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INTER ALIA

Latin for “Among Other Things,” this monthly section gives young attorneys information or advice about life situations that are unique to our readership.



## HOME IS WHERE THE RECYCLED, SUSTAINABLE, ORGANIC, LOCAL HEART IS

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*This article is the last of a three-part series focusing on “green” practices that young attorneys can implement to lessen their impact on the environment.*

If you read the [previous article](#), you now have a few ways to act as an office environmentalist. But there’s only so much you can do in your employer’s space ... what about in your own home? Making smart decisions as a consumer is a great way to lessen your impact on the environment, as well as save a little money. Listed below are a number of activities that will make you a little greener in your home life. The first level is a combination of easy things that have a significant impact, the second level requires a little more commitment, and the third level is based around lifestyle changes that have the maximum benefit to the environment.

### Level One – Environmentalism for Dummies

**Recycle** – I hope this is common knowledge, but just in case you didn’t know about this one – recycle! Here are a couple of details: food containers don’t have to be spotlessly cleaned, just rinsed out. You can’t recycle pizza boxes or take-out boxes (i.e., containers where food product has sunken into the cardboard), but you can recycle the containers in which food was packaged, such as pasta or cereal boxes. If you want details on where to recycle in your neighborhood or how to recycle less common goods such as batteries, go to [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org).

**Don’t be idle** – if you’re paused somewhere in your car and expect to remain in idle for even a short time, shut down your engine. Idling for *any* length of time burns more gas than it takes to restart the car.

**Eat less meat** – I’m not saying you have to become a fifth-degree vegan; just try to cut down on meat and animal products. Start small – say, refrain from eating meat one day every week – and keep cutting down on meat until you start to feel like you’re depriving yourself. A report issued last year by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization stated that the livestock business generates more greenhouse gas emissions than all forms of transportation combined. If you can just give meat up for just one day out of seven, you will save about 2000 gallons of water per month.

### Level Two – Beyond the Basics

**Reduce junk mail** – even if you’re recycling the seemingly endless stream of junk mail you receive, it’s even better to stop it in the first place (remember: it’s reduce, then reuse, then recycle). By using the Direct Marketing Association’s Mail Preference Service to opt-out, you can reduce the majority of your junk mail. Register for this service online at [www.the-dma.org/consumers/offmailinglist.html](http://www.the-dma.org/consumers/offmailinglist.html).

**Become a stinky hippie** – well, not actually. But the standard washing machine uses an incredible amount of energy and about 40 gallons of water per load. So think twice (or sniff twice) before you throw something in the dirty clothes basket. And if you just can’t stand the thought of wearing an unwashed item, switch your washer to the cold cycle as often as possible. The cold cycle uses less water and less energy and is easier on your clothing, as well.

### Upcoming Events

#### July 30:

YNLD Civility CLE at the San Diego County Bar Center at Noon.

More details to follow.

#### August 26:

YNLD General Meeting at the San Diego County Bar Center at Noon.

More details to follow.

#### September 12:

YNLD Annual Padres Night.  
More details to follow.

**Buy the following:** compact fluorescent bulbs and a reusable water bottle. The evidence in favor of compact fluorescent bulbs is undeniable – they use 75 percent less energy and last up to 10 times longer than a standard bulb. A reusable water bottle will prevent you from buying all those overpriced disposable bottles, which generally are recycled less than 25 percent of the time. Buying both of these products will cause you to save money and consume less energy, thereby helping the environment.

### **Level Three – Al Gore Would be Proud**

**Choose a place to live that reduces the need to drive** – this is a big step that many people can't take immediately, but it's one of the most effective things you can do to reduce your impact on the earth. And in the face of ever-increasing gas prices, why wouldn't you want to drive less? When choosing a home that reduces your need to drive, you should take into account not just proximity to where you work but also consider the accessibility of public transportation.

**Buy a fuel efficient car** – again, a decision that you make rarely, but one with a huge effect on the environment. As hybrid cars become more common, they are not only a smart environmental choice but a smart fiscal choice. Assuming that gas comes back down to \$4.00 per gallon (knock on sustainable bamboo) and that you drive 1000 miles per month, the cost differential between a Honda Civic hybrid and a standard Civic will drop to zero about 2 to 2.5 years after purchase. In other words, if you buy a slightly more expensive hybrid car, your return on investment will be less than three years. This savings goes up even more if you're choosing between a Civic hybrid and a standard car that gets fewer than 25 miles per gallon.

**Do as much as you can to cut back on animal products and fuel** – the savvy environmentalist will tell you that if you want to have a real impact, it's not about paper or plastic grocery bags; it's about what you eat and what you drive. These are the two biggest areas where Americans consume resources and produce emissions. So do whatever you can to cut back now and decrease your consumption a little more every few months. For additional information on using less, read *The Consumer's Guide to Effective Environmental Choices*, an acclaimed book put together by the Union of Concerned Scientists.

The key to becoming a better environmentalist at home is making changes that you can live with in the long run. If you can't go cold turkey on your daily hamburger, then do what you can and adjust your lifestyle in areas where it doesn't seem like such a sacrifice. Starting small and starting at home may be the least painful and most effective way to do your part. You will be surprised at how easily these "green" activities become customary to you. So what are you waiting for?

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