

HOME OFFICE OPERATIONS

Waste Management at Home

- Recycle properly, to learn how, visit [recycle smart MA website](#)
- Compost at home by [starting your own compost](#), seeing what your town offers, or using a local composting company.
- Continue to reduce food waste by working to understand how much food is appropriate for your family's new situation of being home more often.
- Donate clothes, toys, household items, and other items that no longer serve you.

Resource Management at Home

- Reduce your water usage by taking shorter showers. By shortening your shower by just two minutes, you can save TEN gallons of water! To go the extra mile, turn off the water while you're lathering.
- Do your best to conserve water used in at home landscaping.
- Rescue office supplies from your office instead of buying new, and if you do have to buy new, try and purchase supplies made with recycled materials.
- If printing in your home office, consider purchasing 100% recycled copy paper and print double sided whenever possible.

Still consider using sustainable modes of transportation like public transit, walking, or biking

- \$30/month reimbursement for bicycle expenses or discounted Blue Bikes membership <https://www.transportation.harvard.edu/bikebenefit>
- Check out Commuter Choice's Bike Education Library with video tutorials about at home bike maintenance, urban cycling, etc: <https://www.transportation.harvard.edu/commuterchoice/bike/bike-education-library>
- Check out Commuter Choice's Zip Car benefits.

Use green cleaning products when possible and if safe for your individual situation



EMISSIONS AND ENERGY

Get an idea of what the energy hogs are in your house.

- A Wattmeter will let you measure how much energy your appliances are using. (Cambridge Public Library has Wattmeters you can check out in the home improvement section)
- [MassSave](#) provides free home energy audits for both renters and homeowners as well as incentives.

Minimize your plug loads

- Unplug chargers, computers, and adapters when not in use.
- Use natural daylight or task lighting versus overhead lighting whenever possible.
- Install smart power strips to automatically turn off devices.

Save energy while doing laundry.

- Wash clothes on cold. Wash full loads. Hang laundry to dry.

Swap out your lightbulbs for LEDs.

- Lighting accounts for close to [20% of the average home's electric bill](#). Energy Star qualified LED Bulbs use up to 90% less energy than incandescent light bulbs and last up to 20 times longer.

Install a programmable thermostat.

- If your household has a regular schedule, use a programmable thermostat to set back cooling (or heating) when you're not at home or at night.

Know your labels when buying new appliances for electronics.

- When buying appliances, look for the EnergyStar label. Backed by the EPA, products must not only be energy efficient, but also functional and affordable.
- EPEAT is a label for electronics. They have ratings of bronze, silver and gold, and their accounting system considers energy use, manufacturing, and ease of disposal.

Install insulation and air sealing.

- Air seal your basement first. Cold air most often enters through leaky basements, and then works its way up through your home.
- Focus on insulation in the attic. Insulation will keep the sun's heat from radiating into the house.

Consider adding solar panels to your house.

- Bring in a solar provider to assess your home for renewable energy. Check out [available incentives](#).



NATURE AND ECOSYSTEMS

Get Your Fill of Chlorophyll

- Plants, greenery, and even pictures of nature scenes have been linked to many health benefits, including alertness, attention and concentration, stress management, less fatigue/more energy, reduced tension and anxiety, and even greater productivity, comfort, creativity, and enhanced mood. In addition to their beauty, adding plants to any space can add additional benefits such as acting as air filters and helping to remove toxins from the inside environment.
- Not sure what plants to buy for your home or office? Below is a list of common and hearty indoor plants for everyone, regardless of your level of garden mastery.



Spider plant



Philodendron



Pothos



Snake plant



Dieffenbachia



Zz plant

Step Into the Light

- Harvard researchers say that moderate sun exposure and access to daylight can provide multiple benefits, including production of vitamin D. Lack of exposure to daylight, even through windows, is associated with physiological, sleep, and depressive symptoms.
- Can't get outside as much as you'd like to? Choosing nature's sound to listen to, such as a babbling brook, rain, wind, or ocean sounds, can also help reduce anxiety and stress.

Keep Your Green Clean

- Green up your landscape by planting drought-tolerant, minimal water plants (an activity called xeriscaping), plants native to your local area, and/or plants that support pollinators like bees, hummingbirds, and butterflies.
- When tending to a lawn or garden, always use organic, natural fertilizers. Chemical fertilizers have been linked to many health effects, including water pollution, thyroid problems, and cancers.
- Composting can be a great way to reduce the trash volume from your meals and upcycle those scraps to create nutrient-rich fertilizer for soil. If you don't have the space for a big compost bin, a compost pick-up service could be a great alternative to repurposing your food wastes into useful products so they don't end up in a landfill.
- Rain barrels are a great way to capture water throughout the year and cut down on your water bill. Many cities offer discounts on barrels and other water-saving products.



CULTURE AND LEARNING

- **Netflix Documentaries about Sustainability:**

- [Minimalism: A Documentary About the Important Things](#) (2015)

This documentary explores the adage that "less is more."

- [A Plastic Ocean](#) (2016)

Explorers Craig Leeson and Tanya Streeter reveal the causes and consequences of plastic pollution and share solutions.

- [Forks Over Knives](#) (2011)

Researches explore how a plant-based diet can impact overall health and wellness.

- **Great Reads about Environmental Justice Issues:**

- [Reimagining Capitalism in a World on Fire](#) by Rebecca Henderson

HBS professor and economist, Rebecca Henderson, reimagines capitalism in harmony with environmental realities, striving for social justice and the demands of democracy.

- [Pursuing Sustainability](#) by Pamela Clark, William C. Clark, and Krister Andersson

This short guide provides students and practitioners with a strategic framework for linking knowledge with action in the pursuit of sustainable energy, food, water and housing.

- [A Terrible Thing to Waste: Environmental Racism and Its Assault on the American Mind](#) by Harriet Washington

Science writer and medical ethicist, Harriet A. Washington, offers an incisive analysis of environmental racism - a confluence of racism and other institutional factors that relegate marginalized communities to living and working in harmful conditions – and what can be done to remedy this devastating problem.

- **Podcasts to Listen to about Sustainable Living:**

- [Climate Rising](#)

Business and policy leaders join Harvard Business School faculty to discuss what businesses are doing, can do, and should do to confront climate change.

- [Low Tox Life](#)

The Low Tox Life with columnist Alexx Stuart provides support for real people wanting to make better choices for their health and our planet.

- [Conscious Chatter](#)

Host Kestrel Jenkins is a conscious style maven pursuing ethical fashion. Guests discuss where our clothes are made, what they are made of, and who made them.

- **Take a class!**

The Harvard Extension School offers Graduate Certificates in:

Corporate Sustainability and Innovation | Environmental Policy and International Development
| Sustainable Cities and Communities | Natural Resource Management and Sustainable Ecosystems |
Sustainable Food Systems



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Sustainability



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Eat more plant based food.

- The EAT LANCET Commission released the [Diets for a Better Future Report](#) provides more information on why a plant-based diet is better for you and the environment.

Purchase more humane & climate-friendly animal products.

- Check out the ASPCA Humane Buying Guide to figure out which labels to look for: <https://www.asPCA.org/shopwithyourheart/consumer-resources/meat-eggs-and-dairy-label-guide>.
- Purchase seafood that is certified by Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch, Best Aquaculture Practice, and Aquaculture Stewardship Council.

Reduce food waste.

- Eat leftovers and get creative with them!
- Plan ahead (ie buy what you know you'll use)
- Freeze foods to preserve freshness.
- Here are some resources suggested by the Food Law and Policy Clinic at Harvard: [Save the Food](#) and the [USDA FoodKeeper App](#).

Purchase local produce where possible.

- Information on the Harvard Farmer's Market can be found here: <https://dining.harvard.edu/farmers-market>

Prioritize purchasing products without chemical classes of concern.

- The [Environmental Working Group's Healthy Living Home Guide](#) includes guides for healthier purchasing of more than 20 different types of products for building, making improvements and furnishing your home.
- The [Harvard Office for Sustainability website](#) walks through Harvard's steps to eliminate harmful chemicals on campus and gives tips for how to reduce your exposure at home.

Try meditation to enhance your personal well-being.

- The [Harvard Center for Wellness](#) has resources for yoga, meditation, and movement.

Get some exercise.

- Try taking a virtual class with [Harvard's Athletic Center](#).
- Take your meeting outside by doing a walking meeting.

Check out this resource <http://www.globalstewardship.org/2018/05/01/10-ways-to-reduce-your-ecological-footprint/>



IMPACTS OF SUSTAINABLE HOME LIVING

Interested in motivating others? Here are some more facts and figures to share with family and friends:

Energy

- The average greenhouse gas impact of the electricity generated in the U.S. was roughly 1 pound of CO₂ equivalent per kWh.[1]
- That means if every Harvard student, staff, and faculty member reduced their energy use by 1 kWh per day for a whole year, it would reduce our combined energy use by over 14.2 million kWh/year.*
- That is equal to:
 - Taking 1,159 homes total energy use.[2]
 - Or 23,235 barrels of oil not burned.[2]

Waste

- The average person in the U.S. wastes one pound of food per day.[3]
- That means if every Harvard student, staff, and faculty member reduced their food waste by two-thirds, it would reduce our combined food waste by over 9.5 million pounds per year.*
- That is equal to:
 - Enough food to feed over 6,500 people.**
 - Over 23,000 Cambridge-issues residential trash cans full per year.[4]

References:

1. FAQ: U.S. Energy Information Administration.
2. GHG Calculator: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
3. PLOS ONE: Relationship between food waste, diet quality, and environmental sustainability.
4. Waste 260: Estimating a city trash container to hold a maximum of 412 pounds of food waste.

*Estimated total population at 39,000.

**If a person consumed an average of four pounds of food per day.

