

Environmental Wellness

It is important to lead a lifestyle that is respectful of our environment. This includes respecting nature and those species living in it. Also, respect for others living in our environment is just as necessary as respect for the physical environment itself. While today's climate is one of increased environmental awareness, the average person may still be unconcerned or simply uninformed about what he or she can do to help the environment. You don't have to be a member of an organization to help; an individual can help by simply leading an environmentally conscious life.

Spread the word about environmental wellness. Discuss with your friends the importance of leading a lifestyle that ensures the purity of our water, air and living conditions. Also, if you see someone littering, politely tell that person you do not approve of his or her actions. Get involved with your community's recycling programs. Implement a recycling program and find ways to conserve paper in your home and at work. Make sure the recycling bins in your home / office are readily available and are being utilized. Not only will your efforts be rewarding, but they will put you on the right path to environmental wellness.

Signs of Good Environmental Wellness

- You are aware of the limits of the earth's natural resources
- You conserve energy (i.e., Shutting off unused lights)
- You recycle paper, cans, and glass as much as possible
- You enjoy, appreciate, and spend time outside in natural settings
- You do not pollute the air, water or earth if you can avoid doing so
- You avoid second-hand smoke

Tips to Improve Environmental Wellness

Environmental wellness is an awareness of the precarious state of the earth and the effects of your daily habits on the physical environment. It is maintaining a way of life that maximizes harmony with the earth and minimizes harm to the environment. It includes being involved in socially responsible activities to protect the environment.

Stop your junk mail - Americans receive almost 4 million tons of junk mail every year. If one million people stopped their junk mail, we could save up to 1.5 million trees a year. About 44 percent of junk mail is never even opened or read. Contact the major senders of junk mail saying "take me off your list." Try stopjunk.com or privatecitizen.com

Snip your six-pack rings - Six-pack holders are virtually invisible underwater, so marine animals can't avoid them. Seagulls sometimes strangle themselves by catching one loop around their neck while another loop gets snagged on a stationary object. Before you toss six-pack holders into the garbage, snip each circle with a pair of scissors. When you're on the beach, pick up any six-pack rings you find, snip them, and put them in a trash can.

Don't leave your water running - Washing dishes with the tap running can use an average of 30 gallons of water. A running faucet uses three to five gallons of water per minute. As much as five

gallons of water is wasted if you leave the tap on while brushing your teeth. If you wash your car at home using an ordinary hose, you can use up to 150 gallons of water. When brushing your teeth, wet and rinse your brush only. A half gallon of water will be used as opposed to five to nine gallons. When washing dishes by hand, fill up a basin of water instead of letting your water run. When washing your car, either take it to a self-service car wash, or use a shut-off nozzle on your hose when washing it at home. This can save more than 100 gallons of water.

Use recycled paper bags when shopping - Plastic shopping bags are not biodegradable. The bags never disappear in the earth; they just break into small pieces. Plastic bags that wind up in the ocean can kill marine life that swallow or get tangled in them. "Recyclable" paper bag does not mean recycled. If a bag does not say recycled, it's probably made from virgin paper. First, consider if you really need a bag before taking one – especially if your purchase is small. Also, bring your own cloth bags when you shop, or reuse old bags that you have already saved.

Environmental Wellness Assessment

The environmental dimension of wellness involves accepting the impact we have on our world and doing something about it. Read each statement carefully and respond honestly by using the following scoring:

Almost always = 2 points
points

Sometimes/occasionally = 1 point

Very seldom = 0

- _____ 1. I consciously conserve energy (electricity, heat, light, water, etc.) in my place of residence.
- _____ 2. I practice recycling (glass, paper, plastic, etc.)
- _____ 3. I am committed to cleaning up the environment (air, soil, water, etc.)
- _____ 4. I consciously try to conserve fuel energy and to lessen the pollution in the atmosphere.
- _____ 5. I limit the use of fertilizers and chemicals when managing my yard/lawn/outdoor living space.
- _____ 6. I do not use aerosol sprays.
- _____ 7. I do not litter.
- _____ 8. I volunteer my time for environmental conservation projects.
- _____ 9. I purchase recycled items when possible, even if they cost more.
- _____ 10. I feel very strongly about doing my part to preserve the environment.
- _____ Total for Environmental Wellness Dimension

Score: **15 to 20 Points** - Excellent strength in this dimension.

Score: **9 to 14 Points** - There is room for improvement. Look again at the items in which you scored 1 or 0. What changes can you make to improve your score?

Score: **0 to 8 Points** - This dimension needs a lot of work. Look again at this dimension and challenge yourself to begin making small steps toward growth here. Remember: The goal is balanced wellness.