



## Top tips for greener living

We want to encourage any action that connects people with, protects and enhances the natural environment. If you're not sure where to start it can be a daunting experience, so we've drawn together a range of examples to help encourage and inspire you to take green action.

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## Greener choices at home

### *In the kitchen*

- **Recycle**  
[Recycling](#) reduces the need for raw materials and helps keep our air, water and land clean.
- **Only buy the food you need**  
By planning your meals for the week, and only buying the fresh ingredients required, you can reduce the amount of food that is wasted and save money.
- **Compost your food or opt for a food waste bin if your council offers it**  
[Separating food waste](#) reduces the amount of waste going to landfill and it can be used to generate energy.
- **Avoid pouring fats and oils down the sink**  
Collect them in a container and put them in the bin to prevent drains from becoming blocked.
- **Use a washing up bowl for dishes or only use a dishwasher when it's full**  
This will help reduce your water consumption and save you money.

- **Choose non-toxic cleaning products, paints and furnishings**  
Products containing Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) can reduce the air quality in your home.
- **Pick efficient appliances**  
When you need to replace an appliance, [Energy-efficiency labels](#) will indicate which models use the least resources.

### *In the bathroom*

- **Only flush the 3Ps down the loo – pee, paper and poo**  
Wet wipes, nappies and medical waste are frequently responsible for [sewer blockages](#). Blockages can lead to sewer flooding and release pollution into the environment.
- **Turn off the tap when you brush your teeth**  
A running tap can waste 6 litres of water per minute.
- **Take a shower and use a low-flow or aerated shower head**  
A bath typically holds around 80 litres of water, while a short shower can use as little as a third of that amount.
- **Check your toilet for leaks**  
A single [leaky loo](#) can waste up to 400 litres of water per day, the equivalent to five full bathtubs.

### *In the garden*

- **Use a water butt to collect water for gardening or reuse water from your home**  
Water butts are a brilliant way to catch large amounts of free rainwater.
- **Feed the birds**  
Using a bird feeder to provide [high-energy foods](#) can help birds of all sizes survive.
- **Create a home for wildlife**  
Install [bird](#) or [bat](#) boxes, build [bug hotels](#) and create [log piles](#) to provide shelter and places to hibernate for insects and animals.
- **Build a pond**  
[A pond](#) is one of the best features for attracting wildlife to a garden including hedgehogs, birds, frogs, dragonflies and other animals that need fresh drinking water. If a pond is not practical, opt for a simple birdbath or pebble fountain.
- **Grow plants for pollinators**  
[Flowers](#), shrubs and trees provide nectar and pollen as food for bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects throughout the year.
- **Don't let pond plants escape into the wild**  
Invasive aquatic plants can damage our ponds, waterways and the environment. [Be Plant Wise](#) and dispose of unwanted plants and pond material through careful composting.

- **Plant trees**  
A single tree can be home to hundreds of species of insect, fungi, moss, mammals, and plants. Trees can also help clean the air we breathe and filter the water we drink.
- **Let your lawn grow**  
[Longer grass](#) encourages different plant species to grow and creates feeding opportunities for birds and insects.
- **Think carefully about whether to use pesticides**  
Especially where pollinators are active or where plants are in flower. Only use pesticides if necessary.

### ***Energy saving***

- **If you can, hang out clothes to dry rather than using a tumble dryer**  
It will save electricity and help your clothes last longer.
- **Try to put a full load in the washing machine each time**  
A full load will use less water and energy than two half loads. Select a low temperature programme when possible.
- **Only light a fire if you need it to keep warm**  
Use dry wood or fuels approved by your stove's manufacturer on an efficient and well-maintained appliance to reduce pollution.
- **Boil only what you need**  
Fill the kettle with the amount of water required. Any extra and you're wasting time, money, and energy.
- **Install, or improve, insulation and draft proof your home**  
40% of heat is lost through doors, windows and floors. 25% through the roof. Sealing unwanted gaps and fitting insulation in the loft will help cut heating bills and make your [house warmer](#).
- **Turn down your thermostat**  
If you [turn down your thermostat](#) by just one degree it will cut your heating bills straight away, and you may not feel any difference.
- **Talk to your water company about receiving free water-saving devices**  
Most companies will provide simple products, such as tap aerators or shower timers, for free.
- **Switch to a green energy provider**  
Changing energy provider can help reduce your carbon footprint.

# Greener choices when out and about

## *Greener travel choices*

- **Cycle and walk more and make fewer journeys by car**  
This will help reduce pollution and congestion and can improve your physical and mental health.
- **Drive your car efficiently**  
Driving with good anticipation and smooth acceleration and braking saves fuel and cuts emissions. Correctly inflated tyres, avoiding carrying unnecessary weight and removing carriers and racks when not needed increases these benefits. ([the Road to Zero](#))
- **Join, or set up, a car share scheme**  
Putting drivers and passengers together to share car journeys can relieve congestion, provide a more sociable commute, and reduce pollution.
- **When parked or waiting in traffic for long periods turn off your engine**  
It will keep [our air cleaner](#) and save you money and fuel.
- **Choose a lower emission vehicle**  
Next time you're replacing a vehicle, look for the lowest emission options that meet your needs.

## *Greener choices in the outdoors*

- **Bag and bin dog mess**  
Dog fouling can [spoil and contaminate](#) the environment and be a hazard to human health.
- **Take litter away with you**  
Recycle where possible.
- **Follow the Countryside Code**  
By following the [code](#) everyone can respect, protect and enjoy the outdoors.
- **Join a beach clean or litter pick**  
Removing rubbish improves places for people and wildlife. Why not join a [local litter group](#), start a new one or pick up litter on your own?
- **Take part in citizen science surveys**  
Help record wildlife by sharing what you've seen. Information on when and where you spotted a particular species can be valuable data. Find [surveys](#) or upload your observations of wild nature to [iSpot](#) or [iRecord](#).
- **'Check, clean and dry' clothing and equipment when you leave the water**  
Help stop the spread of invasive plants and animals in our waters by following the [three simple steps](#).

- **Support local green spaces**  
Establish or join a local group maintaining a community garden, park, allotment or wildlife area. Urban green spaces can improve air quality, reduce soil erosion and benefit your health and well-being.

### ***Greener choices when shopping***

- **Take reusable bags**  
So you don't need to buy additional or single-use bags.
- **Shop in charity shops and donate unwanted items**  
Not only is it cheaper and reduces waste, but you are also supporting good causes at the same time.
- **Buy a reusable coffee cup or water bottle**  
Switching to a reusable cup or bottle is an easy way to cut waste and can save you money.
- **Use bars of soap, shampoo and conditioner**  
To reduce the number of plastic bottles needed.
- **Buy loose produce to reduce the amount of packaging material**  
Where possible, buy produce loose rather than pre-packaged and take your own bags to shops and markets.
- **Where possible, seek out locally sourced food that is in season**  
Transporting food long distances can require lots of energy.
- **Try to refill cleaning and dry food products**  
Many shops and market stalls are reintroducing options to take your own bottles, jars and tubs to refill products.
- **Consider switching to reusable sanitary products**  
Using a reusable menstrual cup will last for years and save you money. Even switching to non-plastic applicator tampons can help to reduce waste.
- **Buy sustainably sourced fish**  
Make more environmentally responsible choices [when buying seafood](#).
- **Think twice before buying wildlife souvenirs abroad**  
Products offered for sale to tourists, including wooden ornaments, jewellery, exotic foods and medicines, could be made from endangered plant or animal species and might be [illegal to bring home](#).

### ***Greener Choices for you***

- **Take breaks outdoors**  
Spending time outdoors in a green space, like a park or garden, can reduce stress, fatigue, anxiety and depression.

- **Carry a water bottle and use refill stations**  
Using [refill stations](#) will save you money, keep you hydrated and help to prevent plastic pollution at the source.
- **Exercise outside**  
Outdoor exercise provides a mental health boost beyond that of indoor gyms.
- **Invest in reusable straws and cutlery**  
Carrying utensils with you will reduce your use of unnecessary single-use plastic products.
- **Get involved in environmental volunteering**  
Through [volunteering](#), you can learn new skills, boost your mental and physical health while improving the environment.

## Greener choices at your workplace

### *In the office*

- **Switch to recycled paper**  
Using recycled paper contributes to a more circular economy, one that minimises waste and makes the most of resources.
- **Go paperless**  
Go further in reducing waste by going paperless and offering this option to your customers. For example, offering paperless monthly statements.
- **Invest in recycling bins**  
Providing recycling facilities will enable and encourage staff members to recycle more.
- **Maintain appliances**  
Proper appliance care and upkeep can prevent potential leaks and wasted energy.
- **Keep windows and exterior doors closed when heating or cooling the office**  
This will make the process quicker and more energy-efficient.
- **Use indoor plants**  
Being close to greenery, even indoors, can make staff feel more at ease with their surroundings, reducing stress levels and improving feelings of wellbeing.
- **Use technology to reduce your footprint**  
Introduce a low flush option on toilets, water fountains instead of water coolers, motion-sensitive taps in bathrooms and motion sensors to control lighting.
- **Make sure your pipes are protected against cold weather**  
Insulating pipes can protect them against damage and make your heating system more efficient.
- **Know where your supply pipes run and where the shutoff valves are**

In the event of a leak, you'll be able to minimise damage and wastage.

- **Check your meters**  
Checking your meters at night, or when no water is being used, will allow you to monitor leakage.
- **Improve your car fleet management**  
This can help [lower costs while reducing the carbon emissions](#) from your organisation's vehicles and employee travel.
- **Try and set water usage targets**  
Through setting targets, and encouraging staff involvement, you can raise awareness and reduce consumption.
- **Help prevent flooding**  
Using permeable paving allows water to drain through rather than quickly running off.

### *Help colleagues make greener choices*

- **Help staff travel less**  
Introduce mobile technology that enables staff to work from home or elsewhere.
- **Do what you can to promote active travel and use of public transport**  
To reduce the number of staff and customers using their cars to get to you. Provide bike sheds and shower facilities, bike to work schemes and electric vehicle recharging points.
- **Encourage sustainability**  
Bring together a group of employees to develop and champion a sustainability strategy for your organisation.
- **Help your employees connect with nature**  
Publicise the wellbeing benefits of spending time in nature, and promote opportunities for employees to do so. This could be through "walking meetings" and volunteering opportunities.
- **Pledge to 'step up to the plate' and reduce food waste**  
Businesses, and individuals can sign the pledge and ['step up to the plate'](#), committing to reduce food waste, either in their food production business or working environment.
- **Link up with organisations providing nature-based services in your area**  
If you work with people with health, educational, or social needs, find out which local services can support them with structured programmes. Across England, programmes are run on [care farms](#) and other natural spaces.

**Manufacturers and retailers**

- **Sell products with less packaging**  
Reduce packaging waste by packaging items more efficiently, where possible.
- **Use recycled packaging**  
Make use of recycled packaging materials and encourage re-use or recycling by the customer.
- **Increase the durability of your products**  
In some industries, waste can be reduced by increasing the durability of the products made.
- **Introduce return schemes**  
Introduce product return schemes to ensure your components are correctly disposed of or are recycled/reused.
- **Offer price incentives for reusing**  
Consider offering incentives to customers who bring a reusable coffee cup, rather than opting for a disposable option.

*This suggested actions are not government advice.*

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