

Small changes – big results

When we hear about the ecological problems of today, we may feel they are too large for just one person to make a difference. Nevertheless, the future depends on all of us doing whatever we can – not matter how small. Even if you can't do much, one or several of the following things will have a big impact on environment. Four of them are what causes most pollution, while the last advice is aimed at spreading the awareness.



Using bikes, trains and buses instead of cars and planes. Bicycles are the best way to travel because they don't use any fuel except our own muscle strength. Public transport, on the other hand, cuts CO2 emissions. Many trains, buses and coaches nowadays are also environmentally friendly: They run on gas or electricity. If possible, we should avoid owning cars, or use eco-friendly cars, drive around less, or carpool (drive more people at once).

Eating more plants – fruits, vegetables, grains, and beans – and less meat and dairy. Of the food we eat, animal products use up the greatest amounts of land and clean water. Those of us who can't give up meat altogether, should opt for fish, eggs and poultry (e.g. chicken and turkey), which are the best choices. Also, throw away as little food as possible. A lot of it is already wasted in production – we can try not to add to that amount.

Using our old things instead of buying new ones. This can be quite difficult in a world where we are constantly bombarded with ads and offers. Refusing to always get the newest toy, gadget or accessory is therefore a type of a rebellion. We should consider whether we can fix or find another purpose for the things we already have. It is also worth considering second-hand clothes: they are cheaper, and often unique, because we can't find them in every shop.



Taking care of plastic waste. Plastic is one of the biggest pollutants in everyday use. If you look around, you will discover that you are surrounded by plastic: bags, containers, dishes, electronics, and even personal hygiene products are all made of or packaged in plastic. Most other types of waste will eventually get recycled in nature – but plastic and metal will not. Therefore, it is essential to use as little of it as possible, and responsibly take care of the plastic we do need.



Using our voices. If we are aware of the ecological problems, we should discuss them online, choose eco-friendly products, and buy from businesses which have a green agenda. If a lot of us make similar choices, we can change the way large companies work, and do something good for ourselves and the world around us.

Questions:

- 1) Which of these ideas seem easiest and which hardest?
- 2) What do you already do to help the environment?
- 3) Who in your life is the most aware of climate change and the need to be greener?
- 4) Who or what is your biggest inspiration in going green?
- 5) Who or what makes it difficult?
- 6) Are there eco-friendly things you would like to try, but don't know how?
- 7) Imagine you are an adult. What would your eco-friendly life look like?