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4 Great Ways to Go Green

Chances are at some point you've read some scary statistics about how much humans have damaged the earth. And, unfortunately, there are plenty to go around. As a result, you've probably made some changes to the way you live your life to help minimize your own individual impact. But the damage humans have done to the environment is so extensive, can one person really make a difference?

The answer is yes. And here's a great example: Greatist.com explains [one person](#) can prevent 4,800 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions from spewing into the environment simply by taking public transportation instead of a car for their 20-mile round trip commute. That's a lot!

So, don't avoid making small changes simply because you think it might not be enough to make a difference. It is! And here are 4 great ways to get started:

Clean green. Many of the cleaners we use in our homes contain strong chemicals that not only pollute the air we breathe but can potentially contaminate our water systems if they're dumped down drains after use. As this article explains, "[green cleaning](#)" encourages people to use environmentally-safe

cleaning products. These products are less harmful to people, animals, and the environment. The article provides a great compilation of green cleaning resources that can help you start “greening” the way you clean.

Shop local. As SustainableBabySteps.com explains, a lot of the foods we eat have to travel [“a minimum of 1500 miles”](#) to reach us. It notes that when we buy food from local sources and shop at small businesses we can cut down on the carbon footprint of the food we eat and other products we use. It also explains that shopping at small businesses leads to other positive results because small businesses “contribute more to charitable causes, create more jobs, limit outsourcing, and keep money circulating within a community.”

Be a vegetarian once a week. Perhaps you’ve heard of Meatless Mondays, but you weren’t sure exactly how skipping meat one day a week would help the environment. As this article featuring [50 go-green tips](#) shows, the meat we eat has a big impact on the planet. For example, it notes that to produce just one pound of beef 2,500 gallons of water are needed. When you forego that juicy steak, you’re contributing to the conservation of valuable resources.

Donate used pet items. We should reduce, reuse, and recycle whenever possible. And if you can help an animal in the process, even better! Follow the advice of this guide on [helping homeless animals](#) by donating used items, such as crates, toys, and towels, to local animal shelters. It notes these shelters can also always use your old newspapers. By giving these items a chance to have a second life with a homeless animal, you’re keeping them out of the landfill and putting them to great use.

The planet is our home, and we should do everything in our power to keep it clean. Making an effort to make our lives greener really doesn’t require that much effort from us. There are many easy ways, as individuals, that we can live more environmentally-friendly lives. What can you change in your lifestyle to help the planet?

Sara Bell grew up in a family of teachers—her dad has taught high school for 30 years and her mom is a university professor. At [EducatorLabs](#), she puts the lessons they instilled in her about the importance of curiosity and learning to great use. When she isn’t working, she enjoys reading, writing, and knitting.