



Simple Actions That Protect The Earth

by Joy Cordery

- ▶ Put on a sweater. When you turn up the heat, your furnace is probably burning fossil fuels. A sweater or a nice warm robe will keep you even warmer and will help conserve resources and reduce climate change.
- ▶ Put one foot in front of the other. One hundred years ago, 99.9% of people got by without cars. They took the train, they lived near their work places—and they walked. Using fuel-efficient cars is important, but we can save even more fuel simply by driving less.
- ▶ Go for seconds. Recycling doesn't mean only separating your cans and bottles. It can mean using things a second time (or a third time). That nice padded envelope you got in the mail, for example? Instead of throwing it away, scratch out the address, tear off the stamps and reuse it.
- ▶ Watch your waste. Items you may be throwing away can contaminate the soil and water for thousands of years. Your community probably has special disposal procedures for things like used

oil and batteries. Ink cartridges can probably be recycled where you bought them. And many of the new super-efficient light bulbs contain mercury, so proper disposal is crucial. Check with the store where you buy them.

▶ Paper or plastic. Bring your bags with you! By taking reusable bags to the grocery store, you can cut down on the 350 bags the average American uses each year and reduce needless deaths of marine life caused by plastic bags that end up in streams, rivers and oceans.

▶ BYOB. Last year Americans went through about 50 billion plastic water bottles. Fill up a reusable water bottle at home and bring it with you. Don't like the taste of your tap water? Buy a filter! (Remember, much of the bottle water sold today is filtered tap water anyway.)

▶ Flip 'em off. In much of America we can't even see the stars anymore, due in part to all the electric lights. Keep the light on in the room you're in, but keep the rest of your house dark. You'll find the dark soothing.

▶ Get in touch with your roots. Plant a tree. Good for the soil, good for the birds, good for reducing climate change—and good for the air you're breathing.

▶ Get off the list. Catalogs are great when they're from the company you like to order from. But if you're getting catalogs you don't buy from, call and tell them to get you off their lists—and that's an order.

Information obtained from a publication of the World Wildlife Fund.