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Five easy eco tech tips

The lazy gadget lover's guide to going a little bit eco

by Amy-Mae Elliott published on 20 May 2009

We all know that we should be doing more to save energy around the home to help "save the planet", but aside from the obvious energy saving light bulbs and buying AAA+++ kitchen equipment, sometimes it's hard to know where to start.

Inspired by the growing trend for people to be seen to be doing something, here are five simple ways to help clear your conscience and still remain a full-fat consumer. Think of it as the lazy gadget lover's guide to getting a little bit greener...

Consume digital media

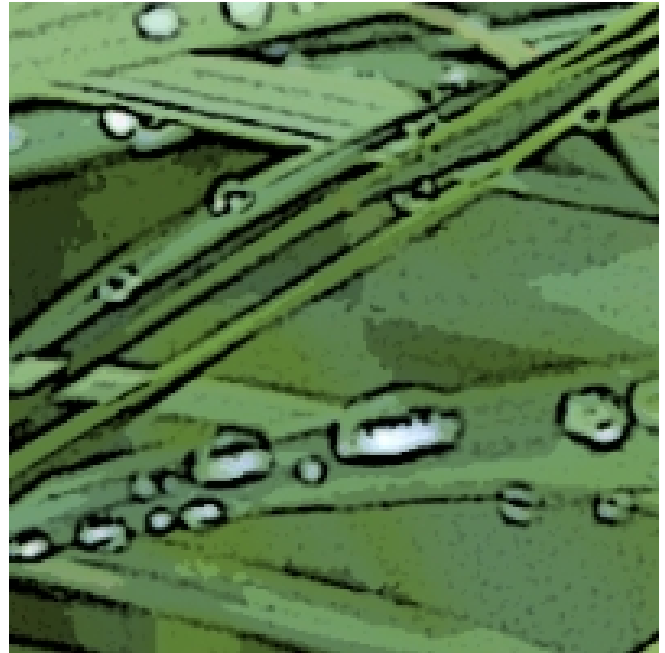
Where possible consume digital media. This means you can begin to replace CDs, DVDs, books, some video games and a heck of a lot of software with their digital equivalent. As an example, think of the materials, manufacturing and transportation that goes into producing - and you getting in your car to go and buy - a CD. A digital download has got to be a better option for the environment. Just make sure you back it all up. Regularly.

Don't overcharge your laptop battery

Although this obviously doesn't apply to certain MacBook owners, if you use your laptop as a desktop replacement, in the home or office, and have it plugged in all the time, think about removing the battery. Possible with some laptops is the option to run the laptop from the mains with the battery removed, so that it does not keep drawing power and you'll avoid the constant charging that will reduce the battery's capacity for charge and its life, meaning you won't have to fork out for a replacement so soon.

Get a TV with an off button

It's new! It's innovative! It's the on/off button on a television! Somewhen in the last few years, before the green bug hit, TV manufacturers did



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away with the power button on TVs, instead leading consumers to leave their goggle boxes on permanent standby through the remote control. Now, the off button is back and all the rage. With some manufacturers calling it an "integrated power switch" this eco-friendly feature will enable you to save a bit on your electricity bills - whilst staying at the cutting edge of technology.

Try to buy second hand

Not popular with some but it really does make sense, it's not only a cheaper way of buying but you're recycling at the same time. There are plenty of decent second hand tech retailers out there, there's the Freeads and your local paper's classified section, as well as online services such as eBay, Gumtree or Craigslist. Buying already-used goods isn't everyone's cup of tea, granted, and it might depend on what the product is, but before you hit the retail park, consider if you can re-purpose something that's already been manufactured.

Buy that eco phone charger you've been reading about

Eco phone chargers are a cheap and cheerful way you can save on energy. According to some sources only 5% of the energy used to charge mobile phones in the UK is actually used to charge it, the rest being used when charger is plugged into the wall and not turned off at the socket. Most of us try and make sure we turn our chargers off, but let's face it - it doesn't always happen. Bite the bullet and buy one that automatically turns off when the phone is fully charged. The Carphone Warehouse offers a really good version with models suitable for Nokia, Samsung and Sony Ericsson phones. All three models are £22.99 and you can order online - do it today and by the end of the month you'll be saving energy - and money.