

# 10 EASY WAYS TO SAVE THE EARTH



## 1 DON'T USE RO WATER SYSTEMS

Using RO (reverse osmosis) purifiers is a waste of water, say experts. "RO purifiers use 75 litres of water to give you 25 litres of drinkable water," says renowned food and trade policy analyst and environmentalist, Devinder Sharma. "Obviously, a typical family uses much more than 25 litres of water a day – so you're wasting much more than 75 litres. Here we are ruining the condition of our farmers and we leave that water to run down the drain, literally." How can you use that water? "Use it for mopping, watering your plants, washing your car, anything, but use it," he says.

## 2 GIVE AWAY YOUR PLASTIC BOTTLES

We have a tendency to keep collecting plastic bottles (like buying a bottle of water when we're out) and then using the same bottles to store drinking water at home or carry them to office as water bottles. Stop collecting plastic bottles or throwing them in the dustbin. You're better off giving them away to the scrap dealers who collect newspapers and other odds and ends from your home every month, says Sharma.

## 3 SWITCH OFF THAT DESKTOP COMPUTER

How many of us corporate employees are guilty of leaving our desktop computers on every day after we leave office? A desktop that is on for 8 hours a day using close to 600 kWh – that is around 170 kgs of CO2 every year. And this is just when it's on. Of course, you can put your desktop in a hibernation mode, but do you?

## 4 STOP USING PAPER - SWITCH TO E-BILLS

If you have credit cards and multiple bank accounts, chances are that you have paper bills and statements being posted to you every month too. How about switching to e-statements and e-bills? More and more people are switching to net banking, so they don't even use chequebooks or passbooks anymore. What about you?



## 5 QUIT WASTING THAT WATER!

Did you know that a one-minute shower uses up around 30 litres of water? This goes up if it's a high-power shower, of course. Multiply that by, say 10 minutes – that's 300 litres of water wasted for an activity that shouldn't take more than five minutes. And this isn't even inclusive of your brushing, flushing or hand-washing! "An average toilet flush uses up 12.5 litres for 500 ml of urine," Sharma tells us. You do the math.

Saving the Earth? Why, that's a job for activists and environmentalists, you might say. But who says you can't do your bit? On Earth Day, today, here's how you can make the planet a little better in a small yet significant way

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## 6 PLANT A PLANT

No matter how small your space, have a plant. "Even if it's just a herb or a green chilli plant that needs little attention, grow it. A little amount of greenery goes a long way," says Sharma. And if you like, you can even build a mini garden in your house – use vertical arrangements, hanging planters, box shelves – the choice is yours. After all, in an increasingly concrete world, it's nice to have an oasis of your own, is it not?

## 7 BUY LESS

Why buy it if you don't need it? One of the main reasons we leave a huge carbon footprint is that we buy more than we use or need. More consumption, more resources, simple. If you can make do with one AC, why buy two? Sharma says, "One of the biggest problems of a growing economy is that our buying power has grown. The flip side is that now we buy more than we can use. Why buy 10 pairs of leather shoes when you end up using only five on a daily basis?" asks Sharma.

## 8 FILL THOSE TYRES

Of course, carpooling is way better than driving solo but hey, if you don't have an option, make sure you fill your tyres properly. Many a time, we ignore filling our car tyres because we're getting late but there are few who know what impact that can have. Improper inflating of tyres causes them to drag more to speed up, thus using more fuel, reducing your car's efficiency and causing pollution through emissions.

## 9 WASHING WOES

No one needs to be told how much water washing machines use, right? Plenty. Are you perhaps, guilty of throwing in a handful of dirty laundry and setting the option to 'full load'? Wash your clothes only when the machine is full – and while you're at it, clean that lint filter. When you don't, your machine's efficiency lowers, using up more power, and therefore, electricity, than required.

## 10 STOP USING TOILET PAPER

According to Sharma, this is the biggest culprit behind deforestation. As per the organisation, Earth911, nearly 7 million trees are cut down for toilet paper needs of just the US. "Why are Indians, who've never used toilet paper, switching to it now? Water is much more hygienic, isn't it?" asks Sharma, adding, "It's not just individuals, corporate companies are just as responsible."

One of Delhi's finest hotels, ITC Maurya is also one of the most eco-conscious. It was the world's first hotel to have a Platinum LEED certification. "We save up to 10,000 units more of electricity compared to conventional hotels by using renewable energy sources," says the hotel's chief engineer, S Arunaachalam, adding, "We educate our stakeholders on how to reuse and recycle resources."



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