

How to make going 'green' a little easier

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Green is quite the buzzword these days. From television specials on global warming to talk show tips and tricks, it's heartening to see that the nation is taking environmental issues to heart. But I'm the first one to admit that it can get a little overwhelming. Even as a vegetarian, conscientious recycler and member of Green Hanson, I often feel guilty that I'm not doing more. Some of you may feel the same way. But since we can't all trade our cars in for bicycles, run our houses on solar panels or even grow our own vegetables, here are some suggestions to make going green a little easier:

Make it convenient. It's hard to change habits overnight but you'll be a step ahead of yourself with some creative thinking. I started by putting my recycling box next to my kitchen trash. I put a sticky note on my front door reminding me to shut lights off and turn down my thermostat. I also keep my canvas shopping bags in my car. Some of the most basic green living practices have now become second nature.

Take one thing at a time. So maybe you recycle and take the commuter rail, but can't afford a new refrigerator, never mind a windmill to power the neighborhood. That's OK. Even if you can just do one thing, that's better than doing nothing. Someday I hope to own a hybrid vehicle, but for now I'm buying compact fluorescent light bulbs which use one-fifth the energy of incandescent light bulbs.

Remember the big picture. It's a lot easier to do something when you believe in it. If feeling overwhelmed is inducing a feeling of 'green guilt,' remember that everything makes a difference. Take one statistic: Approximately 2.7 million tons of plastic are used worldwide every year for bottled water. Not to mention that we spend \$10,000 a minute on this industry. Every time I fill my reusable water bottle I remember that I've just kept one plastic water bottle out of the impractical bottled water cycle, and I've saved myself money. The environmental statistics we're so often confronted with may only seem like pressures to act, but they can also reassure us that we're doing the right thing.

None of these suggestions will take any more time than it takes to read this article, but I encourage you to seek out more resources. Green Hanson hopes that you will visit and learn from our display about recycling at the Hanson Public Library this month. If you are interested in joining Green Hanson or finding out more, our next meeting is Thursday, Feb. 14 at Whitman-Hanson Regional High School. Visit www.orgsites.com/ma/greenhanson/ for more information.

This article is the first in a series from Green Hanson, a group of concerned citizens dedicated to environmental awareness and action in our community.