

Simple Steps to a Green Home

By Beth Aldrich

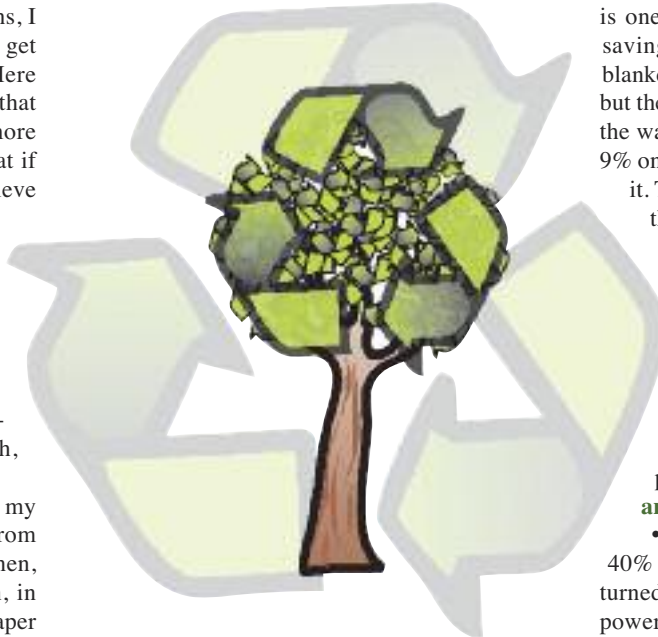
As a busy “green mom” of 3 sons, I am always looking for ways to get my kids “thinking green”. Here are some tips and household products that parents AND kids use that can be more mindful for the environment. I find that if I make it part of my life, my kids believe and understand that it’s “normal” to do certain things and use certain products. These tips are mindful of the environment, maintain sustainable business practices and are EASY for busy moms (and kids) on the go.

Simple Steps to a Green Home and Planet from our Healthy Lifestyle-Green Living Expert Beth Aldrich, www.BethAldrich.com.

- For example, I always encourage my sons to **recycle EVERYTHING**; from paper products to plastic containers. Then, I explain and show them how we can, in essence, “re-use” all of that recycled paper by using recycled paper products, such as the new Marcal® Small Steps™ bath and facial tissue or paper towels. That’s one easy way our entire family can go green without much effort at all. Let’s face it, I don’t have time to travel to and save the rain forest, but my family can use products that DON’T use up trees. It’s estimated that each American uses approximately 700 pounds of paper each year and if we can lessen the load, wouldn’t that be something?

- Another easy way for kids to get involved in going green is to teach them about the importance of using **CFL’s** (Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs). If every American replaced just one ordinary bulb for a CFL Compact Florescent Light bulb, we could save enough energy to light more than 3 million homes for a year, more than \$600 million in annual energy costs, and prevent greenhouse gasses equivalent to the emissions of more than 800,000 cars. Kids love to get involved with “grown up” activities so one good way would be to have the kids be on the “look out” for burnt out bulbs. When it’s time to change a bulb, just opt for a CFL and you save TIME IN THE FUTURE by not having to change the bulb as many times as an ordinary bulb.

- A clever product and idea that kids can use to help “green our world” is a



reusable water bottle. It’s estimated that plastic water bottles take 1000 years to break down in nature. Instead, choose a stainless steel reusable water bottle that prevents

harmful plastic or aluminum from leaching into the drinking water. Kids can decorate the outside with permanent markers or stickers, or you can purchase various color combinations.

- Another “tree saver” tip would be to encourage children to use **reusable grocery bags**. I have my children keep a fabric or nylon bag in their backpack or gym bag. That way, whenever we’re out at the grocery or drug store, I have at least four bags on hand (one in my purse and three in their bags)! This saves using countless plastic bags from grocery or drug store; and it keeps our landfills free of plastic bags which take up to 1000 years to break down in nature.

- **Use a programmable thermostat.** A programmable thermostat allows you to predetermine temperatures for daytime and evening comfort as well as energy savings. It can save you as much as 20 percent if you opt to reduce temperatures by 5 degrees at night and 10 degrees during the day when most people are out of the house.

- **Insulate your hot water heater.** This

is one of the most cost-effective energy-saving steps you’ll ever take. Insulating blankets or “jackets” cost only around \$10, but they can reduce the loss of heat through the walls of the tank by 25-40%, saving 4-9% on heating bills. Do it, and forget about it. The same goes for the hot water pipes that move hot water from the tank to your faucets.

- **Use less hot water.** Wash laundry in cold water, install low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators, fix leaky faucets, and wash full loads of laundry and dishes.

- When you have to replace appliances, choose **Energy Star appliances** whenever possible.

- **Turn it off.** Electronics consume 40% of the energy they use when they’re turned off! Save energy by plugging into a power strip.

- **Electric Green.** Buy rechargeable batteries instead of throwing away batteries into landfills. Batteries contain heavy metals like mercury, lead, cadmium and nickel. Household batteries, especially alkaline and button batteries, are the single largest source of mercury in our trash.

- **Buy Local,** buy organic and buy in bulk! Save airline fare and fuel cost for your food, but supporting local farmers, whenever possible.

- **Compost** your food and yard waste—make some clean, nutrient dirt!

- **Time your showers** and use a bucket to collect the cold water that runs while you’re waiting for your shower or bath to heat up. Your garden and plants will appreciate it (so will the fish).

- Many **common cleaning products** contain hazardous chemicals that impact our health and the environment in three ways: when they’re manufactured, when they’re used, and when they’re thrown away. You can buy alternative, eco-safe cleansers, or you can make your own. For example, an all-purpose cleaner can be made by mixing ½ cup of vinegar with ¼ cup of baking soda and ½ gallon of water.

Beth Aldrich, Healthy Lifestyle-Green Living Expert and founder of forherinformation.com the online magazine for women, www.BethAldrich.com