



How to navigate the world of sustainability – and have some fun along the way

Green life, green home, sustainable funds, buying local, the “buy nothing” movement, plastic-free living, eco-fashion, electric vehicles. We’ve all seen the headlines, but it can be a bit overwhelming. What exactly does “green” mean? And how do we incorporate it in our daily lives? Hint: Small steps add up, for those who are interested. The UK government defines sustainability as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Looking at going green this way certainly casts a broad net. But the overarching idea is to find ways to eat, work and play that have a gentler effect on the Earth. Fortunately, there are a lot of easy-to-implement, and even fun, ways to do just that.

TO BEGIN, BUY NOTHING

Divert landfill waste, get really amazing things and even maybe make some new friends in your neighbourhood. All by ... buying nothing. Using online sites and app like Gumtree and Facebook Groups or Marketplace, you can buy and sell – but also pick up some unwanted items for free! You may not be able to score everything you’re looking for, but it’s an easy place to start.

EAT WILD

While you don’t have to go foraging on your own, you can find places locally that do. From pasture-raised meats to seasonal fruits, vegetables and flowers, farminguk.com is an online directory listing farm shops around the UK and in your local area. Similarly, bigbarn.co.uk lists artisan, specialist and local food outlets so you can find what you need, locally! Alternatively, ask a friend for recommendations of local shops or sustainable food delivery services.

SHADES OF GREEN

Here are a few quick and easy ways to ease into a more sustainable lifestyle, if you’re interested.

TURN OFF THE TAP

Turning off the water while brushing your teeth can save up to 1,000 gallons of water a year.

LEAVE YOUR SHOES AT THE DOOR

Studies show that pesticides – and bacteria – can last on your shoes for up to a week, so ditch the shoes inside.

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GO MEATLESS ON MONDAYS

Going without beef on Mondays over the course of a year saves the equivalent emissions to driving 348 miles in a car.

GROW YOUR OWN

Speaking of, you can’t get much more local than your own garden for food. Many local councils offer green waste disposal bins and gardening guides to help, or explore the Royal Horticultural Society’s website which is full of tips on how to get started. The few steps it takes to go out and pick some fresh basil have zero emissions and the result packs way more flavour than store-bought alternatives. Find out if your neighbourhood has a community garden and get involved or visit sites like farmgarden.org.uk run by charity Social Farm & Gardens that support communities in farming and gardening together. Garden centres are also a great place to explore, get ideas and often expert advice from those who run them.

KEEP IT COOL

You can remove a million cars' worth of emissions from the roads by doing your laundry in cool water, not warm. And did you know washing your clothes in cold water makes them last longer, too? The Energy Saving Trust confirms washing at 30°C rather than 40°C reduces your energy consumption by 60% per cycle.

STEP OUT SMARTLY

When it comes to eco-friendly fashion, there are a wide variety of shoe companies that now embrace green values. Adidas and Allbirds have recently partnered to create the lowest ever carbon footprint performance trainers. With kooky and fun styles for both men and women, this isn't Allbird's first innovation – the brand makes men's and women's runners and slip-ons from renewable wool. Others including Brazilian brand Cariuma and everyday staples made by Everlane are sustainable and built to last.

INVEST WITH IMPACT

You may not necessarily think of your portfolio as part of your sustainability plan, but it can and should be, even if you're just thinking of a sustainable retirement income withdrawal plan. Sustainable investing is quickly becoming mainstream, ranging from screens for social and environmental risks to opportunities

for positive impact through new business ideas and corporate engagement. As of June 2020, global ESG-data driven assets hit \$40.5 trillion according to Pensions&Investments. Talk with your wealth manager about how you can align your investments with your prioritised causes, values and risk profile. Looking to take a more active role? MSCI have a multitude of resources on their website to do your own research and get to grips with everything ESG.

Sources: gov.uk; energy.gov; cbsnews.com; foodnotlawns.com; treehugger.com; farminguk.com; bigbarn.co.uk; milliongardensmovement.org; energystar.gov; eia.gov; rhs.org.uk; forbes.com; investopedia.com; zerowastechef.com; myplasticfreelife.com; greenmeansgotravel.com; farmgarden.org.uk; moralfibres.co.uk; ariel.co.uk; cariuma.com; allbirds.com; rothys.com; sandiegouniontribune.com; mondaycampaigns.org; buynothingproject.org; cnn.com; aarp.org; eatwild.com; plansponsor.com; asyousow.org; pionline.com; msci.com

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