



SAVING PLACE

You can help the environment in even the simplest of ways

In the day-to-day shuffle of life, saving the planet often takes a backseat to more immediate demands. "Thankfully, you don't have to take on the whole project at once," says Heather Stephenson, cofounder of IdealBite.com, a daily eco-tips e-newsletter. Here are a few ways to get started:

SAY IT WITH ORGANICS Florists often buy their blooms from countries where chemical use and labor standards aren't regulated, or they buy bouquets that are transported great distances, burning up gasoline. Instead, pick up fresh flowers at your local farmers market (find the nearest at www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/map.htm) or order online at organicbouquet.com.

CHANGE BULBS Conserve energy and cash by swapping your so-last-century incandescent light bulbs for compact fluorescent lights. CFLs cost more upfront but last up to 15 times longer. You'll save more than \$100 in electricity costs over the lifetime of each light.

BRING YOUR OWN MUG Whether you love or hate Starbucks, the company reduced 655,000 pounds of paper cup waste in 1 year by offering a 10-cent discount to customers who brought their own mugs. If you drink coffee at work, keep a ceramic mug at the office and skip the cups.

DOWNLOAD YOUR MUSIC Fill up your portable music player and do the landfills a favor, too. Downloading music avoids the waste caused by the production, packaging, and distribution of CDs. Not to mention the instant gratification part.

BRING YOUR OWN BOTTLE Americans use 4 million plastic bottles every hour, yet only one-quarter of those get recycled. The solution? Filter your H₂O at home and carry a leak-proof, lightweight, aluminum SIGG bottle from swissbottle.com.

OM, NATURALLY Yoga is great for your mind and body, but the toxic plastic (called PVC) in your mat may be spewing nasty chemicals called APEs. These contain potential hormone-disrupters that, when rinsed off your mat, may contaminate waterways and harm aquatic life. For some less toxic (but very stylish) alternatives, visit intentusa.com or bluecanoe.com.
—Jennifer Pirtle

THE DOSHA DOC

Q: When I'm stressed at work, I crave sweets and wind up eating more than I want. Is there a way ayurveda principles can help me?

—Katelyn B., Dallas

A: Feeling stressed usually means the Vata dosha is overactivated; Vata governs the mind and brain. Sweet-tasting food "balances" (or calms) Vata, so craving sweets is a natural reaction to stress. Eating plain sugar depletes your body of vitamins and minerals. Instead, choose dates, raisins, fresh fruit, or even whole-grain bread with a nut butter and honey spread that will break down more slowly and provide nourishment.

Q: I read that ayurveda says you're supposed to drink warm water. Ugh! Are there any exceptions where ice water is okay?

—Leslie M., Redmond, WA

A: Generally, ice water is too much of a contrast to the body, suppresses digestion, and has a cold effect on your sinuses, ears, as well as to your tonsils, lymphatic system, and throat. If you're really hot during summer and you're not going to have a meal for a couple of hours, you could have some cold water to cool your body. But throughout the year, the coldest water you should drink is room temperature.

Q: How can I rev up my body faster? I have great endurance, but getting started is really hard.

—Victoria C., Springfield, MO

A: Having great endurance is a Kapha trait. The good qualities of Kapha are strong muscles, good stamina, and strength. But when Kapha is out of balance, there's a tendency to get sluggish. You probably have a Kapha imbalance that can make you feel dull and draggy in the morning. Have your main meal at noon, when digestion is strongest, and stick to vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and fruits in the evening. Avoid cold foods and drinks in the evening. Avoid ice cream, meat, and hard cheese in the evening because they don't digest as well after midday.

Nancy Lonsdorf, M.D., an ayurvedic doctor, answers your diet and lifestyle questions at editors@iyogalife.com.