SUSTAINABILITY

Recycling saves energy because the manufacturer doesn't have to produce something new from raw natural resources. By using recycled materials we save on energy consumption, which keeps production costs down. Recycling reduces the need for more landfills. No one wants to live next to a landfill.

Increasing recycling rates

However, these strategies and changes will not happen overnight. To increase recycling rates we need to:

- Collect more materials in recycling bins
- Build more recycling plants
- Educate people about what can be recycled
- Find ways of turning recycled materials into useful items

The global impacts of our diet

The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation defines sustainable diets as:

Those diets with low environmental impacts which contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations.

In developed countries like the UK, people tend to consume more meat and operate at a higher trophic level in the food chain.

At the lowest level of the food chain (trophic level 1) are primary producers such as plants, followed by plant-eating animals such as cows, goats, and horses. Then come animals that eat other animals, and then the apex or super predators at the top of the food chain (including carnivores like crocodiles, lions and killer whales).

Between each trophic level, there is a loss of energy. That's why, for example, production of livestock, on average, may require 4 kg of cereal grain for the production of 1 kg of meat.

The rearing of livestock for meat, eggs and dairy also generates 14.5% of total global greenhouse gas emissions, mainly from methane produced during digestion in grazing animals such as cattle and sheep. If people consumed more crops directly, rather than their processing through livestock, there will be a positive environmental impact.

Computers

Reducing your PC monitor brightness from 100% to 70% can save up to 20% of the energy the monitor uses. (Harvard)

A PC monitor left on overnight can waste enough electricity to laser print over 500 pages. (Energy Saving Trust)

Energy from devices such as computers left on standby account for 5-10% of the total electricity used in residential homes and accounts for about 1% of the world's carbon dioxide emissions. (Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory)

Leaving a computer on overnight for a year creates enough CO2 to fill a double-decker bus. (The Carbon Trust)

Old CRT monitors use more than three time as much energy as LCD monitors.

You could run three modern LCD monitors with the energy used to power one old CRT monitor.

Think before you ink

Save documents, web sites, photos, and presentations electronically and resist the urge to print unless absolutely necessary.

Share information electronically, it will save innumerable copies at meetings and presentations.
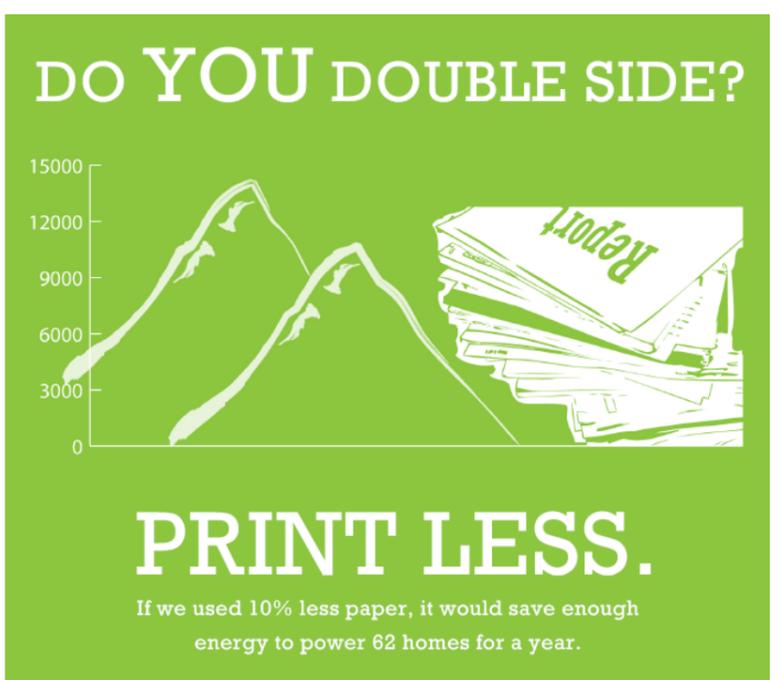
Save Resources
Set your printer/copier/fax machine default mode to duplex and print double-sided documents every time.
If you are using a private ink jet printer, set your printer to "Fast Draft" under advanced printer settings to reduce the amount of ink used for each page.

Checklist
Before you print, ask yourself these simple questions:
- Do I need to print this document or can I view and share it electronically?
- Can I fit more content onto any page?
- Did I use print preview to make sure I am printing only what I really need?
- Did I select double-sided printing?
- If this is not a final copy of an important document, am I printing in draft mode to save ink (and money)?

Reduce, Reuse, Rethink