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Going green: How to live an earth friendly life

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Even if you aren't trying to go green yourself, you have probably at least heard of it and know what it means. But...do you really know what it means? Are you fully aware of how vitally important it is that we all make an effort to live an earth friendly life? You may think you don't have time to go green or that you couldn't give up your technology and creature comforts. But, going green doesn't mean that you have to make a drastic lifestyle change. If you want to quit your job, sell your house and go live in a cave...fine. But, there are plenty of things you can do to help the environment that aren't quite so drastic as reverting back to Neanderthal times. Every effort made to be kind to the earth is worthwhile. Small things add up to big differences, so try to make a conscious effort to think green even in minor ways.

Here are some tips for earth friendly living:

- * Ask your boss about either letting you work four 10-hour days or maybe working from home part of the time. Telecommuting is much more eco-friendly than the average commute; be it by train, bus or automobile. Less emissions means cleaner air for all of us.
- * Think about switching to a laptop instead of using your desktop PC. Laptops use about 50% of the power required by a desktop when plugged in and only 1% of the energy when running on batteries.
- * Does your copier, fax or printer have a sleep mode? If so, be sure to use it. The machine will wake up as soon as you need to use it but will be consuming less power in the meantime.
- * Speaking of printers, always make two sided copies when you can. It saves paper as well as ink.
- * Retrofit your non-conserving toilet so that it uses thousands of gallons less water over a period of time. Simply fill a plastic 1 quart bottle or jug with water and submerge it the toilet tank. Your toilet will then use 1 quart less water with every flush.
- * People who live in cold climates should paint their houses dark colors because these dark colors absorb heat, using less power to keep comfortable. Living in a hot climate? It works just the opposite: paint your house a light color to deflect heat and you can run the AC less.
- * Instead of using the oven in your range, nuke if possible. Any time you can cook or heat something in your microwave instead of a full size oven, you are saving energy. In fact, you will reduce energy usage by as much as 70%.

Victoria Amador is the CEO of Tremendous Maid and Boston's Best Commercial Cleaning, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540