

# Living Green at Caltech

## 31 Quick Sustainability Tips for Daily Life

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**Try landscaping with California native plants**—They are well adapted to Southern California's dry, hot summers and they look nice.

**Eat Produce that is in season**—Produce that is out of season is usually imported from the southern hemisphere. Intercontinental freight transportation requires a tremendous amount of fossil fuels. Reduce your carbon footprint and enjoy fresher food by eating fruits and vegetables that are in season.

**Hang towels on the rack**— Wash them after several uses, rather than just one.

**Buy food in bulk**—Cut down on plastic packaging that must be produced (and sent to a landfill). Also, it's usually cheaper and you might find something you like that you would never have tried otherwise.

**Go to your local library instead of buying new books.**

**Wrap presents creatively** – Wrapping paper is usually dyed and laminated, and often contains plastic and tape used in the wrapping process, and is thus non- recyclable. Instead, try using old maps or newspapers.

**Use a timer on your Christmas lights**—Cut down on electricity use when no one's admiring your decorations.

**Do errands in bulk**—Make a list of the things you have to do, and see if you can fit a couple of those things together in one ride.

**Plant a tree**—It's good for the air, can keep you cool, and can increase your property value.

**Buy local produce**—Consider how much energy it takes for produce from Chile or any other country to come here. If you have the option to buy local, do it. In doing so, you can support your local economy and eat fresher food! There are a slew of websites that can inform you on farmers' markets, family farms, and other sources of sustainably grown food near you.

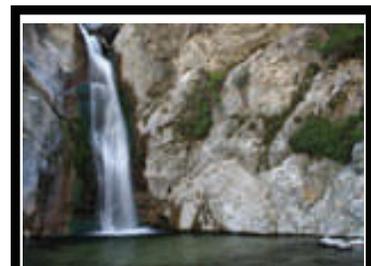
**Start a compost in your back yard or on your rooftop.**

**Ride your bike or walk**—If you have to go somewhere close consider walking or biking there instead of driving. It's better on the environment and can help you get in shape.

**Walk, jog, or run for exercise**—It's free and avoids the carbon emissions of a gym – heating, cooling, and lighting.

**Buy products that use recyclable materials whenever possible.**

**Calculate your carbon emissions**—There are many websites that can help you calculate the carbon emissions of your daily activities. Most can put it into contextual units, such as miles driven or trees planted.



**Pasadena's local watershed is the Arroyo Seco**

Go visit it! Take a hike, go fishing, horseback riding, mountain biking, or bird watching. Help care for it. Visit <http://www.arroyoseco.org/>.

Photo Credit:  
<http://www.modernhiker.com/2009/04/09/hiking-eaton-canyon/>

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**Inflate your tires** - If your tires are inflated at all times your car will run more miles on less gas.

**Consider signing up for a car sharing service like Zipcar** - See <http://www.zipcar.com/caltech/>

**Turn your car off if you're going to be idle for more than one minute**—If you are going to be stopped more than 10 seconds (except in traffic) you save time and money by turning your car off.

**Consider buying a fuel-efficient car or a hybrid**—Some of the newer models pay off in as little as 6 years.

**Car pool or vanpool**—Get better parking, make friends, and help the environment. More information at <http://parking.caltech.edu/Transportation/carpool> or <http://parking.caltech.edu/Transportation/Vanpool>

**Take the metro or bus to work**—Beat the traffic!

**Learn about Caltech's incentive programs** for walking, biking, carpooling, and taking public transportation. <http://www.parking.caltech.edu/Transportation/Incentives>

**Only ship your packages overnight or rush when absolutely necessary**—Ground shipping uses about 1/5 the amount of gasoline than air shipping.

**Go paperless in your home**—Over 24 billion newspapers are published each year. Consider reading your newspaper and magazine subscriptions online.

**Stop paper bank statements** - Why waste paper getting your bank statement mailed to you when you can just check it out online?

**Pay your Bills Online** - If every house in the US did this then we would save 18 million trees every year.

**Get rid of junk mail** – It takes over 100 million trees to produce all of the junk mail delivered in the U.S. every year. The manufacturing of all this mail amounts to the equivalent of the emissions of over 9 million passenger cars. Look online for services that will remove your name from junk mail lists.

**Switch to fair trade coffee**—Most harmful chemicals and pesticides are banned from fair trade operations. Instead environmentally sustainable methods are used to protect farmer's and their ecosystems.

**Take on a green home improvement project**—Consider installing solar panels, improve your insulation, install a programmable thermostat, or install a motion detector on your exterior lighting.

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