

Attainable Sustainable: Small Changes Make a Big Difference

Did you know you can save money and the planet with these small changes to your routine?

One of the most pervasive misconceptions about sustainability is that individual contributions don't matter. If you feel like your efforts are in vain when compared to the enormity of the environmental challenges we face, then know that you aren't alone in your endeavours to be more environmentally friendly. There's an army of concerned citizens working together to help save our natural spaces and create a healthy place for your family. Here are just a few small changes you can add to your sustainability efforts that will make a big difference.

Coffee Cups

[1.6 billion coffee](#) cups end up in Canadian landfills each year with 1 million cups thrown away in Toronto every day. Your coffee cups [are not recyclable](#) (the lids and sleeves are) and the wax coating can cause problems when they are mistakenly placed into the blue recycling bins. By taking your own travel mug to your local coffee shop, you will be availing yourself of the discount many establishments offer and saving [22 kg of cups](#) from the landfill every year.

A Paperless Home

Canadians use about [22kg of napkins, toilet paper and paper towels each year](#). Instead of paper towels, use a cloth to clean up spills. Replace your paper napkins with fabric ones that you pop in the laundry and then reuse.

If every Canadian replaced just one roll of regular toilet paper with a roll of recycled toilet paper, we could save [47,962 trees and 65.5 million litres of water](#) every year.

Reduce your Water Consumption

Canadians use about [329 litres of water](#) per person per day. Cut your shower time by just one minute and save [63,800](#) litres per year! Save another [7,000 litres](#) by turning the tap off when you brush your teeth.

It takes [7,000 litres](#) of water to produce just one pound of beef. Add a vegetarian meal to your weekly meal plan to save water. Eat smaller portions and opt for locally-produced meat that is packed in paper rather than plastic. See other ways to reduce your water consumption [here](#).

Plant a Tree

Trees absorb [48 lbs of carbon each year](#). An acre of hardwood trees will neutralize the carbon footprints of 18 people. Plant a tree every year—get a fir tree to use for Christmas and plant it in the spring, or plant a hardwood in the summer. Don't have space in your garden? [Donate a tree](#) to a street, school or park near you. If you plant a tree every year, you will have created a forest over the course of your lifetime.

Be Part of the Sharing Economy

Instead of buying items that you will probably only use once or twice a year, start sharing with your neighbours. Borrow tools from your [local tool library](#). Don't buy books, use your [library](#), ask friends and family members when you need to borrow sports equipment, kitchen gadgets or appliances.

Organize clothing and toy swaps with other families and work together to grow food in community gardens. Use a ride share app to find someone to share your commute with and for long trips.

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