

Practical Ideas For Simple Living

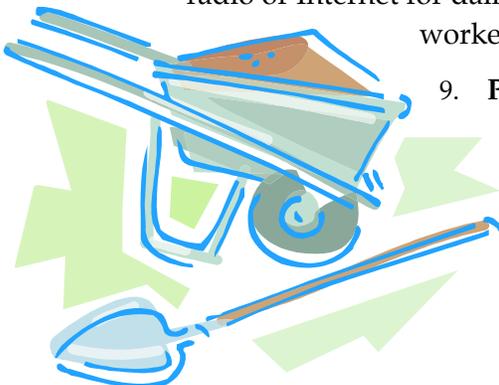
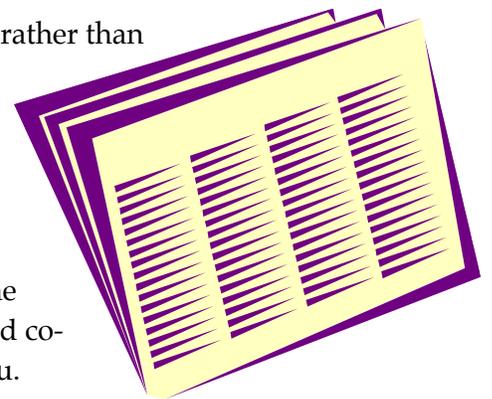
Conserving resources and reducing consumption



1. **Recycle last.** Remember: recycling is the last step of the reduce/reuse/recycle process. Begin by asking yourself how you can *reduce* or *reuse* resources first.
2. **Take public transportation, walk, or bicycle.** Cutting down on your use of a car is one of the biggest ways to reduce pollution and precious oil consumption. Carpool. Not only will you be saving gas, you'll have more time to build relationships.
3. **Make it yourself.** Before buying processed, pre-packaged food full of additives and preservatives and using wasteful packaging ask yourself, "Can I make this at home?" Consider baking your own bread, making homemade soup, etc.



4. **Compost.** Reduce 30-50% of your weekly trash by composting your food scraps so that they don't go into a landfill.
5. **Do a big housecleaning.** Recycle or give away anything you haven't used yet; does your house really need a dozen sets of bed sheets? If not, give some away to a local shelter.
6. **Use your library.** Borrow books, videos, and music from the library rather than buying them.
7. **Re-use clothes.** Shop at thrift stores rather than support the burgeoning clothing/fashion industry, or plan a clothing exchange party and invite a group of friends to bring clothes in good condition that they no longer wear often.
8. **Re-use periodicals.** Rather than subscribing to the local newspaper ask to a neighbor to recycle theirs to you, or use the radio or Internet for daily news. Ask friends, neighbors, and co-workers to recycle their magazines to you.



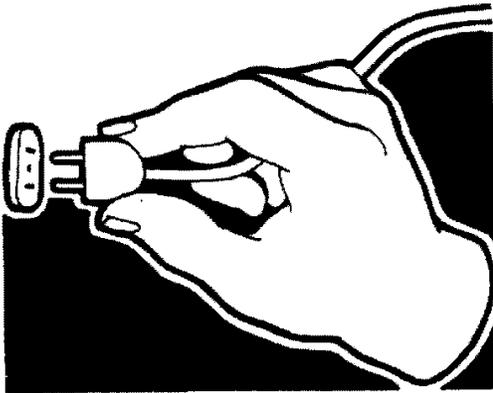
9. **Plant a garden and shop at farmers' markets.** By doing so you'll be withdrawing your support from factory farms that produce crops grown and shipped from thousands of miles away. Most of those farms are paying migrant farmworkers less than minimum wage and are exposing them to toxic chemicals, which are polluting the soil and water.

10. **Eat less meat.** If you're not already a vegetarian, consider reducing your intake of meat or even giving vegetarianism a try for the year. Meat production is one of the most wasteful uses of natural resources in this country as well as causing a great deal of pollution in our soil and water. Make use of the simple living cookbooks in your kitchens: *With Less* and *Extending the Table* are two excellent resources from the Mennonite Community. You might also browse through *Diet for a Small Planet*. More

11. **Use the principle of halving.** When using any kind of commodity, try using half the amount you would normally use. If that amount is still effective, halve it again. Continue until you know how much you really need. Try it with toothpaste or laundry detergent.



Putting people and relationships ahead of objects and acquisitions...

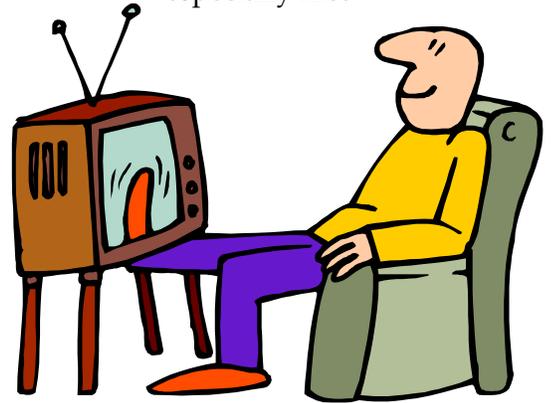


1. **Get unplugged.** Try having an electricity fast to help you slow down the pace of your life.
2. **Take a class.** Take advantages of continuing ed. offerings like classes and lecture series at your local library, community center, parish, or schools -- it will help you meet folks and learn about the area.
3. **Promote tutoring.** Consider asking someone to teach you cooking or gardening skills, bike mechanics, quilting, knitting, sewing, how to play a musical instrument, etc. and use your skills and talents to do the same for someone else.
4. **Borrow and barter.** Don't be shy about borrowing items or bartering with your neighbors, co-workers, and friends. When you borrow the lawn mower from John Doe next door it means you have to have some semblance of a relationship with him. Bartering your time or skills in return for other favors is a great way to help everyone get what they want or need. Mow someone's lawn in exchange for music lessons, offer to babysit in exchange for a massage from their mother, change someone's oil in exchange for a haircut.
5. **Exercise simply.** Choose ways of exercising that will help you get in touch with the local community. Consider alternative exercising that is available to everyone, free of charge: walking, biking, and running is a great way to get to know your town, too. Join a public city-league team, go to the open gym at the high school or join the neighborhood kids in a game of basketball or soccer.



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6. **Savor your meals.** Enjoy preparing good meals and eating them leisurely. Share conversation around the dining room table. Celebrate birthdays with homemade meals or potlucks, have barbecues, eat picnics outside in your yard. especially nice
7. **Live by your body.** Try living according to your biological clock rather than your watch. Eat when you are hungry, and sleep when you are tired. Pay attention to your body and honor it!
8. **Limit your television use.** Store your TV in a closet or in the basement and only pull it out for special occasions. You may be surprised by how much you get done (and how much more you connect with other people) without a television around. Watch your computer use, too.
9. **Hang out with God.** Set aside regular alone time for your relationship with. Spend some time each morning or evening alone to pray or journal, go for a walk, take a bath, spend your commuting time in prayer, etc.



by Ann Naffziger