

# How Low Can You Go?

FLIP SIDE:  
**Shrink Your  
Ecological  
Footprint!**

**True or False? “People will never exchange their high impact consumer lifestyle for one that they perceive is less – less fun, less satisfying, less comfortable.”**

By Portia Sinnott, LITE Initiatives, Copyright, 2007

**False. Most people simply need information and positive reinforcements to motivate them to establish new, lighter habits.** As presented in the companion article, **Shrink Your Ecological Footprint** ([www.liteinit.org](http://www.liteinit.org)), time management is a key to living a low impact life and to developing new habits. Information is another key. The adjacent list is chock full of websites that promote the suggested actions. **Here are some additional concepts to motivate you:**

## **Zero Waste - Or Darn Close**

In nature, biodegradability is the norm and there is no waste. Zero Waste, the application of that fact, ensures that products are made to be reused, repaired or recycled into the marketplace or nature. **Seriously, we believe if it can't be recycled – it shouldn't be made!**

Some people vehemently object to this term because reaching zero is impossible. Proponents consider it a worthy goal that shouldn't be dismissed because it is too ambitious.

The State of California is leading the way: “Now, with recycling and conservation programs in every city, we are able to embrace the zero waste concept as our guiding principal and goal for the future.” [www.zerowaste.ca.gov](http://www.zerowaste.ca.gov). It is not just in California, this issue is being collaboratively worked on all over the world: [www.grrn.org](http://www.grrn.org), [www.zwia.org](http://www.zwia.org)

## **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)**

In the ZW worldview, the long-term responsibility for a product is on the producer of the item, not you the consumer or the local government agency that oversees your waste stream. The ultimate goal of EPR is clean, safe materials and production and the elimination of waste at each stage of the product's life cycle. [www.eprworkinggroup.org](http://www.eprworkinggroup.org), [www.productpolicy.org](http://www.productpolicy.org)

## **Precautionary Principle – Do No Harm**

If an action, policy or product might cause severe harm, the burden of proof should fall on those who are producing it. In other words, it must be proved to be safe before it is implemented - versus proving it is not unsafe. [www.safecosmetics.org](http://www.safecosmetics.org), [www.noharm.org](http://www.noharm.org)

## **Carbon Offsets and Personal Offsets**

Trying to reconcile your actions with your values? Rather than sending money around the world (and through many hands), consider investing in greening your home or donate to a local non-profit. Internal trades are another story; **no one needs to be 100% perfect**. If you make an extra trip to the store tonight, plan to ride share or do errands on foot tomorrow.

## **LITE Initiatives**

Simple, Sustainable Practices With Significant Consequences  
[www.liteinit.org](http://www.liteinit.org)      [LITE@sonic.net](mailto:LITE@sonic.net)      707 579-5811

## **How To Shrink Your Ecological Footprint**

### **LITE Checklist II**

Check items you already practice. Draw a line through the impossible and circle a few you are willing to take on. Set a goal and go for it! Visit list again in a few weeks. See List I on front.

### **EXERCISE/SOCIALIZE**

- Walk or bike to an event or drive part of the way and walk/bike the remainder
- Invite friends to carpool or take public transit with you. Bring route info and directions just in case.
- Green your dinner party: [www.earthdinner.org](http://www.earthdinner.org)
- Share weekly meals with neighbors and friends
- Create a neighborhood space: [www.cityrepair.org](http://www.cityrepair.org)
- Surf Your Watershed: [www.epa.gov/surf](http://www.epa.gov/surf)

### **HOME**

- Buy local & organic: [www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org)
- One a day - short & sassy tips: [www.idealbite.com](http://www.idealbite.com)
- Safe beauty products: [www.safecosmetics.org](http://www.safecosmetics.org)
- More fun, less stuff: [www.newdream.org](http://www.newdream.org)
- Responsible shopping: [www.coopamerica.org](http://www.coopamerica.org)
- Shrink your mail box: [www.StopJunkMail.Org](http://www.StopJunkMail.Org)
- Be hip, learn to sew: [www.stitchlounge.com](http://www.stitchlounge.com)
- Vacation close to home: [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)
- Try a green hotel: [www.greenhotels.org](http://www.greenhotels.org) or [www.environmentallyfriendlyhotels.com](http://www.environmentallyfriendlyhotels.com)

### **SCHOOL**

- Walk/bike to school: [www.cawalktoschool.com](http://www.cawalktoschool.com)
- Teach recycling: [www.ciwmb.ca.gov/schools](http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/schools)
- Improve school lunches: [www.food-matters.org](http://www.food-matters.org)
- Plant a school garden: [www.oaec.org](http://www.oaec.org)
- Green School Initiative - [www.greenschools.net](http://www.greenschools.net)
- Go Green: [www.gogreeninitiative.org](http://www.gogreeninitiative.org)

### **ALTERNATIVES**

- Check out green building: [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org) and [www.builditgreen.org](http://www.builditgreen.org), [www.virtuallygreen.com](http://www.virtuallygreen.com)
- Consider solar energy: [www.ases.org](http://www.ases.org)
- Visit DOE: [www.eere.energy.gov](http://www.eere.energy.gov)
- Change from diesel to: [www.biodiesel.org](http://www.biodiesel.org)
- Drive electric: [www.eaaev.org](http://www.eaaev.org), [www.calcars.org](http://www.calcars.org)
- Zero Emissions: [www.zeri.org](http://www.zeri.org)