

Who Knows You Best?



South Durham Green Neighbors

We all know we need to shrink our carbon footprint, but how do we get ourselves to take larger steps toward sustainability?

The person who knows you best is you. What motivates you? What are the practical things you can do to get yourself on track?

This is the introduction to a five-part series on taking those next steps toward sustainability.

Motivation

I have general ways to motivate myself like thinking about the people I want to be happy in the future and the places and things I want to help save.

What is important to you? Do you have kids or perhaps grandkids? Do you like to go to Topsail Island or Emerald Isle? Perhaps taking regular walks in the woods periodically would keep you in touch with the natural world – to say nothing of helping your health. What do you want to help save?



Do you like win-win situations? You can help yourself as well as the environment with some of the things that make the biggest difference to our carbon footprints.

- Sealing and insulating your home – Save money by lowering your energy bills. The money saved could go toward paying off credit cards, paying off educational debt, or ensuring a comfortable retirement.
- Eating less meat – Lower your weight, your blood pressure, and your cholesterol levels with this one. You would also lower your risk of cardiac disease, stroke, diabetes and colorectal cancer.
- Buying less stuff – This would definitely save you money.
- Flying less – For those that fly, this is often the single largest contributor to their carbon footprints. How about actually seeing the country as you travel by train or bus? Or saving money by taking vacations closer to home?



Try linking your goals to other positive outcomes.

Carrying Out the Plan

Ask yourself what it will take to actually get started on the steps you choose to do. Below are some ideas for particular steps, but you will know what works best for you.

- Consider keeping your credit card in a sleeve labeled, "Do I really need this item?"
- Try calling Duke about a free energy audit to see what your house needs (<http://tinyurl.com/EnergyHouseCall>). Or for \$25 you can get a full audit from PSNC including a blower door test (<http://tinyurl.com/PSNCInHome>).
- Do you need inspiration for meals with less meat (<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>) or no meat (<http://tinyurl.com/MeatlessRecipes>)?
- How about enticing vacation alternatives (<http://www.amtrak.com/all-inclusive-train-vacation-packages>)?

More ideas will appear in four other parts of the series.

You are the one who knows yourself best. So, what's your plan?