

## May, 2009 31 Day Green Challenge

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My intended outcome for all my clients and contacts is an improved life through organization. The two main ideas I base my business and all my efforts on are:

- An organized life is better in many ways than a dis-organized life; and
- An organized life equates to the best, most effective use of all our resources- Time, Talent and Treasure.

And an improved quality of life through the best use of our resources is what Going Green is all about. Being ecologically responsible is an excellent idea at any time, and especially in these tumultuous economic times!

I am updating my organizing services this month, too, offering to my paying clients responsible recycling disposal of:

- Household batteries (Walgreens)
- Plastic shopping bags (Jewel-Osco drop box)
- Light bulbs (Home Depot)
- Wire dry cleaning hangers (my local Crisp 'n Clean Dry Cleaners)
- Donations of clothes and household goods (nearby JDRF or St Vincent de Paul drop boxes, or Neat Repeats in Worth)
- Cell phones and chargers (our local elementary school's recycling efforts)

April is now Earth Month, which is great, but I missed my own personal deadline for adding Green tips to my April newsletter. SO I am sharing with you in May what our family learned in April.

The tips with (kids) after them were contributed by my sons, so you know that even a child can handle these!

### Week 1

Green your Stuff: Use pencils and other items that were made from recycled products (kids). They buy "Sment-cils" at school, scented pencils made from recycled newspapers.

Energy: Ride, don't drive. We all have tuned up our bikes for Spring, and we'll be riding around town when we can, instead of driving. (kids)

### Week 2

Water: Invest a little money for a great gain, with a rain barrel or two hooked to your home's gutters. We have two, and it is amazing how much water we can accumulate in a short time. 50 gallon barrels fill up in an hour or 2 of hard rain, and we can use the water to water the grass and garden, fill a bucket for cleaning, water the house plants, etc. If you live in or near Chicago, <http://www.mwrd.org/irj/portal/anonymous/rainbarrel>.

Green your Stuff: Invest in rechargeable batteries for your high use items. We use them for the Wii controllers, digital camera, etc. (kid) And recycle the regular batteries—no landfill, please!

Energy: Turn off the lights when you leave the room. (kid)

Water: Take your car to a car wash. Washing at home in your driveways uses a lot more water, and sends the soapy water into the storm drains.

Green Eating: Go vegetarian. And if you can't stop eating meat, no matter how it is raised, buy local when you can.

Energy: Turn off the TV when no one is watching it. Better yet, don't even turn it on. (kids)  
Water: Limit your long showers. Set a timer for 5 minutes, so you realize how long you've been in there. (kids)

### Week 3

Mother's Day: Green your gifts. Re-usable gift bags, useful consume-able gifts or gift cards!  
Paper: Print from the computer on both sides of your paper. All the notes that come home from school get flipped over and re-used for computer printing of rough drafts, grocery lists, etc. (kids)  
Energy: Adjust your thermostat up one degree in summer, and down one degree for winter. The house won't feel different, but you will save energy.  
Green Eating: Plant a garden. If you can't plant a whole garden, even fresh herbs or a tomato plant in a pot will ease you into more Green living and eating!  
Energy: When it is warm out, open up the curtain for light. When it is cold out, close them at night to keep the heat in. (kids)  
Green your Stuff: Compostable Bio Bags, [www.biobagusa.com](http://www.biobagusa.com) for stores or products  
Cleaning: Cut up old t-shirts into squares to make your own re-usable cleaning cloths. Better yet, invest in some Microfiber cloths (I bought mine at Target and Bed, Bath and Beyond) for cleaning without paper towels and harsh chemicals.

### Week 4

Energy: Close the refrigerator door. Know what you are looking for before you open the door. (kids)  
Green Eating: Stop drinking bottled water. Install a filter on your tap, or use a filter pitcher, if you prefer non-tap water. Use re-usable and re-fillable water bottles to take to baseball practice or games (kids).  
Energy: Put your computers and appliances on surge protector bars, and turn the whole bar off or even unplug it when you are done working.  
Water: Wash your laundry in cold waters, and save hundreds of dollars a year while conserving energy. Win-win!!  
Energy: Clean your lint trap every time you toss in a load of laundry to dry. My drying cycles work twice as well with a clean lint trap, meaning half the expense and energy.  
Green your Stuff: Drop off your used light bulbs at your local Home Depot, and keep their harmful contents out of the landfills.  
Energy: Work-out outdoors. Take your aerobic exercise to the great outdoors, and save the treadmill energy. Take some deep breaths and enjoy the fresh air! (kids)

### Week 5

Green Your Stuff: Drop off your expired medications at your local pharmacy instead of throwing them out or flushing them down the toilet (this is very bad for all of us!)  
Green your Memorial Day Picnic! Re-usable or paper plates, no Styrofoam please!!!  
Water and Energy: Scrape your plates down the garbage disposal instead of lengthy pre-rinsing, and run the dishwasher only when full.  
Paper: Sign-up for on-line bill pay and save stamps and checks.  
Paper: Go a step further, and choose to receive your statements via email. Save them in an email folder, or print them to PDF and save the file on your computer, instead of printing the statement on paper.  
Green Eating: Pack your lunch in re-usable containers and bags. (hubby)  
Take your kids for a walk outside, and identify signs of spring and the beauty of nature. Nurture a love of nature from the beginning. (kids)  
Green your Stuff: Instead of throwing them out, take your extra wire hangers back to the drycleaners.