

COLUMNS

MiSustainable Holland: Basketball team saves energy while exercising

Ella McKinney ODC Network

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HOLLAND — For as much as exercise and physical activity is encouraged in today's world, we should also talk about the importance of sustainability when exercising.

The Hope College women's basketball program is not only successful on the court, but provides a great example of how to be sustainable while exercising and playing a sport.

Team members take a number of actions to support the environment throughout the season. The first is something everyone can do: purchase reusable water bottles for practice and workouts. The bottles last the entire season, eliminating the use of disposable bottles, which generate waste.

The team also emphasizes carpooling to events and walking or biking to the fieldhouse, even in the winter. It's a great reminder for the rest of the community to work together to carpool and walk places when possible.

Players also wear their jerseys for three years before getting new ones — a designed effort to be environmentally conscious by reusing uniforms.

Team members are intentional about their laundry system. They practice in the same shirt, jersey and shorts daily, and wash all of the players' gear in one load. With nearly 30 players in the program, this is an impressive energy saver.

Even if you're not part of a sports team, it's important to think about ways to be sustainable when exercising on your own.

It's quite a bit easier in the summer and warmer months to stay eco-friendly, but we must be aware of ways to care for the environment in the winter.

In the summer, going for a run or biking outside is refreshing and exciting. In the winter, it's more common to use an indoor gym facility with a treadmill or static bike — but the energy

consumption of indoor gym equipment should be considered.

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Fitness enthusiasts can counteract energy consumption by running outside or finding an indoor track to use. Many walkers and runners visit downtown Holland for its snowmelt system on sidewalks. You can also visit a gym that invests in eco-friendly equipment.

It's important this winter to think about ways you can support the environment while continuing to be physically active.

— *Ella McKinney is a volunteer intern at DeGraaf Nature Center and a senior on the Hope College women's basketball team.*

About this series

The MiSustainable Holland column is a collection of community voices sharing updates about local sustainability initiatives.

This Week's Sustainability Framework Theme: Environmental Awareness/Action: Environmental education and integrating environmental practices into our planning will change negative outcomes of the past and improve our future.