



5 Habits, 5 Gadgets: A Practical Shade of Green

“Going green” is as hot as global warming itself right now. Okay but really, a lot of companies and individuals are going to great lengths to take better care of the planet so that we can still have land in the future. Some approaches can be pretty extreme, and not all of us possess the resources to totally revolutionize the way we live (often the most important of those resources being time and patience). But there are some practices and products that can be adopted without pain, and even replace things we already have or do.

Habits

1. Print on the front and back of paper.

Sometimes the nature of the document can keep this from being an option, but if at all possible, go for it! It'll cut the amount of printer paper you use nearly in half, saving you money and leaving trees in the ground.

2. Bring your own shopping bags.

They're cheap, washable, and hold a lot more stuff than plastic bags (important to those of us who vow to bring everything inside in one trip if it kills us). Pick up a few for a dollar apiece and keep them in your car so you can always have them with you.

3. Buy used items.

Vintage clothes, pre-owned furniture, secondhand kitchenware—trendy and environmentally friendly.



4. Sell back your old electronics.

The Huffington Post linked an article from [PC Magazine](#) that listed 10 different places that will buy your used electronics, even if they're broken. It keeps harmful chemicals out of landfills and enables you to pocket some cash.

5. Eat less beef.

This sounds like a weird one, but according to an article [featured in The Guardian](#), red meat requires 28 times more land and 11 times more water to produce than chicken or pork. That adds up to carbon emissions five times greater! The author credits one expert with saying that giving up beef entirely is more effective than giving up your car.

Gadgets

1. Slow cookers.

Surprisingly, slow cookers use a very small amount of energy, especially when compared to stoves, microwaves and ovens. Plus, it's nice to have dinner ready and waiting at the end of the day. Grocery stores carry a variety of sizes, small ones for as little as \$10.

2. Solar chargers.

They're real! [Outdoor Life](#) featured a list of 7 solar chargers they tested and rated. They can be pricey, but incredibly useful, especially if you're outdoorsy. Literally no one will be unimpressed that you have a solar charger.



Image: <http://www.solio.com/>

3. Smart power strips.

There are several different types, but they all serve the same purpose: saving electricity by cutting power from electronics when you're not using them. They differ in how and when they shut off, but the U.S. Department of Energy has come up with a [quick and simple flow chart](#) so you can figure out which type will suit your needs.

4. Water powered clock.

All you have to do is fill it with tap water. Really. The positive and negative ions in water are conducted through metal plates to create enough charge to run the clock. It only needs to be

refilled after 6 months to a year. Another impressive conversation piece to add to your living room. [\[link\]](#)

5. Eco amp.

These are made from recycled cardboard, and resemble a small phonograph horn that you can fold up and put in your pocket or bag. Amplify your music, books, or podcasts without having to worry about batteries, and recycle it all over again when you've worn it out. [\[link\]](#)
