Simple Steps to Going Green

As we realize that environmental resources are limited, more and more people are considering green options for home cleaning and maintenance. Earth friendly options are becoming more and more popular, and are readily available in most areas. If you've been considering a greener lifestyle, this article will offer some tips and guidelines to get you started. Living a more sustainable lifestyle is easier than ever, and you'll feel good about making environmentally sound decisions for your home and family.

1. **Consider Cloth-**Disposable paper products eat up the world's resources at an alarming rate, and Americans use an alarming amount of these items.

Disposable diapers, paper towels, toilet brushes, mops – the list goes on and on. Consider making the switch to cloth or reusable alternatives wherever possible, using dish cloths, rags, and cloth diapers. The earth (and your wallet) will thank you!

2. **Use Earth Friendly Cleaners-**Instead of housing a cabinet full of unpronounceable chemical cleaning products; consider switching to all natural alternatives.

3. **Cut Out Bottled Water-**According to Climate 411, Americans spend over 15 billion dollars per year on bottled water, much of which is simply processed tap water. This booming industry costs both the consumer and the planet – using the equivalent of 17 million barrels of oil per year. Instead of purchasing cases of bottled water for your home, consider investing in a reusable water bottle and refilling it with filtered tap water. This one time investment will save you hundreds of dollars a year and conserve precious natural resources in the process.

4. **Eat Locally-**Modern technology has given us the ability to eat strawberries in January and apples in May. Processed, frozen, and convenience foods have become the norm. However, most Americans pay little attention to where their foods are shipped from. As gasoline costs rise and we strive to conserve energy, it's time to turn our thoughts to the origin of our food products. By eating locally and in season, we can save energy, money, and our health – avoiding costly products that have been stripped of nutrients and shipped halfway around the world. Scout out your neighborhood for local farmers, CSA's, and organic growers to begin your journey into local sustainable food. Take some time to research where your food comes from. You just might be amazed.

5. **Turn off and unplug-**Even when electronic devices are turned off they use energy. Save more than 1000 pound of carbon dioxide and $256 per year by unplugging when not in use.

6. **Buy Second Hand-**Buy from used clothing and furniture stores will save money and save the environment. You'll be amazed at the treasures you can find.

7. **Ironing-**Reduce the need for ironing by taking clothes out of the dryer slightly damp and hanging them up. You'll save energy and money.

8. **Less packaging-**Buy products with less packaging and recycled paper, plastic, and glass. Better yet, buy concentrates that will make multiple bottles of ready to use. It's less to recycle.

9. **Water-**Turn off water while you brush your teeth and save 4 gallons a minutes! That's 10,000 gallons a year for a family of four.

10. **The Bath-**Plug the bathtub before turning the water on, then adjust the temperature as the tub fills.

11. **Trash-**Avoid creating trash wherever possible. Buy ice cream in a cone instead of a plastic cup.

12. **Tires-**Keep the tire on your car adequately inflated. Check them monthly and save 250 pounds of carbon dioxide and over $800 per year.

13. **Printer-**Make sure your printer paper is 100% post consumer recycled paper. Save 5 pounds of carbon dioxide per ream of paper. If you find you don't need a printed sheet, reuse the back side of the paper for the next print job. Be sure to refill your own cartridges.

14. **Food coloring-**Put food coloring in your toilet tank. If it seeps into the bowl, you have a leak. It's easy to fix, and can save more than 600 gallons of water per month.

15. **Heating and cooling-**Move your heater thermostat down two degrees in winter and up two degrees in the summer. Save 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide and $98 per year.

16. **Vacation-**When you leave for vacation, turn your hot water heater down. You will be amazed how much this will save you and the environment. While at home, keep the thermostat no higher than 120 degrees. You'll save over $30 per year.

17. **Car-**Check your car's air filters monthly. Save $130 per year.

18. **Air Conditioning-**Clean or replace dirty air conditioner filters as recommended. Save $150 per year.

19. **Showering-**Using less water in the shower means less energy used to heat the water. Save $150 a year

20. **Idling-**Letting your car idle wastes gas and generates pollution. If you are not in traffic, turn the car off.

21. **Compost-**You can create richer soil in the back yard by composting your leftovers.

22. **Trees-**Plant a tree and suck up carbon dioxide. You'll help clean up the air and save 2000 pounds of carbon dioxide per year.

23. **Insulate-**Insulating your hot water heater could save you over $130 per year.
24. **Computer-**Shut off your computer when not in use and save energy and over 200 pounds of CO_2.

25. **Insulate the pipes-**Insulating hot water pipes so that the water that comes out of the faucet is hotter faster will save money and energy.

26. **Pots and pans-**Soak pots and pans in water with a small amount of soap, rather than let them sit under running water while you scrape them clean.

27. **Wear more cloths-**Instead of turning up the heat in your home, wear more cloths.

28. **Lunch-**Pack a waste free lunch, utilize a reusable carrier and reusable containers.

29. **Cloth bags-**Take your own reusable cloth bags to the market. Don't use the paper or plastic that the store offers.

30. **Water-**Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap for cold water.

31. **Bike-**Share a ride or take your bike when possible.
It's all about the small things we can do each day that will save time, money, and the environment! Going Green is all about better health for the environment and your personal health.

For more information you can visit the following links.
   www.parentawarnesscenter.com
   http://psr.igc.org/ihwrept/ihwcomplete.pdf