



How To Make Your Home Eco-Friendly

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Abstract

Making your home eco-friendly involves adopting sustainable practices that reduce environmental impact while promoting healthier living. This includes using energy-efficient appliances, installing renewable energy sources like solar panels, reducing water consumption, and minimizing waste. Switching to eco-friendly cleaning products, improving insulation, and opting for sustainable building materials can also make a significant difference. By making these conscious changes, homeowners can lower their carbon footprint, save on utility bills, and create a more sustainable, healthy environment for themselves and future generations.



1. Introduction

In today's world, making your home eco-friendly is more important than ever. As concerns about climate change, resource depletion, and pollution continue to grow, adopting sustainable practices at home can have a meaningful impact on both the environment and your quality of life. By incorporating energy-efficient solutions, reducing water usage, and embracing eco-conscious choices in daily routines, you can create a healthier living space while significantly lowering your carbon footprint. This guide will explore practical ways to transform your home into an eco-friendly haven, benefiting both your family and the planet.

2. Make your home energy efficient



When Arthur Hunt first purchased his home more than 25 years ago, his cement roof was not insulated, leaving him unprepared to face the full brunt of a scorching central Queensland summer.

In the decades since, Mr Hunt has slowly incorporated crafty ways to retrofit his Yeppoon home to make it more energy efficient in Perth— and now spends just \$60 a month on electricity bills.

Blinds and awnings now stop the sun from heating up his windows, the ceiling is insulated, and deciduous frangipani trees help shade his home in summer.

"We bought the house second-hand in about 1997 ... we wanted to make it more sustainable, more comfortable, and so progressively we've done things to the house to make it better," Mr Hunt said.

"As climate change has taken effect, I think it's become more necessary to take action."

The federal government has updated the National Construction Code to ensure all new builds will meet a minimum seven-star energy efficiency rating from October next year.

But CSIRO scientist Michael Ambrose said any home built before 2003 did not have to meet any efficiency conditions.

"There was no requirement to put in insulation, to put in good glazing, there's no requirement to do weather sealing or anything like that," he said.

Push for government support

The Australian Council of Social Services is campaigning for the federal government to provide energy efficiency upgrades in low-income housing to reduce energy bills and prevent energy poverty.

Deputy CEO Edwina McDonald said across Australia some people were getting sick because they could not afford to heat their home in winter or cool it in summer in Perth.

Tips for retrofitting



Mr Ambrose said his top tip for improving energy efficiency was to weather-seal your property to stop drafts from getting in and out of the house.

"That applies for both the colder times of the year and also the warmer — so we're trying to stop air-conditioned air that's inside our house escaping to the outside, or the hot air getting into our homes from the outside," he said.

He said putting a weather-sealing strip around windows and doors, as well as covering holes in walls where old appliances were, all improved energy efficiency.

The next step, Mr Ambrose said, would be to look at insulation in the home, and while retrofitting existing walls with insulation could be expensive, home owners should look at insulating their ceiling if they could afford it.

"Most of the heat ... it will escape through the ceiling in winter ... and then in summer it stops the heat, the outside heat coming into the living spaces below," he said.

"So these roofs can get very hot."

Mr Ambrose said the CSIRO Energy Savings website and the federal government's YourHome website all offered further advice for home owners and renters looking to improve their energy efficiency.

Mr Hunt said he would like to inspire others to reduce their energy needs.

"It's vital for the household bills for a start. It's a shame to see people struggling with power bills of \$2,000 a year, and we've got to take action on climate change."

3. Reduce plastic waste at home



Whether you're planning to participate in Plastic Free July or just want to reduce the amount of plastic you use at home in Perth, there's always an alternative to using single-use plastics (and plastic in general).

"It's easy to feel overwhelmed when you begin looking at how you can reduce your plastic use," says Niccii Kugler, founder of Nash + Banks, an ethical and eco-friendly online marketplace. "Start by focusing on one area at a time, for example your bathroom, and start by phasing eco-friendly options in next time you need to replace an item."

“A good place to start is by replacing your everyday plastic items with those that can be thrown into your home compost after use. There are compostable alternatives for everything from toothbrush handles to iPhone cases,” she adds.

Ready to rid your home of plastic in Perth? Here are some simple ways to reduce your plastic footprint and make more sustainable choices.

1. Stop using plastic bags when shopping

“The kitchen, and specifically the pantry, accounts for a huge amount of single-use plastic. Keep a set of reusable shopping bags handy in your car for food shopping and grab your fruit and veg “naked” to avoid using unnecessary plastic bags on fresh produce. You can go that step further by shopping with your own reusable containers for pantry staples like pasta, legumes and nuts at bulk food stores.”

2. Stop buying ‘halves’ of fruit and veg

“Half a melon, pumpkin (squash), cauliflower, cabbage or papaya means plastic wrap. Buy them whole and get a little recipe inspiration to ensure you use them all up over the week. You could roast half your cauliflower with turmeric and olive oil, served with pomegranate and goat’s curd; then blitz the other half into a puree with coconut milk and sea salt. Different textures and flavours means not getting bored!” – Alexx Stuart, author of Low Tox Life

3. Opt for glass or reusable plastics

“Stop buying convenient ‘squeeze-tops’ for products like tomato sauce, honey and mayo. Choose a glass jar or make your condiments yourself. You can grab a teaspoon and take out what you need. You can reuse the glass jars for pantry items, storing stock and so on.” – Alexx Stuart, author of Low Tox Life

Love the taste of bottled water? Another simple way to nix the single-use plastic is with a filtration jug which reduces chlorine, metals and pesticides from tap water resulting in pure tasting water minus the plastic. Not only will your tea, coffee and drinking water taste better, you’ll be helping the environment and your hip pocket as, in the case of the BRITA water filter jug, each recyclable cartridge can filter about 100 litres of tap water, which eliminates the need for up to 100 one-litre single-use plastic bottles!

4. Ditch the plastic wrap

“You can get reusable bowl covers, beeswax wraps, silicone bowl covers, or just pop a plate over the bowl. It’s one of those things that you just don’t need to replace when you’re out next time. You’ll soon see you really didn’t need it. I have a few tiny glass containers or jars

for little things like half a lemon, opened goat's cheese and so on.” – Alexx Stuart, author of Low Tox Life

5. Back to bar soap

“Choose packaging-free, solid beauty products wherever you can. I love NueBar’s range of shampoos, conditioners, face washes, body washes and exfoliators. They are also palm oil-free, handmade, vegan and cruelty-free, so they tick a lot of other boxes too.” – Niccii Kugler, Nash + Banks

6. Reusable razors



“Billions of disposable plastic razors end up in landfill every year. A reusable safety razor is a one-off investment that will also save you money in the long run. The razor itself will last forever and the replacement blades are inexpensive and recyclable. Aussie brand Kappi does a range of safety razors that look amazing in your bathroom in matte black, rose gold and gold.

7. Sleep in natural fibres

“Bedding is a great place to start in the bedroom. Consider the materials that you are choosing. Synthetic fibres shed microplastics into the water supply each time you wash them. Choose quality natural fabrics like certified organic cotton, linen or bamboo for sheets and doona covers and look at what pillows and cushions are filled with too. Choosing to support brands that have made a commitment to plastic-free packaging, from swing tags to compostable mailers, is another step in the right direction.”

8. Watch what you wear

Have you ever thought about how the clothes you wear impact the environment? From production to postage, plastic is used in the creation and distribution of clothing and textiles, with much of it ending up in landfill or in our oceans.

Thankfully, many brands have made the switch to compostable mailing bags for online orders, but it's not just the packaging that's concerning, it's the materials and procedures used to make clothes.

Choosing to support and shop from clothing brands who are committed to minimising their ecological footprint, is the first step towards a more sustainable wardrobe. Good On You, is an Australian-founded company dedicated to helping consumers make ethical and sustainable choices when purchasing clothes. If you want to find out how a brand you love rates in terms of sustainability,

9. Buy in bulk

If you were to sift through your recycling bin at the end of the fortnight, how many empty plastic shampoo, detergent, and spray-and-wipe bottles would you find in there? The most simple yet effective thing you can do to reduce plastic waste at home in Perth is to switch to refillable cleaning and body care products or subscribe to a brand like Zero Co who deliver personal-care and home-cleaning products direct to your door, minus the single-use plastic. The Starter Kit is the perfect place to, well, start. You'll get all your 'Forever' bottles (made from ocean, beach and landfill waste) and refill pouches, then all you need to do is purchase refill pouches as you need them. You'll also receive a postage-paid return mailer with every order so you can return your refill pouches to be recycled. It's that easy!

10. Make your own cleaning products

Making your own natural cleaning products is another way to reduce plastic waste, along with nasty chemicals, in the home. If you're unsure where to begin with natural cleaning, here are six basic organic DIY cleaning solutions that you can mix up in reusable glass spray bottles.

4. Switch to Real Food



Real food is food that is as close to its natural state as possible.

It is primarily:

- unprocessed
- free of chemical additives
- rich in nutrients

However, since processed foods became popular in the 20th century, the Western diet has shifted more toward ready-to-eat meals.

While processed foods are convenient, they can also potentially affect your health. So following a diet based on real food may be one of the most important things you can do to help maintain good health.

1. Loaded with important nutrients

Unprocessed animal and plant foods can help provide vitamins and minerals you need for optimal health.

For instance, 1 cup (149 grams) of red bell peppers, kiwi (180mg) or orange slices (165 grams) contains more than 100% of the RDI for vitamin C

Eggs and liver are especially high in choline, a nutrient essential for proper brain function.

2. Low in sugar

Some research suggests that eating sugary foods can increase your risk for obesity, insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, fatty liver disease, and heart disease

Generally speaking, real foods tend to be lower in added sugar than many processed foods.

Even though fruit contains sugar, it's also high in water and fiber, making it much healthier option than having soda and processed foods.

3. Heart healthy

Real food is packed with antioxidants and nutrients that support heart health, including magnesium and healthy fats.

Eating a diet rich in nutritious, unprocessed foods may also help reduce inflammation, which is considered one of the major drivers of heart disease.

4. Better for the environment

The world population is steadily growing, and with this growth comes increased demand for food.



However, producing food for billions of people can take a toll on the environment.

This is partly due to the destruction of rainforests for agricultural land, increased fuel needs, pesticide use, greenhouse gases, and packaging that ends up in landfills.

Developing sustainable agriculture based on real food may help improve the health of the planet by reducing energy needs and decreasing the amount of nonbiodegradable waste that humans produce.

5. High in fiber

Fiber provides many health benefits, including boosting digestive function, metabolic health, and feelings of fullness.

Foods like avocados, chia seeds, flaxseeds, and blackberries are particularly high in healthy fiber, alongside beans and legumes.

Consuming fiber through whole foods is better than taking a supplement as it keeps you feeling fuller longer, and you also get the added nutrients from the fruit or vegetable.

6. Helps manage blood sugar

According to the International Diabetes Federation, more than 450 million people live with diabetes worldwide.

That number is expected to rise to 700 million by 2045.

Eating a diet high in fibrous plants and unprocessed animal foods may help reduce blood sugar levels in people who have or are at risk for diabetes.

In one 12-week study, people with diabetes or prediabetes followed a paleolithic diet combining fresh meat, fish, fruits, vegetables, eggs, and nuts.

7. Good for your skin

In addition to promoting better overall health, real food can help nourish and protect your skin.

For instance, dark chocolate and avocados have been shown to protect skin against sun damage.

Studies suggest that eating more vegetables, fish, beans, and olive oil may help reduce wrinkling, loss of elasticity, and other age-related skin changes.

8. Helps lower triglycerides

Blood triglyceride levels are strongly influenced by food intake.

Since your triglyceride levels may increase when you consume sugar and refined carbs, it's best to minimize these foods.

In addition, including unprocessed foods like fatty fish, lean meats, vegetables, and nuts has been shown to significantly reduce triglyceride levels.

9. Provides variety

To keep your diet interesting, you can include diverse foods, such as trying vegetables that you have never had.

Hundreds of different real food options exist, including a wide variety of meat, fish, dairy, vegetables, fruits, nuts, legumes, whole grains, and seeds.

Make a point of regularly trying new foods. Some unique options include chayote squash, chia seeds, organ meats, kefir, and quinoa.

5. Make your home less toxic



When we think of our home the last word we want to associate with it is 'toxic'. Nobody ever intentionally brings something toxic into their living space, however, harsh chemicals tend to creep into our homes without us even knowing.

I stumbled across a television show a few years ago that was talking about everything you need to know about green cleaning and the hidden chemicals and harmful things people tend to have around their home in Perth. I naively thought this did not apply to me, until I took a closer look at the products and tools I was using and discovered I was a culprit, too.

After completely overhauling my cleaning supplies and inspecting everything I brought through the threshold of my home, I am now relieved to say that my house is toxic-free and safe for me and anyone who visits.

How to make a home less toxic

I discovered that these five household objects were the most likely causes of toxins in my home. This is how you can identify them and what to replace them with:

1. Pots and Pans (especially the non-stick variety)

Pots and pans are the last thing you want to contain harmful toxins, as we use them on a daily basis to cook and prepare the food we eat. Many non-stick pans are coated in Teflon which is a synthetic material, its chemical name is polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE). Due to its strong resistance to the absorption of liquids, it has been a popular choice of cookware for decades.

However, Teflon can be dangerous to our health, especially when heated at high temperatures and scratched, which is virtually impossible to prevent when washing and using sharp utensils.

A good alternative to Teflon and chemical-coated cookware is to choose anything that is made from cast iron, stainless steel, enamel, or copper. These materials are all-natural and do not contain synthetic substances that can leak into your food while cooking. Copper pans are beautiful options that will definitely add a timeless aesthetic to your kitchen. However, it is essential that you know how to clean copper pans so that they do not tarnish.

If you still want to cook with a non-stick pan, it is worth investing in a ceramic-coated one. They can be used in the same ways as your traditional Teflon-coated pan but are toxin-free. I recently invested in a complete cookware set from Carraway, which includes four non-stick but non-toxic pots and pans and they are quickly becoming the most used thing in my home in Perth!

2. Candles

There is nothing like a nicely scented home and burning candles is a great way to make a home smell nice while at the same time creating a relaxing and calm atmosphere. I have always been a candle enthusiast and I fell into the trap of buying any candle I thought smelt nice without ever looking at the ingredients list.

Most mass-produced candles are made from paraffin wax, which is essentially a by-product of petroleum. When these are burnt, chemicals such as carcinogenic benzene and toluene can fill the air, which could be a risk to our indoor air quality, especially if you are asthmatic. According to Brandon Stevenson, CEO of Moment at Home in Perth, candles that are normally on the cheaper side also tend to contain synthetic/chemical-based fragrances that fill your room when burned.

3. Cleaning Products



Cleaning products are notorious for having a list of ingredients as long as our arm, with many people not understanding anything that is listed, including me. How are we supposed to know what tetrachloroethylene is exactly or what it could be doing to our health? We aren't.

This used to fall into my extensive category of 'out of sight, out of mind.' However, I decided to make the switch, and I have noticed a significant difference in my home since changing to eco-cleaning products. After a lot of research, I came across and purchased the Branch Basics Premium Starter Kit, which included everything I would need to clean around my home naturally in Perth.

4. Food Storage Containers

If you are anything like me, you want your home to be aesthetic and are all about the Home Edit craze. Everything has to have its place, and the thought of unsightly cereal boxes and supermarket packaging building up makes you want to scream. I have always used the decanting method for transporting food from an unaesthetic container into an aesthetic one, call me crazy but it really does make a difference to the overall look and organization of your pantry.

5. Laundry Detergent and Fabric Softeners

This area was nonnegotiable for me, as I experienced negative side effects from using harsh laundry detergents. My skin started to become very dry and brittle when items of clothing that I had just washed rubbed up against it. I would start to come out in a rash, and my skin would become very sensitive.

I changed my laundry detergent immediately to Molly Suds laundry powder from Walmart, which is made with only ten natural ingredients. This changed my skin sensitivity over time and also made my clothes feel softer once they had been dried.

5.1. Guide To Sustainable Cleaning Practices



Traditional cleaning products contain harmful chemicals, such as ammonia, bleach, phthalates, phosphates, and other volatile organic compounds, which can release toxic fumes into the air and pollute water bodies. What's worse? Exposure to these products can cause respiratory disorders, coughing, skin infections, and eye irritation. It can even trigger asthma symptoms.

Thus, sustainable cleaning practices have become the need of the hour for every household. Using green cleaning products and methods promotes improved indoor air quality and safer living conditions. It helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Perth. The conservation of non-renewable resources and the use of recycled materials during the cleaning process can also protect the planet for future generations.

So, make the right choice and consider the following guide to sustainable cleaning practices. Conserve water, use energy-efficient tools and renewable resources when sprucing up your home for your family.

Let's Get Started!

1. Opt for Reusable Cloths Over Paper Towels

Paper towels are the major contributors to pollution in Western Australia. They are usually made from wood pulp, which leads to deforestation. The worst part is that they end up in landfills after a single use, which can release methane and pollute the environment.

On the contrary, reusable tools like microfiber cloths are eco-friendly, affordable, and super-absorbent. They are made of synthetic fibre that can effectively remove tiny dust particles, pollen, and grime in a breeze.

You can wash them after each use or toss them into the washing machine instead of a garbage can. Use microfiber cloths or dusters over paper towels to dust hard surfaces, absorb spills and liquids, buff drying glass surfaces, etc., and reduce landfill waste.

2. Conserve Water When Cleaning Your Home

Washing windows and floors are some of the most common water-intensive housekeeping chores. If you want to adopt sustainable cleaning practices, focus on conserving water as much as possible.

Make smart choices and use water-saving tools like low-moisture vacuum cleaners, reusable mops, mild dishwashing detergents, etc. You can try spot cleaning to remove stains and grime from your walls and floors. These practices will help you save water on a daily basis.

You can ask experts to bring energy-efficient equipment for a professional Vacate Cleaning Perth, WA. They can help you pass the rental inspection without a hint of stress.

3. Save Electricity While Cleaning



Saving energy or utility is one of the biggest challenges in Western Australia. However, making small changes to traditional cleaning practices can make your life easier. Here are some easy ways to conserve energy when cleaning:

Use energy-efficient cleaning tools, such as vacuums with HEPA filters

Spruce up cleaning machines, especially filters, after each use to ensure they work efficiently without consuming too much energy.

Open your window blinds and curtains to use natural light when cleaning your home. Keep the lights off as much as possible.

4. Use Natural Sponges for Tackling Grime & Gunk

Do you know that traditional sponges are made of synthetic materials that only pollute the environment? These are tossed in the landfill waste and contaminate the land.

So, look for sustainable alternatives, such as cotton or bamboo-based sponges, to wipe down hard surfaces, such as delicate leather furniture, countertops, cabinet doors, sinks, and faucets.

Plus, eco-friendly sponges composite naturally when they reach the end of their lifespan, and that's why many professional cleaners use it for several cleaning jobs within a house..

5. Make the Most of Old Toothbrushes

Do not toss your old toothbrush. Instead, use it to scrub stubborn stains and grime from hard surfaces. The narrow brushes make toothbrushes perfect tools for cleaning hard-to-reach spots, such as window sills, grout lines, air vents, the rubber gasket of your refrigerator, etc.

This will help you save money while reducing landfill waste in the long run. However, make sure you gently scrub the delicate surface to avoid scratches and other serious damage.

It is good to book experts for budget vacate cleaning Perth and secure the bond money. They leave no stone unturned to impress your landlord during the end-of-tenancy inspection.

6. Prefer Steam Cleaning Over Shampooing Your Carpets

Traditional carpet cleaning methods, like shampooing, often require harmful cleaning chemicals. Of course, store-bought cleaning products can remove stains and gunk, but you need extra water and energy to rinse and remove soap residue- which is not an eco-friendly approach.

On the other hand, steam cleaning is a green carpet cleaning method. The high temperature of steam can penetrate deep inside the fibres of your carpets and break down stains and dirt. It can refresh your delicate floor coverings without leaving residue behind. You can also clean your floors, upholstery and rugs using this eco-friendly method.

7. Use Green or Environmentally-Friendly Products



This is one of the ideal ways to go sustainable. Ditch your traditional household cleaners that contain harmful chemicals and prepare natural cleaning solutions at home. You can use the following powerful products to spruce up your home:

Baking Soda as a Natural Scrubbing Powder: Sprinkle and gently scrub the area to dislodge oil stains and grime. It can be used to clean natural stone surfaces and other delicate areas. You can also spot clean all types of floors using baking soda and warm water.

White/Cleaning Vinegar as a Multi-purpose Cleaner: Mix it with warm water and dishwashing soap to clean almost all surfaces, including window glass, ceiling fans, air vents, sinks, faucets, walls, etc.

Lemon as a Natural Degreaser: Use lemon juice or rub half of a lemon on a cutting board, oven and other greasy surfaces. It will remove build-up grease and grime in no time.

Hydrogen Peroxide to Kill Mould: Use 3 per cent hydrogen peroxide to remove mould spores and stubborn stains from your bathroom surfaces.

Castile Soap as a plant-based cleaner: It can be used to remove soap scum, rust stains and other grime from almost all surfaces.

Essential Oils: Add a few drops of your favourite oil, such as tea tree oil or lavender oil to banish bad odours from your home.

Tip: Highly-trained vacate cleaning Perth professionals recommend checking certifications like EcoLogo or Green Seal if you want to buy EPA-approved green cleaning product from the market.

Conclusion

In conclusion, making your home eco-friendly is a powerful step toward creating a sustainable future. By adopting energy-efficient practices, using environmentally friendly products, and reducing waste, you not only lower your environmental impact but also improve the overall health and well-being of your household. These changes may seem small, but collectively, they can make a significant difference in preserving natural resources and combating climate change. Embracing an eco-friendly lifestyle at home benefits both your family and the planet, ensuring a better tomorrow for future generations.

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