



8 Simple Sustainability Tips for Millennials

By Guest Author [gf](#) | July 24, 2016

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Millennials are arguably the most globally-aware generation ever. 20- to 30-somethings are plugged into the news, opinions, and cultural movements that affect people from across the planet through social media in ways that we've never seen before. They can clearly see the consequences of bad business practices, oppressive governments, and terrorist agendas, making them more emotional and vocal about

many issues, including environmental causes.

Because the millennial lifestyle is more connected, they realize that living sustainably is important—and, if done right, can be really simple. Here are several practical ways that millennials can live in a more sustainable way.

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1. Green Up with the Sharing Economy

Unlike generations before them, millennials aren't interested in being trapped in a specific job for the rest of their careers, and certainly not one that doesn't pay them enough to sustain their lifestyles. That's why the gig economy is starting to get big: millennials are starting to take jobs on the side, and earn additional income made possible in the sharing economy . Aside from the economic benefits, these can have environmental benefits too.

Opportunistic Uber drivers (i.e., those who pick up passengers who happen to be going their way) decrease air pollution by effectively decreasing the volume of vehicles. Millennials like the idea of a minimalist lifestyle, so they'd rather use Uber than buy their own car. If you have a car, you can share your ride or hitch a ride with someone else instead. Either way, you'd be doing your part for the planet.

Similarly, Airbnb hosts can offer more sustainable living accommodations than many hotel chains, ensuring that travellers reduce the size of their carbon footprint, while also earning some additional money for their eco-friendly hosts.

2. Exercise for the Environment

Another option working millennials might want to consider is working *out* on their way to the daily grind. Maybe you're not doing as much cardio as you should be, and you need to save money. Maybe your place of work isn't that far, and maybe you have some place where you can clean yourself up before your shift begins. In that case, the conditions are perfect for you to just hoof it on your way to work.

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Get yourself a nice bike, or even a nice pair of running shoes, and you can get to the office using your own strength. Why burn gas when you can burn calories instead?

3. Cut Out Your Commuting

Because they're so comfortable as net-izens, there are a lot of careers millennials can consider. For a millennial, a career opportunity should ideally fulfill several criteria, one of which is flexible work conditions. Having a flexible work arrangement can allow you to choose your own schedule, which means you have a chance to avoid rush hour.

Less traffic means less time on the road, which means less air pollution. You can even take the logic further if you have a work-from-home option: no need to burn gas in that case. Do you have any apps like Grocery Gateway in your area, that allow you to order groceries and have them sent to your doorstep? Consider signing up! Online grocery ordering has been found to have the same benefits as carpooling for groceries.

4. Find the Beauty in Green Living

One of the main millennial characteristics is an emphasis on purpose. Posting pretty selfies is not enough for them, they've got to stand for something, too. So when you use makeup or any other beauty product, make sure you're supporting a green company. Look for stickers or indications that they're cruelty-free—that means the manufacturer didn't hurt any animals in creating their products. Also look for companies that use natural ingredients, like antioxidants and plant extracts, instead of sulphates, parabens, and phthalates.

Don't buy facial cleansers with microbeads; they tend to wreak havoc in marine environments. Read up on different makeup companies and find out more about the ones with a stellar reputation for quality and corporate responsibility. If you have a DIY streak, try to make your own homemade beauty products, like lip balm or facial masks.

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5. Waste Not, Want Not

Humanity is very good at making things. The downside of that is we usually can't tell how much we actually need, so we end up with a lot of waste. Instead of just throwing stuff away, really look at it and figure out how you can decrease your disposables. If you can recycle or upcycle something, don't chuck it.

Does your bank send you junk mail or do you get magazines that you don't read anyway? Call the companies that send you that material and ask to be taken off their

mailing list. Millennials at work can also help: practice double-sided printing, bring a mug instead of using paper cups at nearby coffee shops, and cook your food in big batches during weekends instead of buying frozen dinners.

6. Start Unfriending Plastic Products

A lot of plastic materials are harmful, and not just because they eventually end up in the ocean or in landfills. The mere act of producing these materials can release destructive pollutants into the atmosphere. As long as people buy products that use them, businesses will make them, so don't buy products that have environmentally-harmful components. Buy cast iron skillets instead of Teflon-coated ones, use reusable canvas bags when you go shopping, use aluminum sports bottles instead of plastic ones that contain bisphenol A (BPA), don't bother using plastic straws anymore, and use ceramic or porcelain plates rather than vinyl.

7. Dial Down Your Demand for Energy

Producing energy can also have a devastating effect on the environment. A majority of the world's energy producers still rely on coal-fired plants, which emit carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Renewable energy is on the rise, but until it becomes the world's major electrical source, it's better to just use less electricity overall.

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Use energy-efficient lights and appliances at home. If and when you can, try to figure out ways to use natural sunlight instead of lightbulbs. Decrease your dependence on

air conditioning and heating by insulating and sealing your home properly or by wearing sweaters indoors when it's cold. Check your air filters and clean them every once in a while too, as that can make climate control more efficient. Inverting the colors of your screen, such that you read light text against a dark background, can save energy and decrease eye strain.

8. Grow a Green Thumb

With urbanization on the rise, more forests are being destroyed, which means fewer plants to process carbon dioxide into oxygen. Maintaining an urban garden is one of the best ways to replenish the world's rapidly dwindling plant population. You can go with flowers, cactuses, and other decorative houseplants, or you can grow fruits, vegetables, and herbs for bonus points on the eco-friendliness scale.

People obsessing over how to start living green can also use sustainable practices in caring for their gardens. Reducing water loss from evaporation means you'll need less of it, so try to do your watering in the early morning or in the evening. You can also layer mulch over the soil. Composting is another great practice, because you can use your biodegradable waste and reduce your dependence on non-organic fertilizers.

With all the millennial traits people talk about, this generation may seem complicated. But they all just want one thing: a purposeful life. They can make a contribution through their work or by making positive lifestyle choices. You may be saying, "Our environmental problems right now are huge, so what difference can I



possibly make?" Well, you don't have to do any earth-shaking, awesome deeds to make a difference. Even the smallest choice has an impact, and good choices, when added up, can ripple out to create a better world.



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