

GO GREEN

10 (Easy) WAYS to help save our planet

You know the mantra: reduce, reuse, recycle. As regional governments get behind going green through eco-friendly campaigns, so can you with these easy everyday tricks

1 Donate your old mobile phone Millions of old phones end up in landfills each year, so that's a lot of e-waste. Check out FoneSwap UAE (www.foneswap.com) for details on how to sell your old ones for cash or trade them in for newer models, or simply donate them for responsible disposal.

2 Buy in bulk The more product you get per container, the less packaging you're using and the less waste you'll create. Rather than buying individually-packed items, buy the largest family-sized portion you can find from supermarkets like Hyperpanda or Lulu Hypermarket. Bonus: you'll save money too!

3 Use natural cleaners Many store-bought cleaning products contain hazardous substances that can affect your skin, breathing and pollute air quality. Look for natural options in shops, or if you prefer using a maid service try Eco Clean (www.ecocleanuae.com), an eco-friendly cleaning service that uses their own brand of 'green' products.

4 Support local farmers The less your food travels before it reaches you, the lower the carbon footprint and

'food miles'. Shop locally-grown produce at farmer's markets (check out Ripe and Baker & Spice in Dubai, and Mazaraa in Abu Dhabi), and choose regional over exotic items flown in from far away.

5 Go with a laptop While desktop computers may look bigger and fancier, laptops are up to 90 per cent more energy-efficient thanks to features like low-energy display screens, automatic sleep modes, and rechargeable batteries. They also need less packaging material. When shopping for your next model, look for Energy-Star certified options.

6 Switch to a better light bulb By using energy-efficient bulbs, you could consume 78 per cent less energy, shrink your carbon footprint by 280kg, and save almost 80 per cent on your lighting bills. Your bulbs will also last longer. Learn more about the UAE's Make The Switch Project at www.maketheswitch.ae.

7 Ditch the dry cleaning While it may be great for cashmere and silk, dry cleaning is not great for the environment. The cleaning chemicals are listed as toxic, contaminate soil, and are even listed as a potential carcinogen. For

your delicate items, try Blossom Dry Cleaning (blossomcleaners.com) in Dubai, which uses organic solvents.

8 Plant a tree They absorb carbon dioxide, produce oxygen, provide a home for wildlife, help prevent soil erosion, and aid in water conservation. Donate one through Goumbook (www.goumbook.com), where you can have an indigenous Ghaf tree planted locally on your behalf for just Dhs20.

9 Go veggie once a week Did you know it takes 2,500 gallons of water to produce one pound of beef? Breeding animals also uses up vast amounts of land and fossil fuels, while the destruction of rainforests to make way for grazing grounds threatens numerous species. Check out our vegetarian recipes on *p102*.

10 Lend a hand With bottles, cans, food packets and cigarette butts littering our lands, it's time for us all to lend a hand in the clean-up. Operation Ozone (www.operationozone.org) and the Environmental Society of Oman (www.eso.org.om) both organise regular local beach and desert clean-ups. It's a great way to spend a day with the kids, too. ■