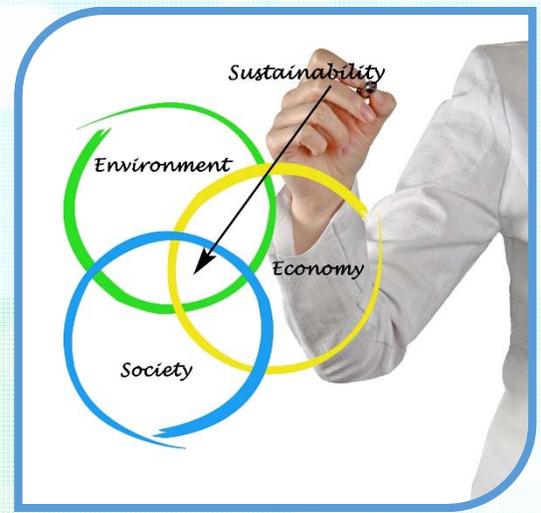


What is Sustainability?

Sustainability is continued development or growth, without significant deterioration of the environment and depletion of natural resources for future generations.

Sustainability has three equal parts: society, environment, and economy. By keeping these three parts in balance the world will be able to prosper. [Check out the three Sustainability models.](#)



What can you do?

There are several easy things to do to keep the parts in balance at home, in your travels, and with the food you eat.

Home

- **Lighting Changes:** there are loads of high-tech green infrastructure gadgets you can get to but one simple thing to do is convert old light bulbs to LEDs when they burn out. At times the LEDs can be more expensive but they will save you a considerable amount on your electric bill (especially if you like to have all the lights on at night). Also see: [LED vs. incandescent vs. CFL](#) bulb comparison chart
- **Programmable Thermostat:** purchasing and installing a programmable thermostat will allow you to automatically change your home or apartment temperature while you are gone during the day. (Why heat a house when no one is there?) Along the same lines, turning down the thermostat and putting on a sweater during the winter can also save a few pennies.
- **Low-Flow Toilet:** adding low-flow toilets, faucets, and shower heads will help reduce water consumption and could open up opportunities for a home garden (even in drought season) without increasing water consumption.
- **USEPA Green Homes:** These and many more ideas for your home are found on the [USEPA's Green Homes](#) website.



Travel

- **Carpooling:** Is a great way to get to know your co-workers or schoolmates and could also save you money as well as cut down on environmental impacts.
- **Commuting by Bike:** Riding a bike can be a cost-effective and healthy way to get to work or school. Illinois Bicycle Rules of the Road can be found under the Quick Links on the Illinois Secretary of State's [Traffic Safety: Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety](#) website.
- **Staycation:** Vacations are a time to relax with your loved-ones but traveling can not only be a headache but also expensive. Consider doing a staycation where you do fun things around your hometown that you don't normally get to do. Or consider traveling only a few hours away. Several websites offer "How To Staycation": [WikiHow](#), [About.com](#), [Forbes](#), and [Huffington Post](#) offer some good ideas.



Food

- **Buy Local:** One easy way to be sustainable with food is to buy local produce and products. Typically the best way to guarantee local is by shopping at the farmer's market. But a local food coop and even some grocery stores will carry items from local producers.
- **Take Inventory:** Another way is to take stock of what you have and only buy what you need, thus saving time and money.
- **Composting:** Instead of creating more landfill debris and racking up garbage truck emissions from hauling food scraps, consider composting. A home composter can simply be a small covered pile in the backyard and can handle most food scraps and yard waste. Both [Plant Natural](#) and [Earth Easy](#) offer some excellent composting guides.

