



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University



BEING
SUSTAINABLE
WHILE WORKING
AND LEARNING
FROM HOME



Find out more about
the areas below in the
following pages



BE MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT



REDUCE YOUR WATER USE



SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING



FOOD AND WASTE



**PROMOTE BIODIVERSITY
AND THE OUTDOORS**



EXPAND YOUR KNOWLEDGE



BE MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT



Heating

It's not about sitting there shivering, but thinking about how to be more efficient. This depends on your heating set up at home, but some general tips include:

- Closing curtains and blinds overnight to keep heat in, but let the warmth in if the sun is shining
- Make sure long curtains don't obscure radiators
- Draught proofing - you could even make your own draught excluder!
- If you have single glazing, you could use secondary glazing film
- Wrap up warm
- Don't have the thermostat on too high if you have one
- Use thermostatic radiator valves so the heating is only on in the rooms you are using
- Could you get smart heating controls?

TURNING YOUR THERMOSTAT DOWN BY ONE DEGREE CAN SAVE UP TO £60 A YEAR ON YOUR ENERGY BILL AND UP TO 310KG CARBON DIOXIDE.

Energy Saving Trust

Switch off

- Fully power down electronics or switch them off at the plug rather than leaving on standby
- If you're prone to forgetting, a smart power strip with a timer function will turn them off for you
- Use as much natural light as possible - could you adjust your workspace to get the best natural light or switch off the lights in the rooms that are not in use?

Email

- Consider your email habits - sending an email with attachments can have a carbon footprint of around 50g CO2 equivalent
- Could you use MS Teams instead?

REDUCE YOUR WATER USE



Shorter showers and shallow baths

Use a shower timer (try two minutes) to try to conserve water and save money on your bills.

**ON AVERAGE, YOU CAN SAVE FIVE LITRES OF WATER BY
RUNNING A BATH JUST ONE INCH SHORTER.**

WATERWISE

Washing up

Use a bowl rather than leaving the tap running.

Leftover water

Use leftover water from cooking or the kettle (once cooled) to water plants.

Washing clothes

Save water and energy by reducing washing machine use, and make sure the washing load is always full. Air dry clothes rather than using a dryer if possible.

Cistern water savers

Water savers in your toilet cistern (for example HIPPO) can save up to three litres of water on every flush.

SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING



Consider your current buying habits

Ask yourself, do you need to buy this? Could you buy less of certain items or buy them from more sustainable or ethical sources?

We can vote with our wallets!

Shop local and independent

[Independent Birmingham](#) is a great resource to find and use more Brummie businesses and [Bookshop.org](#) is a great way to support local bookshops if you do want to buy books online. Check if your favourite local shops are doing deliveries if you can't shop in person.

Delivery

Avoid next day delivery unless you really need it.

Fairtrade

Purchase [Fairtrade](#) or other fairly traded products.

**THERE ARE OVER 4,500 FAIRTRADE PRODUCTS
AVAILABLE TO BUY IN UK SHOPS.**

Fairtrade Foundation

Packaging

Are there any zero waste shops near you?

Have you seen any plastic free alternatives you could use?

Consider switching

To a green energy supplier or ethical bank.

FOOD AND WASTE



Get creative

A big benefit of working/learning from home is that you might eat out less, meaning more control over what you buy, where it comes from and how it's packaged. It also gives you the opportunity to get creative with your lunches and use any saved commute time to find some new recipes. One of the most significant actions we can take as individuals to minimise our environmental footprint is to eat a more plant-based diet, so why not use this time to try out some vegan or veggie meals?

77% OF FARMLAND IS USED TO CREATE ANIMAL PRODUCTS, WHICH ACCOUNT FOR 18% OF OUR FOOD, WHILE 23% IS USED TO GROW PLANTS FOR US TO EAT, WHICH SUPPLIES 82% OF OUR FOOD.

AIMHI

Shop local or Fairtrade

When you buy local food, you also reduce air miles. Also look out for Fairtrade products and other ethically-sourced options.

Waste less

Eat leftovers for lunch and use scraps to make stock. Think about how you store food so it lasts longer - check out [Love Food Hate Waste](#) for some tips.

Reduce and reuse

You will probably be generating more waste than usual at home. Think about what you can use less of and what you can use again, possibly for a different purpose.

Recycling

Check that you are following the correct recycling practices for where you live. Do you have space for a [compost bin](#)?

PROMOTE BIODIVERSITY AND THE OUTDOORS



Own outside space

If you are lucky enough to have your own outside space, think about how you could make it more biodiverse, for example, by creating a small pond, setting up bird feeders or planting wild flowers. Could you also grow your own food? Could you reuse items to help with this, for example old sinks as a pond or bicycle wheels as a trellis?



Explore your local green spaces

If you can, get some fresh air every day and go for a walk or a cycle.

Learn about nature

When exploring your local outdoor spaces, take the opportunity to learn more about nature – there are some great apps and websites to help with this, including [PlantSnap](#) and [iNaturalist](#).

If you prefer hard copies, the [FSC guides](#) are really useful.

Bring the outside in

Can you bring the outdoors into your workspace? Position your workspace so you have views of outside while you are working, do some indoor gardening, or invest in some houseplants to surround yourself with greenery.

EXPAND YOUR KNOWLEDGE



Learn and share

Take time to expand your knowledge on sustainability topics, and discuss what you learn with others. This could be through books, TV shows or podcasts.

Podcast recommendations

- Outrage and Optimism
- Mothers of Invention
- In Defence of Plants
- Resurgence Voices
- Sustainability Defined
- Costing the Earth
- The Sustainability Agenda
- Ways to Change the World
- Sustainable World Radio
- Next Economy Now: Business as a Force for Good
- Liberating Sustainability (SOS-UK)

Book recommendations

- Silent Spring - Rachel Carson
- How Bad are Bananas? - Mike Berners-Lee
- The Uninhabitable Earth - David Wallace-Wells
- The Future We Choose - Christiana Figueres

SDGs

You could find out more about the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) - the [Good Life Goals](#) website is a useful resource showing what individuals can do to assist with the SDGs.

Online courses

Is there a certain area of sustainability you want to know more about, or maybe something practical you want to learn? We recommend the recorded sessions from the [Sustainable\(Ish\) festival](#).