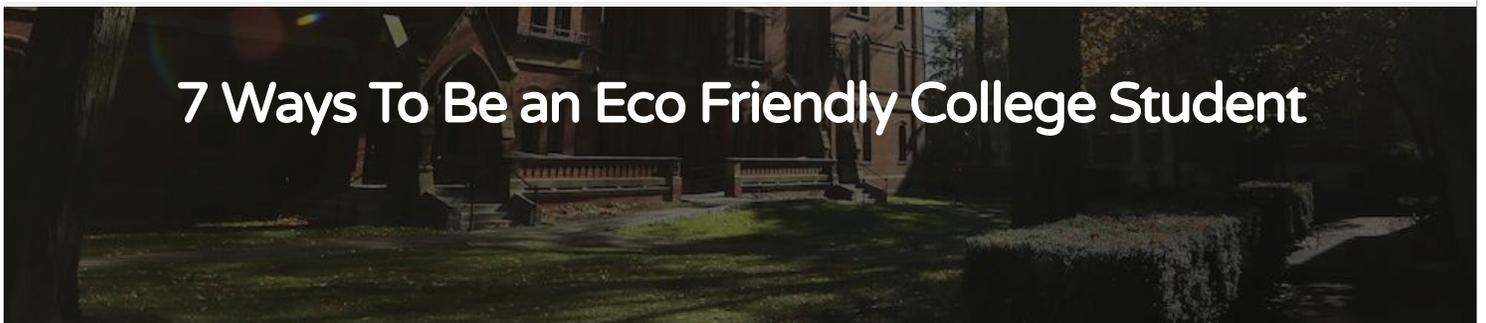


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7 Ways To Be an Eco Friendly College Student

By [Greener Ideal Staff ^{gí}](#) | August 11, 2016

Most college students focus on three things: classes, studying, and socializing (and probably not in that order). With all that's going on around campus, it's safe to say most students don't spend a lot of time thinking about living green.

But there are a few easy ways any college student can be more eco-friendly without having to make major changes to their lifestyles. As a student, being eco-friendly helps not only your carbon footprint, but also your wallet – most eco-friendly practices also double as money-saving practices, which comes in very handy when you're on a student's budget.

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So take a read through the following tips and make your time at college as sustainable as possible. You may just save a few bucks along the way, too.

1. Recycle!



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Think about how much paper you use during the semester – your class notes, assignments, tests, research all the papers you’re collected. On top of that, think of all the plastic food and drink containers you’re likely to go through in a year. Collectively, it’s probably enough to fill your dorm room twice over.

Rather than letting those recyclables end up in the landfill, follow these simple tips to make sure everything that can be recycled is disposed of properly.

Living on campus: most colleges have recycling bins scattered around the campus, so find the closes one to you and regularly visit the bin and recycle your stacks of

paper. If you don't have access to a recycling bin, contact your administration and find out where the nearest drop-off is – and encourage them to install more blue bins around campus while you're at it.

Living off campus: Most communities requires you to separate your garbage, so take a plastic bag, add your papers, and put it either by the curb for pick up or in your apartment building's trash cans. You can also separate and recycle your cans, bottles, cardboard boxes and food scraps. Depending on your state or province, you may also be able to return your bottles and cans for cash. Check out [this article on how you can make money from recyclables](#).

2. Walk, bike or take public transit when possible



It's common knowledge that the fewer cars on the road, the less pollution in the air. Cars and motorcycles are essential, no doubt, but use them only when necessary not only saves money on gas but saves wear and tear on the machine. Ask yourself, do you really need a car?

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Many students think they need a car at college, but the fact is most campuses are pedestrian friendly, and most of the time your car will sit in the student parking lot accumulating parking fees and monthly insurance premiums. Sell the car, and instead invest in a bicycle or transit pass (if one isn't included in your tuition), depending on your specific needs.

When it comes to picking a bike, buy a good quality used item on Craigslist to save money and reduce your footprint. For break, ride the bus or carpool with a fellow student. Many colleges have carpool boards to pair riders with drivers – be sure to check for one at your school.

3. Buy green products



Recycled products, especially paper products, are available in most stores now, and purchasing these items makes a big difference in the recycling industry. In many cases, they don't cost any more than traditional products either.

If you're not sure where to start when it comes to buying green products, and there's no retailer in your area offering sustainable products, consider buying online. You can even get an [Amazon Prime discount for students](#) that offers free 2-day shipping on textbooks and other goods.

Some other green products we recommend for every student:

- **Energy efficient power bars:** TVs, computers, cell phone chargers, coffee makers and many other electrical devices still use electricity when plugged in, even though they may be idle. Using a power strip with an on/off switch or control outlets helps simultaneously disconnect a variety of electronics. With students constantly on the go, it's an efficient way to limit electric usage in the dorm.
- **Local food:** Sometimes students like to cook their own meals, but it takes a lot of resources to ship produce to stores across the country. Buying local reduces the carbon footprint and helps support local farmers.
- **Thrift shopping:** Looking for some new furnishings or decorations for the dorm? Instead of buying new at a major department store try out local thrift shops which have great used and unique items. It also helps support the local economy.

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4. Wash cups and plates

Washing dishes is the last thing most busy college students think about, but it can be one of the most eco-friendly things you can do. If you're moving into your first apartment, avoid the temptation of disposable paper or plastic plates, cups and utensils. Sure, it's convenient, but this adds up to a lot of waste – and money.

Pick up some inexpensive plates and utensils and see if you can get your housemates to chip in on dish duty, so everyone shares the burden. If you're living in a dorm, then wash any of the dishes in the kitchenette or in the bathroom sink.

5. Save paper



Never buy new books unless you have to. Used books are going to cost you less, and they don't contribute to new printing. Compare the cost at the campus store to online

sellers for the best deal. The same applies at the end of the class—compare the buy-back amount at the campus store to what you could make selling it yourself online or to another student.

For other paper supplies you need, only buy the bare minimum you will actually use. For specialty supplies, wait until you actually need them before purchasing since class plans often change mid-term.

Paper is one of the main areas where college students can save money and the environment. The less you need to restock your paper supplies, the better. Some simple tips to get started:

- Use the back of your paper when writing notes and
- Avoid taking handfuls of paper napkins from the cafeteria.
- When printing, save misprints, bad copies and mistakes by always double checking the document you're printing.
- If you do make a mistake, either recycle the paper or cut the paper in half and use the back for scrap paper for notes, writing down ideas for papers, etc.
- For those who write notes on paper, refillable binders save more paper than notebooks.

Another option is to use that new laptop or tablet to take notes in class, and eliminate paper from your studies altogether – though there may be some drawbacks to that when it comes to learning and memorization.

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6. Purchase a reusable water bottle – and take it everywhere!



There are so many flavored health drinks and designer water on the shelves that it's tempting to believe they are essential. Actually, clean water is what is essential for life, and it is usually available from the tap.

Drinking bottled water creates a lot of trash that can potentially end up in the landfill. Use a reusable water bottle and fill it up daily either at home or from the drinking fountains on campus. You'll save money by not needing to buy bottled drinks on the go, and you'll definitely save on the amount of waste you produce.

The same goes for disposable coffee cups – though it may be more convenient, those waxed paper cups aren't recyclable, and will just end up in the landfill after you're done with them. So carry a second bottle or reusable mug with you for your hot

beverages – you’ll even receive a discount on your cup of joe (at most shops) for opting out of the cup.

If you’re not sure which bottle to use, we recommend [Klean Kanteen](#) for both hot and cold beverages.

7. Use LED light bulbs

With all the studying you’ll be doing, you’re bound to burn out a lamp bulb or two. And when you do, you should definitely opt for energy efficient LED bulbs. LED bulbs cost a bit more than incandescent and CFL bulbs, but the saving comes in the electricity bill, as well as the long-term cost savings. LEDs last much longer than the other bulbs and produce more light for less wattage.

Lamp light is more pleasant for studying, and actually more eco-friendly. One or two used lamps can be purchased and fit with energy efficient LED light bulbs. The expensive overhead lights can be turned off – they’re not useful for reading anyway.

Your time at college or university is sure to be a memorable one – and hopefully these tips will help you reduce your carbon footprint, and save you a bit of money while you focus on your studies (... and socializing).



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