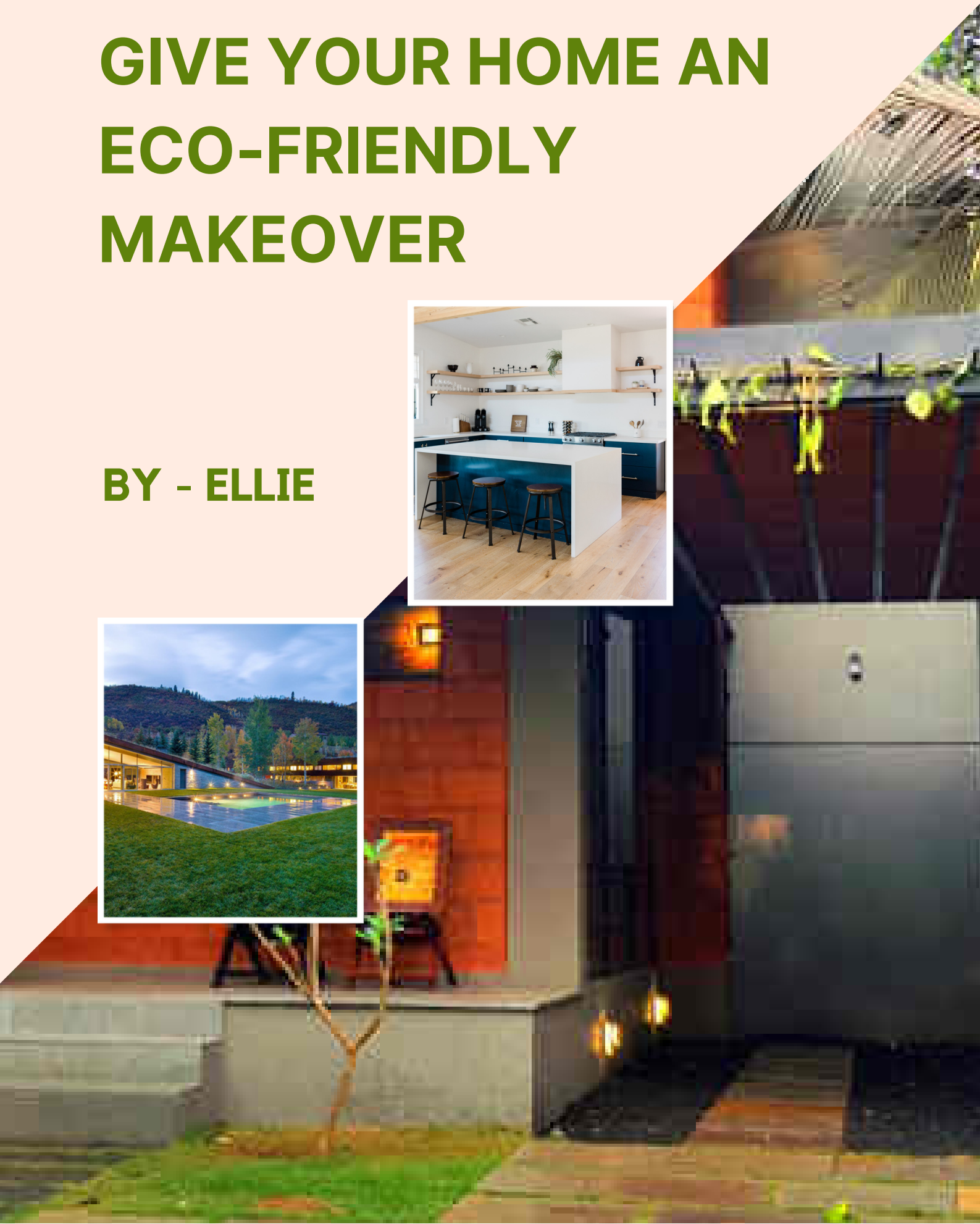


SUSTAINABLE LIVING: GIVE YOUR HOME AN ECO-FRIENDLY MAKEOVER

BY - ELLIE



Abstract

Following an eco-friendly approach and being more mindful of the choices we make in the era of hyper-consumerism can make a big difference in safeguarding our natural environment and the earth as a whole. Making your home sustainable with smart and eco-conscious choices requires one to take baby steps. Here's how you can give your home an eco-friendly makeover.

I. Introduction

The way we live our everyday lives can have a huge impact on the environment. Thankfully, there are a variety of eco-friendly lifestyles that we can adopt, and we can either adopt them completely or implement small parts of each lifestyle in our day-to-day.

What's an eco-friendly lifestyle?

An eco-friendly lifestyle means that you're living a life with the environment in mind. It means that you make decisions based on the outcome that they will have on the environment.

Living more environmentally friendly is so important in helping keep the planet clean and safe for wildlife as well as ourselves.

There are actually different types of eco lifestyles, and each lifestyle has different factors and motives for going green, which makes them unique in their own ways.

Chances are you will find a lifestyle that encompasses your closest beliefs.

How to choose a sustainable lifestyle

The most important thing when creating a sustainable lifestyle is to create your own lifestyle that fits you, your needs, and your habits. It also needs to be attainable.

There are many alternatives, both small and large, that we can start incorporating into our life to make both our lives and the earth better. From the decisions we choose to make, we can prevent pollution, toxicity, waste, animal cruelty, and so on.

Consistency is key, not only to better our planet, but for you to stay motivated and dedicated to the good that you're doing for the world!

These are the best eco-friendly lifestyles that you can adopt to help save the planet.

1. Zero-Waste Lifestyle

Living a zero-waste lifestyle is all about reducing the amount of waste that one creates.

Going zero-waste means that you aim to reduce waste as much as possible which reduces the size of landfills and the pollution caused from them, as well as ensuring less garbage ends up in the ocean.

It can be pretty difficult to be 100% zero-waste, but it's pretty easy to make little changes to reduce waste in your home and day-to-day life.

The main idea is to reuse in as many ways as you can and that makes zero-waste an incredible eco-friendly lifestyle.



To go zero-waste, you need to ditch disposables and opt for reusables

When you buy reusable items like water bottles, straws, food wrap, and grocery bags, you're minimizing the amount of garbage and plastic that you'll have to throw away or recycle.

Recycling is also a big part of living a low-waste lifestyle, but the less to recycle, the better.

Zero-Waste Lifestyle Tips

- Opt for stainless steel, glass or bamboo products
- Compost or reuse food scraps

- Make your own cleaning products
- Don't buy one-use or disposable items and buy reusable products instead
- Buy quality clothing that will last longer
- Shop secondhand

Repurpose as much as you can such as upcycling clothing into items or turning things into planters.

2. Vegan Lifestyle

Being vegan includes eating a plant-based diet and therefore refraining from meat, fish, dairy, eggs, and honey. Vegans also refrain from eating anything that contains animal ingredients.

Contrary to what you might think, living a vegan lifestyle isn't based only on diet. Being vegan also includes cruelty-free lifestyle choices.

Vegans don't support products that test on animals, products that contain animal byproducts, activities that exploit animals, or the suffering of animals.

Veganism is an eco-friendly lifestyle because vegans acknowledge that what we do impacts animals and the ecosystem.

You don't necessarily have to make a radical change to your diet and lifestyle in order to support veganism.

Of course, you wouldn't be able to call yourself 100% vegan if you don't cut out all meat and animal products, but you can definitely be somewhat vegan or part-time vegan.

This can be a touchy subject with hardcore vegans, but personally, I feel like it doesn't matter if you're 100% vegan or somewhat vegan. You're trying to make a difference for animals, and that's what matters the most!

3. Self-Sufficient Lifestyle

Living a self-sufficient lifestyle means that you're relying on yourself to provide your own needs, like creating your own energy, food, and clothing.

This is an eco-friendly lifestyle that helps the planet a lot because by making things yourself, you're eliminating the need for packaging and distribution, and cutting out a lot of middlemen.

A self-sufficient lifestyle can be difficult, especially if you want to live it to the fullest.

Becoming self-sufficient also requires a lot of time, but that time will lessen as you learn and get experience.

You don't need to tackle this lifestyle 100% unless you really want to, but there are some ways to be a little more self-sufficient in your home that will better our planet.

4. Conscious Consumerism

Living a conscious lifestyle is all about being aware of the products that you are buying in terms of how they were made, the people who made them, and how they reach you in terms of their shipment.

It also means that you're conscious of the actions you take and how they impact the environment.

A conscious consumer doesn't make unnecessary or careless purchases

They do their research on the company or the product that they're buying to ensure that it meets their ethical needs and reach out to the company if needed.



If you're reading this, chances are that you're already living a conscious lifestyle.

You're educating yourself on ways that you can be better because you know that there are ways that we can live a better life and make the world a better place.

Here's an extensive list of ecolabels that you can decide what you want to watch out for on your purchases.

5. Minimalist Lifestyle

A minimalist life is all about living with less. It makes a great eco-friendly lifestyle because the less you own, the less you throw away and therefore the less waste you create.

The most important thing to remember with minimalist living is that you only want to hold on to items that you need and that you love.

Anything else is just clutter.

When living a minimal lifestyle, you're careful about the things you buy and let into your home, and only buy quality, long-lasting items that won't need to be replaced, at least for a while.

Minimalists also tend to spend their money on experiences and are not materialistic. In some ways, minimalists are also conscious consumers because they are careful about what they buy.

6. Sustainable Lifestyle

Sustainable living is an eco-friendly lifestyle that aims to reduce the use of Earth's natural resources as well as personal resources.

You can do this by reducing your carbon footprint like changing your methods of energy consumption, diet, and transportation.

Sustainability can incorporate veganism, self-sufficiency, zero-waste, being a conscious consumer and minimalism. It's a lifestyle filled with endless possibilities when it comes to the good that we can do for our planet.

People who live a sustainable lifestyle also think about transportation they personally use. They try to walk and bicycle more, take public transit and have fuel-efficient or electric cars.

Sustainability is all about recognizing that what we do today impacts our future.

The reason that a sustainable lifestyle is such an important lifestyle to adopt, and one that we should all adopt, is that the Earth doesn't have an infinite amount of resources.

II. TIPS FOR AN ECO FRIENDLY INTERIOR DESIGN MAKEOVER

When it comes to home interiors, sustainability generally denotes eco-friendly decoration and design, using materials that focus on improved air quality and reduced environmental

impact. Below is a list of eight sustainable strategies to make your home's interior eco-friendly.

1. Use plants as decorations

This is a no-brainer. Plants provide oxygen, and filter out harmful chemicals from the air. Plus, they offer a natural beauty, ambience and freshness, bringing a little of the outside into your home. Think: mint or pine's refreshing scent, or any number of flowers' lovely fragrances. Lilies, bamboo palm or gerbera daisies especially do wonders in improving air quality.



2. Let the light in

The right lighting can make all the difference in space. If you live in a cold climate, always try to maximise the natural sunlight in your space by freeing windows of heavy curtains and blinds. For privacy purposes, roller blinds are more versatile than curtains, and let more light in. Just ensure that if you don't have curtains, your windows are completely secure in terms of insulation so no heat escapes and no unwanted cold enters in.

Double glazing and proper window accoutrements like caulking and weather-stripping help reduce air leakage. Another tip is to make spaces as bright as they can be.

If you live in a colder climate, walls painted in darker colours will absorb a tiny bit more heat (white reflects it) and if possible, arrange rooms so that bedrooms and bathrooms face north (with less sun) and kitchens and living rooms face the sunnier south.

3. Avoid decorating products with VOC content

Volatile organic compounds (VOC) are organic chemicals that easily evaporate at room temperature. They can be found in many common household products including paints, adhesives, household cleaning products, air fresheners, even furniture and carpets.

In the enclosed spaces of your home, VOC concentrations can be two to five times higher than they are outdoors. This is bad for homeowners, as VOC's contribute to many health problems, such as eye and throat irritation, headaches, nausea, liver damage, nervous system disturbances and even cancer.

4. Use furniture made from natural materials

Forget chairs and tables made from plastic moulding. To make your home's interior eco-friendly, you need furniture made from natural wood and other organic or sustainable materials. But not all woods are sustainable: look for wood with the Forest Stewardship Council certification stamp to ensure you're not using an endangered species for your furniture. Bamboo is another suitable option, but better yet: buy antiques and used furniture whenever possible.

Additionally, keep in mind that particleboard and medium-density fibreboard (which is made from compressed shaving and sawdust) are bonded together with synthetic glues and resins that often contain formaldehyde, which is a potential allergen to humans and carcinogenic to animals. By contrast, good quality wood furniture is held together by wood joinery, which minimizes the need for VOC-laced adhesives. Tables and countertops should also be made of organic materials such as marble and other stone.

5. Choose natural textiles & finishings

The list of household items that ought to be crafted from natural materials goes beyond furniture. Fashioning pillows, mattresses, upholstery and beddings from natural materials, for example, cuts down on the production of synthetic materials that ultimately end up languishing in landfills.

It also means upholstery isn't made from petroleum-based materials and soaked in VOC-laced flame retardants, which can lead to serious health problems like infertility and IQ and developmental impairments in children.

6. Other Considerations

Beyond these immediate and perhaps obvious strategies, other considerations also can help you create a sustainable interior for your home:

- Flooring should be made of stone or wood. Instead of vinyl flooring, for example, use wood, cement, cork or Limestone tiles. Vinyl (polyvinyl chloride, or PVC) is made of toxic plastic.

- Cut down on the cookie-cutter, mass-produced look of your home's interior by using recycled and recyclable materials (e.g., reclaimed wood, repurposed items) for furniture and decorations. For example, my father turned an old anaesthesia machine into a lamp. It may cost more money and/or time, but it's creative, classy and unique. A quick visit to second-hand shops and recycling centres will show you what's useful and available.
- Where possible, use local materials to cut down on transportation costs and emissions.
- Ensure you're not cleaning your home with toxic cleaners, or all this hard work will be undone! Use old-school formulae that you can easily make at home, like these recipes here, or try an eco friendly brand like Ecover.

III. Give your home an eco-friendly makeover

The pandemic helped us further reflect on the value of practising sustainability, owing to the health benefits of green living and staying connected to nature in some way. If you want to make your abode a green paradise, focus on sustainability and make environment-friendly changes to your interiors, while taking your personal style into account.



Fortunately, there is a wide array of sustainable, convenient, affordable, and beautiful home decor items that can fit into any living space, from the simplest to the most exquisite.

Here are some ways you can give your home an eco-friendly makeover and make your space safe and conscious for life on the planet:

Choose sustainable furniture

Eco-friendly furnishing materials put less stress on the environment and prevent the emission of harmful chemicals in the living space. Sustainable furniture adds a unique look to the house and is a better alternative to forest wood, assuring strength, longevity, and beauty.

Bring more houseplants

Indoor plants renew life in any space with their vibrant greenery and freshness. Popularly adapted as an inexpensive decor item, houseplants enhance the beauty of the interiors and keep the surrounding air clean and free of toxins.

However, for indoor plants to function properly, it is important to choose the right kind of planter. Concrete planters are among the many vessels you can use to grow your indoor plants. Found in different sizes, concrete planters not only provide a suitable habitat for the plant to thrive, but also complement the house with their beautiful patterns, designs, and colours.

Buy pre-owned goods

In this day and age when everything is accessible at our doorstep at the click of a button, that too at a cheap price, we do not realise how much the overproduction of goods is burdening landfills.

One of the simplest ways to positively affect the environment with your home decor is to buy pre-owned goods. Vintage decor not only costs a lot less, but also gives a “distressed” chic look to the house. Head over to a local thrift shop or search on eBay to explore the gently-used items that can look great in your house.

Beautify homes with creative DIYs

You can make your place sustainable by utilising waste materials such as popsicles, glass, and paper bags to create unique and personalised home décor items and accessories.

Not only do DIY items decorate your home as you wish, but they also express your individuality with craft ideas. Developing something new from the old and upcycling are the best methods to reduce your carbon footprint. If you want to create a home decor item or accessory with minimal effort, use a ready-to-use concrete mixture, mould it into any shape or size, and paint it with the colour of your choice.

Use non-toxic materials

Whether you are planning to paint your walls, buy a new rug, carpet, curtains, or covers, make sure the materials are free of toxins. Cheap paints emit VOCs and other harmful chemicals, which can affect indoor air quality and make inhabitants vulnerable to chronic diseases. Thus, make sure to only opt for eco-friendly paints, which are safe for the environment and humans.

Even carpets, rugs, or other household items made of synthetic materials have been known to emit high levels of VOCs and allergens. Thus, purchase products made of organic materials only.

IV. Everyday Changes You Can Make for a Greener Home

When it comes to making eco-friendly changes, there's no need to get overwhelmed at the thought of doing a complete lifestyle overhaul. Sometimes all it takes are little swaps to your routine or tiny tweaks to a daily habit to reduce your carbon footprint, protect against toxins, and leave the Earth a little better than you found it. It's all about baby steps, right? Here are a few things you can do at home that require minimal time, effort, or money, but really add up to make a difference in the long run. Read up on some of the best, lowest-lift ways you can make your home a little greener—for you, your family, and the environment.



Go Easy on the Plastic

Whether you switch from buying plastic water bottles to using a filtered water pitcher; ditch single-use plastic sandwich and shopping bags; or get serious about recycling properly, changing your household habits around plastic consumption and disposal can make a huge difference. Going completely plastic-free is not easy—and not always an option. But start

with something small that you can stick to that helps cut down on plastic waste and pollution. For example, maybe you start carrying around a refillable water bottle or bring your own reusable totes to the grocery store.

Swap Household Cleaners

Switching to green cleaners reduces air pollution both indoors and out, minimizing exposure to both asthma and allergy triggers, as well as chemicals that can be harmful to your health. Look for all-natural or plant-based products from companies that have a complete list of ingredients on their labels and are stamped with eco-friendly certifications (here's how to decode green cleaning labels so you can buy the best products).

Upgrade your Insulation

Adding proper insulation to prevent leaky ducts, walls, windows, and doors can improve your home's energy draw, save you a few hundred bucks on your energy bill, and also up your home's value. If totally redoing your insulation isn't in your budget, try thermal shades, which block the sun in the summer and retain heat in the winter, or even something as low-tech as a draft guard on your outside doors.

Leave your Shoes at the Door

Think of removing your shoes when you enter a home as the equivalent of washing your hands. First, it couldn't be easier. And second, it prevents the outside gunk like car exhaust, chemicals, and pesticides from being tracked all over your home. Adopting this daily habit is about as painless as it gets.

Microwave Glass, Never Plastic

Heating plastics can cause leaching into food and many contain hormone-disrupting compounds (not just the much maligned versions made with bisphenol-A or BPA). Plastics that are labeled "microwave-safe" can simply withstand a higher temperature before losing their shape. So when popping anything in the microwave, opt for glass or microwave-safe ceramics.

Donate, Don't Toss

Donating clothing reduces waste, prevents greenhouse gas emissions from clothing that would sit in a landfill, and gives your goods a second life with someone who'll appreciate them. When you can, take gently used items to a thrift store, local donation drop site, or other charity that accepts contributions. Here are the best ways to declutter and donate still-usable items.

Choose Safe Pots and Pans

The materials you cook with do have an impact on your food. The three safest options are cast iron, enamel-coated cast iron, and stainless steel. Non-stick pans, while convenient, can be problematic if you scrape the coating and it gets into your food. If you do use non-stick cookware (because, let's be real, it takes all the hassle out of omelettes and stir-fry), follow these tips for safe, toxin-free cooking.

Select Fragrance-Free Products

Conventional fragrances often contain synthetically-derived compounds and chemicals believed to disrupt hormones and be hazardous to the environment. If you like scented soaps, cleaning products, or cosmetics, read labels to find those scented naturally with essential oils. Otherwise, check the labels. Look for products labeled "fragrance-free"; avoid products that have "fragrance," "scent," "parfum," or even "unscented" (which may still contain synthetic masking or neutralizing scents) on the ingredient labels. You can also look for the Safer Choice label, which verifies that it complies with the EPA's standards for fragrance-free products.

Reduce Use of Bug Sprays and Pesticides

To control pests, prevention is your best bet. Keeping your kitchen crumb-free and sealing any holes in the walls or cracks in the foundation means you won't have to use harmful chemicals in your home. If you do require pest control, reach for greener alternatives or home remedies first.

V. Environment Friendly Moving Tips: How To Pack Without Bubble Wrap?

People do not hesitate to spend money on packing supplies that help in transporting their belongings safely, especially the delicate ones. Bubble wrap tops the list of such essential supplies. The air-filled plastic material is used exclusively for packing items such as plates, glassware, mirrors, vase, musical instruments, artwork pieces, delicate furniture, etc.

However, people often overlook the fact that the bubble wrap becomes useless once you have relocated. It ends up in the trash can along with other packing supplies and contributes to environmental pollution. With global warming becoming a reality, time has come that people opt for eco-friendly alternatives. Professional removalists in Brisbane which follow green cleaning are aware of this problem and have already found the solution.

Before you make a note of things that can be an easy replacement for bubble wrap, here are some reasons why you should avoid this transparent plastic packaging product. Have a look.

Why You Must Pack Without Bubble Wrap

Although this packing supply keeps your belongings safe, there are a few disadvantages of using this material. Have a look.



- It's expensive: Bubble wrap is costly in comparison to packing paper. So it increases your moving cost.
- Its prolonged biodegradation process: It takes hundreds of years for this material to decompose in landfills. On the other hand, its alternatives take around a few months.
- Problem for the environment: It takes a massive space in the city's trash. Many cities across the world have created recycling programs for this material.
- Storage problem: Its large formation makes it difficult to store it in your home.
- Flammable Dangers: Although it takes around 200 degrees to melt, this material can easily catch fire, and the smoke can cause breathing problems.

The Best Alternatives For Bubble Wrap

Here is a list of best alternatives for bubble wrap that are not only environment-friendly but also save your money when moving to a new house. Have a look!

1. Newspapers and Magazines

These are some common things that are readily available at home and can be an excellent replacement for bubble wrap. The best part is that it is not only effective but also free. You

can quickly wrap the fragile items with such material, or crush them to use as padding between the objects and fill up spaces inside the boxes. This is a way more environment-friendly option than bubble wrapping.

2. Packing paper

People often have a concern that hard-to-remove ink on newspapers and magazines can transfer quickly to the delicate items and ruin them. In this scenario, you can go for the packing paper. This is also an excellent substitute for bubble wrap because it wraps carefully around your belonging, and provides excellent protection against dust, dirt and scratches. Because it is thin and soft, you might require plenty of such paper, but do not worry because it is much cheaper than your bubble wrap.

3. Bed Sheets

This is another brilliant alternative to bubble wrap. People usually have plenty of bed sheets in their homes, which can be used to fill the boxes, wrap the delicate items so that they can protect the stuff from any damage, dust and dirt. However, make sure that you are not using any new bed sheets as they can get dirty. If you choose budget removalists in Brisbane, you will find that they often follow this strategy.

4. Old Clothes

Old clothes are another eco-friendly option for packing your delicate belongings. Unlike bubble wrap, these can be reused, and as most of them are soft and thick, they provide enough protection during the transportation. People in Brisbane often throw away their unwanted clothes, but such old cloths can be used during a move.

Use them as space fillers, wrapping and padding your breakables. If you look around your house, you will find many pieces of clothing that you can use in place of the costly bubble wrap. This will be beneficial for both the environment and your pocket.

5. Towels

Bath towels are quite thick and soft, so they can be used to protect your fragile items during the move. Unlike the bubble wrap, they are always available at your place and reusable. So, it doesn't cause any harm to the environment. Use them to cushion your breakables items inside the box.

The only thing you need to keep in mind is that towels are little heavy in comparison to the bubble wrap so they will increase the weight of your box. If you want to do the packing efficiently, hire experienced removalists in Brisbane.

6. Blankets

Moving blankets are popular moving supplies that are widely used in various packing procedures, such as covering breakable items. So instead of choosing bubble wrap, go for such blankets. People moving on a budget can also rent such sheets. If you hire professional removalists in Brisbane, they will provide these blankets for the moving purpose. You can also use your old blankets to fulfill the shortage.

7. Socks

Although they are small in size, socks can also prove useful in protecting your glassware. They might not be that useful to fill the space inside a box, but you can use them smartly to protect many small, fragile items.

8. Shredded Office Waste

Shredded paper also provides excellent protection to your fragile items and fills the space inside the box. This way you are recycling the waste materials and saving a lot of money. Many removals companies in Brisbane follow this approach because it is effective, economical and time-saving. All you need to remember is that it can make a little mess.

VI. Exactly What are the Benefits of an Eco-Friendly Home?

Below are the most compelling arguments for making your home more ecologically-friendly. It might seem like a difficult and expensive endeavor, but it is actually one that is much more achievable than you might think, and it offers some worthwhile benefits to homeowners and families.



More Efficient Water and Energy Usage

Water usage is something that we in the developed world don't really have to think about. Water is there whenever we need it and, while we might have to pay for it, it is still cheap and easily available. Even if the plumbing in our homes is compromised and water is no longer flowing in, bottled water is readily available and there are plenty of reserves.

A Healthier and Cleaner Environment

By making the switch to more ecologically-friendly products, embracing renewable energy and encouraging your family to recycle, you are contributing to a cleaner environment, both in your home and in your wider environment. If you have children and are concerned about their exposure to chemicals and artificial cleaning products, the organic and homemade alternatives that you can find online are a great alternative.

A cleaner and healthier environment is achievable for just about any household. You don't necessarily need to start using your own solar power, although solar panels are a good idea. But by encouraging your family to clean up after themselves and to recycle as much as possible, you can greatly reduce the amount of waste and garbage around your home. If you have a garden, think about getting a compost bin.

Increase Your Property's Value

If you make the right adjustments to your home, you can increase the value of your property and walk away with a home that is greener in more than one sense. If you want to make your home more valuable and eco-friendly, you are likely going to have to undertake some pretty significant renovations. If you have enough capital to go all-in on this, there are some really novel pieces of tech available that you can have built into a home.

Lower Your Carbon Footprint and Make a Difference

One of the most compelling reasons to live a more ecologically friendly life is simply that we all need to do so. There is a serious need to take action to prevent the worst effects of climate change, and so the fight for our environment begins with our individual behavior. If everyone makes a small amount of effort, we can make a huge difference to the fate of our planet.

An ecologically friendly home is much more attainable than it once was, even for those with relatively little money to spend on renovations. Given how important climate change is as an issue, and how much it is in the media right now, there are lots of people who are thinking about how they can make more of an effort to save the environment. By embracing an ecologically-friendly home, you can help be a part of that noble battle for the future of our planet.

Conclusion

All of these eco-friendly lifestyles are helping save the planet in their own ways. Their interests, opinions, and beliefs are all in line with a positive future for our planet and all who inhabit it.

And, remember, you don't have to embrace just one of these lifestyles. You can still be more sustainable by applying different aspects of these eco lifestyles as you want.

A lifestyle is for you, therefore you should curate one that works for you and your family.

And honestly, although all of these lifestyles are amazing for our planet, if you try to make every change possible, you might just burn yourself out!

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