

THE ECO MOSQUITO

SUSTAINABILITY NEWS AND EVENTS AT HSPH AND BEYOND

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Ahhh, January. A new year and a new semester make us feel warmly optimistic in the midst of this cold winter. Turns out the world didn't end in December, so let's get back to taking care of it!

Resolve to Treat Yourself and the Earth Better in 2013



It's January, and you know what that means: time to take advantage of your renewed sense of determination and purpose! Yes, it's yet another list of new year resolutions, but these ones are special. They'll benefit you, the Earth and everyone on it for years to come. Resolve to adopt at least a couple of these habits and you'll get in shape, organize your life, save money, and be green all at the same time.

- **Use reusable shopping bags.** We know you have a plastic bag full of bags somewhere in your house. We all do, and it drives us mad how it seems to keep growing. Reusable bags will cut down on clutter and won't fill up landfills or get stuck in the nearest tree.
- **Stop buying bottled water.** There's a reason why the cafeteria stopped selling it; it's a waste of money and resources. But hydration is important, so use a refillable bottle and sip away.
- **Make the switch to CFL.** As old light bulbs die, replace them with energy efficient CFL bulbs. You can get that same soft glow and you'll save yourself some money in the long run.
- **Use recycled paper products.** No matter how precious your derriere, there's no need to waste virgin fibers on it. Recycled toilet paper (tissues, and paper towels), cost the same and clean every bit as well. Save trees and eliminate chlorine pollution with your bum!
- **Bike or walk to work, if possible.** Even if you only do it a few times a week, this is a lovely way to start your day. Some brisk exercise will leave you feeling refreshed and ready to face the day, especially if you spend a lot of time at your desk.
- **Stop wasting gas.** Increase your gas mileage by checking your tire pressure. A Department of Transportation survey found that more than a quarter of all cars and nearly one-third of all SUVs, vans and pickups have underinflated tires. Don't be one of those schmucks!

DON'T MISS THIS!

In case you missed Al Gore's first big green talk at Harvard back in 2008, catch the former US Vice President and Nobel Laureate presenting **Healthy Planet, Healthy People: A Conversation with Al Gore** at Memorial Hall in Harvard Yard in Cambridge on Wednesday, **February 6**. The talk begins at 7 PM, and doors open at 6:15. Free and open to the public.

Come see what the HSPH **Green Team** has up their sleeve for 2013. We'll be meeting on Wednesday, **January 23** from 11-12 in the 90 Smith Street first floor conference room (a group will be meeting at 10:45 AM at the Kresge security desk to walk over).

DID YOU KNOW?

Harvard's CommuterChoice Program is now offering benefits to those who bike to work. In 2013, look forward to tax-free reimbursements for bike-related expenses like purchase and repair. Emergency Ride Home services will also be provided to faculty and staff who don't commute by car. See the CommuterChoice website or hsph.harvard.edu/bikes for details.

Tips for the Tough Ones

Only the hardcore among us will brave biking through a Boston winter, but here's our advice for those who will:



Stay visible! At the very least, have a white light in front and a red flashing light in back. Now that it's cold enough to wear a few layers, fluorescent yellow or reflective outerwear is a great option, including vest, leg bands, and arm bands.

Stay warm! Layering is key in the cold. Put on a base layer that wicks away sweat, a middle layer that insulates by trapping your body heat, and a windproof, waterproof outer shell.

Stay safe! Winter weather means lower driving visibility, stressed drivers, and poor road conditions. Swap your thin, smooth road tires for cyclocross tires or wider tires with better traction. As always, make sure your brakes are working and your chain is lubricated. Take your time and leave a bit earlier so you're not rushing. Brake earlier too – the roads may look clean but black ice is tough to see, especially in the dark. Don't bike if the road conditions are bad!

GREEN TIPSTER

Don't put just anything on your skin! The world is full of toxins and, unfortunately, some of them end up in cosmetics. There's a great resource for finding safer products at ewg.org/skindeep. The Skin Deep site provides a database rating the safety of ingredients in many of the products you probably have at home. Use it to find the best products out there to keep you looking and feeling like a million bucks.



Psst! We're on Facebook, and we're hoping that you like us enough to let the online world know it. "Like" us at HSPH Eco-opportunity. We don't post too often, but when we do, it's a gem.

Contact us at ecoop@hsph.harvard.edu