

LIVING SUSTAINABLY



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The same way your mom nags at you about cleaning your room or doing household chores because it's your house too, you have a responsibility to take care of planet Earth a little, because it's your planet, don't you think?

Sustainability is a broad topic but a lot of it is related to conservation of the Earth, keeping in mind the needs of the future generations. Sustainable living is a lifestyle in which one tries to use the least amount of Earth's non-renewable resources, and reduce their carbon footprint in the process.

Living sustainably is as simple or difficult as you make it. You don't need to drastically change your life and give up things you love; you only need to make choices that are eco-friendly. This article will help you understand what choices you can make to positively impact our environment.

To make things easier, everything is divided into sections.

WATER

Something I was guilty of doing for quite a while was taking long, hot showers. Heating the water uses up a lot of energy, and the length of the shower means wasting a large amount of water. A short, cold shower is a much more sustainable alternative. Since the weather in Bangladesh is already warm most of the time, a little cold water won't do you any harm, but will be great for the environment.

Avoid buying plastic bottles of water. Re-usable water bottles can be your new friend. Try carrying one wherever you go. You'll be saving both money and the environment this way; plastics take up a big chunk of the total generated waste. Water bottles can even act as an accessory.

ELECTRICITY

Switching off the lights and fans when not in use is one of the most obvious ways to conserve electricity. We all know it, but how many of us actually remember to do it? From now on, try to be conscious about this whenever you're leaving a room.

Something that almost all of us do is plug in our cell phones to charge for the entire night. Your cell phone most probably does



not need overnight charging and you waste energy by keeping it plugged in. A good alternative would be to charge your phone two hours or so before bed, while doing something that does not require cell phone use. Less screen time, more "me time" – it's a win-win situation.

Also remember to shut down your computers when not using them instead of keeping them in sleep mode. Even though it sounds like a chore, it would be best to unplug your computers at night before you sleep since unnecessary energy consumption must be avoided. You could also unplug TVs, and try not to keep the air-conditioning on for the entire night. Most air conditioners come with the feature of scheduling when it should shut down on its own while you're asleep. Try using that if you must.

FOOD

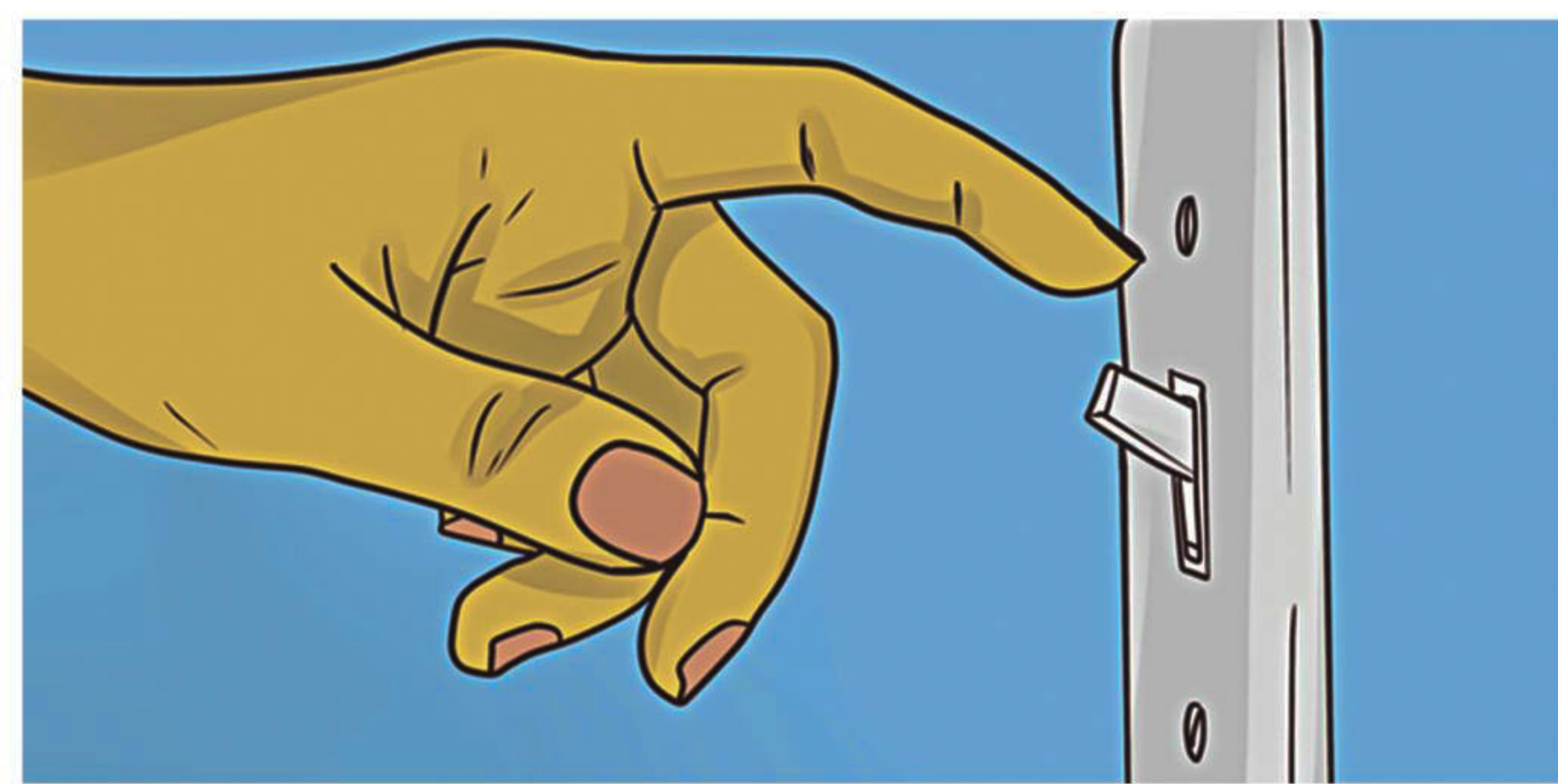
While vegetables are readily available in stores all around, what one could try is set up a rooftop garden. If you're interested in it, organisa-



tions like Green Savers can help set up everything on your rooftop.

Fast food joints are popping up in every corner of Dhaka city these days. Without even realising, you are probably contributing to an extremely wasteful industry. Most of us have no information as to where the ingredients are coming from, if the suppliers are paid well, or if all the leftover food and packaging is recycled afterwards. I'm not saying you should quit fast food altogether, but cutting down on buying takeaway and spending the time to cook food at home using fresh ingredients is the best option for both your physical health and the Earth.

If you're just starting out cooking and have no idea where to start, consider using apps or websites that allow you to input what ingredients you have in your refrigerator and then present you with a variety of



recipes that you can follow. A good example would be www.supercook.com but there are many others just an internet search away.

PLASTIC

Bangladesh being a riverine country, it's not a surprise that water pollution is a big issue here. Littering is something that needs to stop. Plastic substances, including bottles, packets, bags thrown into water bodies harm aquatic life, as well as the people using the water as part of their daily lives.

While buying products with plastic packaging, look out for the "recycle" symbol – a triangle created by three arrows, sometimes with a number inside. The number tells you how many times it can be recycled or if the product is recyclable. Buying recyclable plastic is always the better option. You also have

control over some plastic use that can easily be substituted. Say no to plastic cutlery and utensils, you really do not need them. Anything that is easily disposable should be avoided. Trade your tissues for a handkerchief that you can wash and reuse when possible.

Students or young adults almost always have a backpack wherever they go. Try to carry whatever you buy inside the backpack instead of taking extra bags/packets from stores. If you have no option but to accept plastic packaging, think of ways to reuse it at home instead of throwing it away, but watch out as some plastics can be toxic.

RECYCLING

The importance of recycling has been taught to us by teachers for years, but do we ever consciously make an effort to

recycle? Luckily for us, we have a recycling system that can even help us earn a few extra bucks. Old newspapers, plastic bottles and bags – all of these can be sold to shops that accept old items, which are then recycled. Even if you can't directly sell your items, you can easily ask your garbage disposal person to help you out. If you want to, you can make the extra effort of sorting the recyclable materials for convenience.

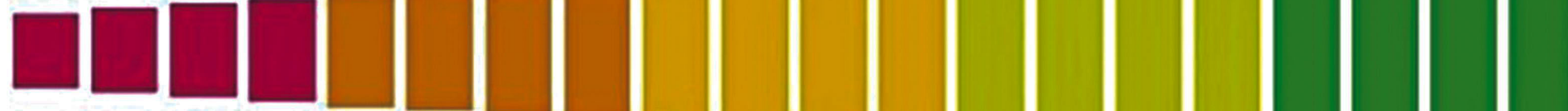
TRAVEL

The amount of noise and air pollution paired with fossil fuel consumption is at an extreme high. In a country like ours, it's not always that easy to stay away from private vehicles and use public transport. However, if you need to go a short distance, please make the time and walk. If your destination is far away, then consider opting for a rickshaw or using a bicycle if you have one. We do not really have many bicycle lanes around but if more of us choose a bicycle over anything motorised, maybe that will change. Also, whenever possible, take the stairs. This will cut down elevator use, saving power and also help you be more physically fit.

Nobody is expected to wake up one day and completely change their lifestyle. Take it slow, implement things one by one. Soon, you'll find you've made a habit of choosing the sustainable option whenever possible. These small steps can help pave the way to a better Earth.



Mayabee Arannya can never say no to a cup of tea or cute doggo pictures. Send the letter at facebook.com/mayabee.arannya



LEAST SUSTAINABLE
MOST SUSTAINABLE