, use one for washing and fill the second part-way for rinsing.
- Reuse water bottles instead of always buying new.
- Reduce your shower time to under 5 minutes.
- Watering your lawn:  
Most lawns need 1 inch of water per week.  
Water early in morning or early evening to avoid a lot of evaporation
- Mulch your lawn mower clippings
- Landscape to avoid high-water needs.
- Use a rain garden to improve water retention by your property and reduce run-off.

## Energy:



- Turn off lights and appliances when they are not in use.
- Set the thermostat to be warmer in summer and cooler in winter, especially at times when no one is home.
- Weatherize your home:
  - plastic on windows
  - weather-stripping at doorways
- Keep the refrigerator in good working order:
  - Tight seal. You can use Vaseline to help tighten the seal.
  - Twice a year, vacuum/wipe the coils at the bottom-front free of dust/dirt.

- **Furnace:**

- Tune up your furnace every two years.

- Seal and/or insulate the duct work to prevent leaks.

- Purchase a high-efficiency unit when the time comes to replace it.

- Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs. Start with your most commonly used light fixtures.

- **Water heater:**

- Set the temperature to 120 degrees F.

- Put an insulation blanket around it to prevent heat loss.

- Consider a solar unit or tankless water heater to save on heating and water use as well.

- **Windows:**

- Use shades/blinds to keep the sun out in the summer.

- Replace older windows with more modern, energy-efficient kinds.

- **Washing clothes:**

- Re-wear clothes more than once if they are not dirty.

- Wash clothes in cold water.

- Use a full load but don't pack the tub.

- Use a clothesline instead of drying when possible.

- Dry full loads (but not over-full)

- When the time comes, buy energy star appliances. A front-loading washer uses less water than a top-loading unit.

## Transportation:



- Carpool to work, church, other activities
- Walk or bike to nearby places instead of driving
- Ride public transportation on a regularly traveled route.
- Have your car serviced on a regular basis
  - Avoid jackrabbit starts and stops
  - Keep your tires properly inflated
- Combine errands into fewer trips
- If you have more than one vehicle, drive the more fuel-efficient one.

- Reduce excess weight in your car.
- Minimize cold starts and limit warm-ups to 30 seconds.
- Maintain a steady speed when driving.
- When appropriate, drive 35-55 mph, the most fuel-efficient range.
- Buy the minimum octane level gas as needed for your car.

- If there are long lines in a drive-through, turn off the car and go inside.
- When purchasing a vehicle, purchase the most energy-efficient one possible.
  - Highest miles/gallon
  - Lightest
  - Most aerodynamic
- Take a vacation that is close to home or reachable by public transportation.
  - If driving, find a place within a day's drive.
- Explore working from home one or more days/week if possible.
- When searching for places to live, try to live as close to your workplace as possible.

### Consumption:



- Choose products with the best quality.
- Buy products with as little packaging as possible.
- Consider the earth-friendliness of the product.
  - Is it made or packaged with recycled materials?
  - Can it be recycled?
  - Is it locally made?
  - Is it non-toxic?
  - Biodegradable?
  - Energy-efficient?
- Buy as many locally made/grown products as possible. It will reduce the energy needed to transport the products.
- When choosing between otherwise comparable items, choose the item made closest to home.
- Replace toxic substances in your home with non-toxic ones.
  - Dispose of toxic items properly
  - Loan and borrow items from neighbors.
  - Have a swap party where people bring functional items they no longer use and can swap with others.
- Eat less meat
- Buy organic products.
- Buy products made from recycled materials
- Don't buy needlessly. If you really don't need it, don't buy it. Don't buy things to make yourself feel good or to "help the economy".
- Use natural materials when furnishing your home.
- Grow things in your own garden.