

Tips For Sustainable Apartment Living

Credit: **Deborah Tull**, owner of Creative Green in Silverlake and **All Shades of Green**

- Create an urban eco-pack for yourself when you're out and about. It should include a food container to pick-up meals of to-go food at your favorite restaurant. Also add utensils, a mug, and reusable bags, so you can avoid plastic bags.
- If you're washing dishes in the sink and letting the water run--you're wasting tons of hot water. Instead, use 2 metal containers: fill one tub up with hot soapy water, then fill the other tub up with plain water for rinsing. If you use a biodegradable soap like **Shaklee** then you can water your plants from the tubs.
- Get off junk mail lists--now! Three websites below will opt you out of catalogs, advertising, and credit card offers. Or you can call the toll-free number for credit cards: 888-5OPT OUT or 888-567-8688, and request that they take you off of their lists.
 - **Catalog Choice:**
<https://www.catalogchoice.org/>
 - **this website:**
<https://dmachoice.thedma.org/>
 - **Opt Out Prescreen:**
<https://www.optoutprescreen.com/?rf=t>
- When using the washing machine, it's always best to use cold water and wash at non-peak hours. Usually between the hours of 6-8 am and 8-10 pm. Also, try to use a drying rack or clothes line whenever possible to dry your laundry.
- Create your own natural cleaning products at home with this simple recipe. **For an All-Purpose Cleaner:** Mix 1/2 cup vinegar and 1/4 cup baking soda into 1/2 gallon (2 liters) water. Store and

keep. Use for removal of water deposit stains on shower stall panels, bathroom chrome fixtures, windows, bathroom mirrors, etc.

- When you flush the toilet you are wasting water. To conserve water you can place an upright glass jar (quart or pint) into the tank. The jar will remain filled with water when the tank is flushed, saving a pint or a quart each time you flush. Ideally, save more water with the mantra: "If it's yellow then it's mellow" (essentially saving a flush).
- Stop energy from escaping your electronic devices (aka phantom energy). Most of the electronic devices in your home stay on even when they're off. A cord that plugs into an outlet or power strip that has a square or rectangular base is usually zapping energy even if it's not in use. To reduce energy waste, simply unplug when not in use or use a surge protector and flip the switch to the off position.

Adapted from

<http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/6-tips-for-sustainable-living-67436>

Food

Sustainable living includes eating sustainably grown or manufactured food. Industrial food production not only uses a lot of energy unnecessarily, but most agricultural systems use environmentally damaging pesticides and fertilizers. In addition, agricultural methods are often employed that destroy the local environment through excess tilling and heavy irrigation. In many instances, only one crop is grown, which further damages the soil and ecosystem, requiring artificial nutrient replenishment. All of these factors lead to such environmental damage as soil erosion, soil degradation, shrinking water tables, and chemical runoff. This

environmental damage, in turn, leads to a disrupted ecosystem and loss of biodiversity. Long-distance food distribution and transportation requires even further energy to be expended. Exhausts from motorized vehicles lead to damaging carbon emissions and the extensive use of non-renewable fuels.

Local Food Production

Although the most sustainable food production is that done on-premises, very few people have enough land and resources to accomplish the task alone. The next best thing is buying local foods from organic and sustainable farms. Buying local foods drastically reduces the carbon footprint created through transportation and distribution. In addition, there is no carbon footprint and waste from packaging materials. Eating only locally produced food products can be a difficult adjustment for some people because it means having a diet based on seasonal foods. It also creates a need to buy excess foods and preserve them for the off-season. Some local organizations schedule weekly pickups of various foods from nearby farms. Those who practice sustainable living also argue that locally produced foods are more nutritious than mass-produced foods.

Meat

Many people who practice sustainable living are vegetarians or vegans. Others eat meat but in strictly limited quantities. Raising livestock is very energy-intensive and can deplete natural resources quickly. Buying locally raised organic and free range meat is a definite possibility, but this meat can be expensive, so it is limited out of financial

necessity. Putting meat on the table two or three times per week is plenty for most sustainable living enthusiasts. This limit makes the meal more special and allows respect for the lives of animals to grow.

Organic Fruits and Vegetables

Eating only organic fruits and vegetables is a very important aspect of sustainable living. Luckily, each year, the scope of organic foods is growing. Ecological farming completely reduces the carbon footprint and ecological damage of agriculture when used in conjunction with such practices as regular crop rotation, composting, natural fertilizers, and biologic pest control methods.

Home Gardens

Of course, the best way to make sure fruits and vegetables are produced in line with sustainable food production methods is to grow them on the property where they are to be eaten. Modern gardening techniques have evolved to where this is possible even in highly urban settings. Urban gardens, perhaps in limited scope, can be setup on any available land not being put to good use. In places where no land is available, rooftops can be converted into gardens.

Preservation

Food preservation is a necessity in leading a sustainable life. Any method of preservation is acceptable, but drying, canning, and bottling is preferred because it doesn't take as much energy as freezing and refrigerating.

Adapted from:

<http://www.sustainableliving.com.au/food>