

Student Sustainability Tips



Go Green Week 2021

In the middle of a global pandemic, with so much to deal with every day, it is hard to find time to being more sustainable. This guide provides some useful tips and facts to help you make small but significant changes. It should not be a source of pressure or guilt, but instead a helpful guide so you can protect the planet however you can.

1) Waste

- To avoid plastic waste, make sure that you reuse shopping bags, and avoid buying items with plastic packaging where possible! Visit [CleanKilo](#) stores for a fully zero-waste shop.
- Make sure you recycle everything that you can- for a comprehensive guide for Birmingham see the Community Warden Guide on the website.
- FACT: In a business-as-usual scenario, the ocean is expected to contain more plastic than fish by 2050 (by weight)
- Compost any food waste- you can put this composting in the Grow with Joe compost bins on campus!



Check out: [Birmingham Conservation Volunteers and Embrace the Waste Birmingham](#)



2) Energy Efficiency

- Saving energy can really reduce your environmental impact! For example, change all of your light bulbs to LED, which use 75% less energy and can last 35 times longer!
- Energy is easily lost in the gaps and spaces between doors and windows- this lost energy is thought to be the cause of 70% of the emissions of the average building- so seal gaps and buy draft excluders.
- Install a smart meter- check out Birmingham Energy Society's [Smart meter campaign!](#)



Check out: [Birmingham Energy Society](#)



3) Consumption

- Consumption and consumerism are huge issues that are causing a strain on the planet- next time you are buying something new really think about whether you need it!
- That doesn't mean don't treat yourself to something new every so often, but we need to reduce our consumption, to lower emissions and reduce waste.
- The solution is to shop second hand at charity stores or online with [Hazaar!](#)
- Fast fashion industries are environmentally damaging and often unethical; every year in the UK, £140 million worth of clothing is sent to landfill.



Check out: [Plastic Free UoB](#) and [Hazaar](#)



4) Meat and Dairy

- Reducing meat and dairy from your diet is the best way to reduce your carbon footprint; farmed livestock accounts for 14.5% of all manmade greenhouse gas emissions.
- Try cutting out meat or dairy from your diet for one day a week and see if you can increase this! If everyone in the USA went vegan for a day, it would save a staggering 1.2 million tons of CO₂
- There are plenty of tasty and nutritious alternatives to meat and dairy! Check out the guide available on the Go Green week website.



Check out: Vegsoc



5) Travel

- Air travel can be a huge contributory factor in carbon emissions, as can regular driving. The obvious solution is to fly less! For example, you might commit to flying once every 2 years.
- If you are going to fly, avoid domestic or short flights where it is possible to use other public transport, fly direct with fewer airport connections and fly in economy, all of which lead to fewer emissions.
- On a more regular level, try to drive less. Using public transport in the pandemic can be difficult, but check out the Sustainable travel Guide on the Go Green week website to find out more.



6) Banking

- Mainstream banks which are common in the UK invest billions of pounds in fossil fuels and carbon-intensive industries.
- FACT: since 2016, 33 of the world's biggest banks have invested around 1.9 trillion US dollars in fossil fuels
- Consider switching bank accounts to a more ethical and sustainable bank, such as Triodos, who has commits to not investing your money in damaging industries.



7) Campaigning

- While making changes to your lifestyle can make a significant impact on your environmental footprint, we need wider systemic change to halt the climate crisis.
- FACT: Just 100 companies are responsible for 71% of global emissions.
- We need the climate crisis to be an absolute priority; so campaigning is important. Vote with your feet by not supporting damaging corporations, email your MP for climate action, sign petitions and when safe, attend protests.



Check out: Extinction Rebellion UoB and Amnesty International UoB



Thank you for reading this guide- if you have any questions or suggestions don't hesitate to email: m.griffin@guild.bham.ac.uk

