


THE LITTLE GREEN NOTEBOOK

*Presented by: The New School Office of Student Housing and
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You're probably already using a canvas bag to take your groceries to and from your car and have your [Siggy water bottle](#) in tow at all times. Moving to New York City will probably make you walk everywhere and force you to make the most of your cramped living space. The purpose of the Little Green Book is to give you some tips on how to begin thinking of, and beyond, the basics of leaving a lighter footprint on our planet as a college student in New York City. When reading this book, please keep in mind the changes in the environment may not only affect you but others, including those you cherish most, your loved ones. It's better now to take care of your home, our home, rather than to trash it.

This guide is divided up into sections of your everyday residence life as a continuing student or first time freshmen, from moving in to partying to cooking. It's loaded with links to the websites mentioned, but there are many more out there. Make sure to do your own homework too. This is not the only guide that exists, and it shouldn't be seen as your only resource. Having the mantra "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" in mind will ensure that you are able to reduce your impact no matter how unique the situation or context.

The New School is committed to continue reducing its own environmental impact, and we encourage all students to help us with that goal. The University is already signed up for the Mayor's Challenge for Universities and is a participant in the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment. For more information about the University's commitment to reduce, reuse, and recycle: check out [Greening New School](#). At the end of this guide is also a list of online resources and organizations if you're interested in learning even more.



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Moving In

a. Getting to New York City

Flying...

If you're flying to New York by yourself or with your family, see if the airline or booking agency you used has an option to purchase carbon credits. When you purchase these, it means that you're offsetting (meaning spending the amount of money in emissions that are created) your flight. That money usually goes into investing in everything from renewable technology investments to planting trees around the world. Some private companies where you could purchase these as well include Carbonfund.org, TerraPass, and Native Energy.

Driving...

Same story goes for driving to New York City. Although it may seem absurd, traveling long distances can still be more harmful to the environment than necessary (especially if your parents are driving the mini-van or pick-up truck to lug half of your life with you). Carbon Fund, TerraPass, and Native Energy all provide carbon credit purchasing for car trips as well as plane flights.

Walking...



. . . just kidding

b. Stuff for your room

Your personal belongings should last as long as possible. If you still have a nice wardrobe from high school or if your parents have some gently used kitchen appliances, bring it with you. It's better to re-use as much as possible instead of purchasing new items. If you do have to buy some things, see if it's on a buy and trade website like Craigslist. If you do have to purchase new items, there are stores like Sustainable NYC in East Village that sell products that are environmentally friendly or made from recycled materials. You also might want to check out Climate Counts, an organization that rates how well big companies are doing.

Your Room

a. Computers/Laptops

Put your computer/laptop onto Power Save mode to cut back on electricity, or better yet, turn it off when you're not using it. Also, laptops use less energy than desktop computers, so keep that in mind if you're purchasing a new computer for the academic year. If you're buying a new one, check to see if the laptop is Energy Star® Certified (meaning it uses less energy than standard electronic appliances): ([Energy Star](#))

b. Clothes

Want to get rid of that sweater that your mom made you pack to use "just in case?" At some places, you can get paid to donate your clothing! Check out places like [Beacon's Closet](#) in Williamsburg where they will pay for (almost) ANYTHING you bring and give you either 35% cash or 55% store credit. It may not be a lot, but it's better than giving your stuff away for free.

If you're feeling like a philanthropic, you can always bring your clothes to the Union Square Farmer's Market every Monday and Saturday from 9AM – 5PM at the Goodwill tent. Here's a [link](#) to all Salvation Army thrift store locations in New York City.

c. Windows

Curtains will be your best friend to help make the most of your window space. Not only do they make your room look unique and cool, but they are great insulators for any type of weather, especially in the winter.

d. Printer Paper

Ask your professor if it's ok to print out your work double sided. Not only will you save paper, but you'll save money on having to purchase paper. And speaking of paper, purchase recycled content printer paper. This means that the paper used is made from previously recycled paper. They sell it at most major office supply stores like Staples and Office Depot and it's just a couple of dollars more than purchasing brand new paper. Why kill something that was 2,000 years old so that you can use it for a week?

e. Phantom loads

Do you often see a light on for your electronic device telling you that it's plugged in? That means that the cord is still drawing energy from the socket. In other words, you're still using electricity even when something is not turned on! When you're not using a cord to power up your devices, unplug it from the wall. It's an even easier task when you have a power strip, that way you can simply shut it off when you're not using any electronic devices.

f. Ink Cartridges

Recycle your old ink cartridges at any office supply store. Staples even offers a \$3 reward! And if you want to save even more money, you can stop by [RICE](#) on 13th between University and 5th Ave where they can refill your ink cartridge so that you're only paying for the ink.

g. Furniture / Electronic Appliances

For purchasing new electronic appliances, you should again look for products that have the Energy Star label on them or see if it's on sale at [Craigslist](#). For new furniture there are a few places you can go to (in addition to Salvation Army or Goodwill) such as [Housing Works](#). For a list of Manhattan Thrift Stores, Consignment Shops, Vintage Clothing Stores, and more check out: [All NY](#). Lastly, if you have any light appliances, make sure to purchase CFL light bulbs instead of incandescent ones. Not only will they last longer but you can drape fabric or a transparent material over them safely without the fear of setting the fabric on fire.

h. Plastic Bags / Paper Bags

The point of having to carry things around with you is not to simply replace plastic bags with paper bags. Even if they're made from recycled paper, no one ever knows what to do with them. Instead of wasting unnecessary space in your closet, invest in a canvas bag or two. They sell them at most stores and you can even get ones that fold into little pouches that you can put in your bag / purse or on a keychain.



Your Common Area

a. Lights

Simple rule: If you don't need the light, don't turn it on, especially if it's during the day. Put up a sign next to the light switch to remind yourself to shut off the light, so that you're not wasting electricity!

b. Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning

Depending on your building setup, you might be able to control the amount of heat or cooling that enters your room.

If you have a radiator . . .

Most radiators should come with valves that control the amount of steam that comes into your room. Just like screws "Lefty Loosey (to let on the heat), Righty Tightly (to prevent heat from entering)." However, don't close the valve entirely otherwise steam builds up and water begins to condense and spill over. If you feel that the heat is too much, don't open up the window. Leave a bowl of water next to the radiator so that it acts more like a humidifier, allowing for the air in your room to be moist instead of dry.

If you have an Air Conditioner . . .

Don't leave the door to the hallway wide open, unless you're interested in making sure that the hallway is cool instead of your suite/room. Instead of leaving the A/C on all the time, raise the temperature a little bit to use less energy (74 degrees max). If you're really responsible, you can also set a timer (depending on your A/C) to turn off or on for when you're leaving or coming back from class.

If you have control over your Central Air / Heating . . .

Be very minimal about its use. And if you don't control the heat or cooling in your room, tell your RA or maintenance staff to adjust the temperature appropriately. It may also mean that your device might not be working properly. Fill out a work order to have it looked at.

Your Kitchen

a. The Farmer's Market @ Union Square

Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. 9AM - 6PM. The market is one of the few opportunities you will ever get to have access to locally produced goods, ranging everything from jam to squash. The Market is located on the Northern and Western edges of the park on most business days.

For those of you at William Street, there is a smaller Farmer's Market at Lower Water Street (across from the Seatport and just South of Fulton Street) every Saturday, 7AM – 1PM.

b. Trader Joe's vs. Whole Foods

Both stores have an amazing variety of organic, local, and/or sustainable products. TJ's is infamous for its long line at 14th ST, however is significantly cheaper than Whole Foods. Whole Foods is known for its higher quality produce and products and also has an amazing buffet to grab a quick bite in their upstairs seating area.

c. Cooking

When cooking, always use a pan top. Water will boil faster. When it boils, leave the top on (or mostly on) and turn down the heat! Also, if you're debating on whether to use the microwave or stove top (natural gas), use the microwave as it will use less energy. However, if your stove top is electric use whichever method is going to make your food taste better.

d. The Fridge

Check the temperature in your refrigerator's sensor (usually located right next to the indoor light). See about raising the temperature in your refrigerator to no more than 40 degrees. Also, have an idea of what you're going to be taking out of your refrigerator instead of contemplating whether you're going to eat leftovers or a Peanut Butter and Jelly sandwich with the door wide open.

e. The Sink

If you see that it's leaky, fill out a work order! Also, look into purchasing a wash cloth instead of a sponge for cleaning your dishes or better yet a dish scrubber. The latter is much more efficient than most sponges or clothes.



f. Compost

Now, now it's not the heaping, steaming pile of disgusting rotting junk that often comes to mind. Composting is a really easy and interesting way to reduce your waste stream by putting stuff that you used right back into the Earth. So what is compost you ask?

Well, let's first understand that anything that breaks down easily over time can be composted. However, if you chose to bring your compost to the Farmer's Market at Union Square, it's important to remember that they **ONLY** accept vegetable scrapings, coffee grounds, plant materials, and egg shells (**NO MEAT OR DAIRY**).



There are two ways that you can compost

Sealed Tight Container Method

This is usually easier, although more prone to rot if not taken care of properly. Keep your container in a dark, cool place and place a plastic bag inside of a sealed container. Every time you have anything that's compostable, place it in the container and tie the bag up and seal the container. This is an ideal situation for those of you who have already composted for a while and are willing to take compost out often. Avoid keeping compost in your sealed container for longer than a week. If your room is now attracting flies, we recommend trying the next method.

Mr. Freeze Method

This method is ideal for those of you who either don't accumulate a lot of compost and/or for those who are trying composting for the first time. Allocate some space in your fridge because if you go with this method you are freezing your compost. Yes it is safe for your fridge. No it will not smell ... much. To minimize smell, it's important to take it out often (more than once every two weeks)

Where can you compost?

If you're in the Village area housing (Loeb Hall and 13th Street), the Farmer's Market at Union Square is ideal. You can drop off compost on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 9AM – 6PM at the Lower East Side Ecology Center Van (usually in the Lower West Side of the park).

If you're living at William Street or 20th Street, unfortunately there's not many other places to drop off compost that are closer. However if you're really dedicated you can make the trek out to the Farmer's Market as well.

For residents of Stuyvesant Park, there is a compost collection site on East 7th St. between Aves. A and B on Sundays from 8AM – 5PM at the LES Ecology Center Community Garden. Aside from compost collection, the garden itself is home to a beautiful community raised garden, of which there are plenty in East Village.

Your Bathroom

a. Shower

Want to cut back on your water and energy use in the shower? First off if you have a leaky shower head make sure you fill out a work order! And make sure to turn your water valve all the way off so that you minimize the amount of dripping. Secondly, make your showers as quick as possible. As refreshing as it can be, it's important to keep your water usage low. Lastly, when washing your body, don't leave the water running. Use only enough to lather up the bar soap or body wash and then rinse after.

b. Sink

Just like with the shower, if you see that it's leaky, fill out a work order! Also don't let the water run, if you're not using it (you're stealing water from the fishes). For guys, if you're shaving, use the water stopper to fill the sink with hot water.





c. Products (Cleaning / Food / Ect...)

As you're aware , most products out there contain labels. Here are some quick tips to making the best consumer decisions possible.

If you purchase something biodegradable ...

This means that the product can naturally break down in the environment. This can be an energy intensive process depending on the product (i.e. cleaning, detergent), but your time is well spent in that you're helping out our environment.

If you purchase a food product that says USDA organic ...

This means that the product was labeled organic by the US Department of Agriculture. Generally, this means that no pesticides, toxic chemicals, or energy intensive methods were used in the making of the product. It doesn't take into account how a product has traveled, packaging, or recycled content. For more information on the only organic labeling organization check out the [National Organic Program](#) on the web.

If you purchase something all-natural / organic (no USDA label) ...

This means that the product uses no man-made products. Be wary of products that only say they're organic with no USDA label. They're a product of "green washing" in the media and are usually using their own methods to claim that they are doing their part to reduce their own impact, which is not telling the whole story of the impact, if any, it has.

Most Trader Joe's and Whole Foods products are very reliable, especially the following:

Method (Cleaning Products)

Tom's of Maine (General Hygiene Products)

Seventh Generation (Cleaning Products)

Burt's Bees (Honey Based Cosmetic Products and Hair Products)

Your Floor / Residence Hall

a. Burn Calories, not Electricity! Take the Stairs.

Most buildings have stairwell access these days. Not only are you going to be saving electricity, but if you're looking for a way to add some variety to your daily walk, taking the stairs to get to class will give you some form of physical exertion.

b. Bike to class!

Biking is a great form of exercise and it cuts down on your travel time to get to class. There are numerous bike racks on campus located in front of most New School buildings. The 20th Street and Stuyvesant Park residence halls even have bike storage in the basement for students to save on space. [Craigslist](#) is a great resource to purchase used bikes. Make sure to purchase a helmet and bike lock and follow [street traffic regulations](#).

c. Become an advocate

If you're really passionate about environmental issues, talk to your RA about doing a fun program in your residence hall to promote awareness. Also, call people out! If you see someone throw away a plastic bottle in the trash; take it back to them and tell them that they put in the wrong place.

d. Laundry

Don't ever wash your clothes unless you have enough for a full load. If you need to clean something right away, ask someone else who's washing their clothes if you could put your item in with their wash.



Going out...

a. Take the Subway, not a Taxi

After hours, taxis put on a surcharge of \$.50 in addition to the \$2.50 flat rate. If your destination is far away, it makes better sense economically to take public transportation. There sometimes is construction that goes on late at night in the subway so make sure to check in with the [MTA](#) website to see if there are any service changes. [Google Transit](#) is another great resource that includes route options, schedules, and estimated travel time for all of NYC's public transportation. If you do end up taking a taxi, try hailing one that has the GreenNYC symbol on it. This means that the vehicle is a hybrid or is flex fuel powered.

Your Campus

a. Computer Labs

If you're looking to print out a paper or a project, see if you can print on both sides. You'll save both money and paper at the same time!

b. Bottled Water

New York City has access to one of the world's most readily accessible and cleanest water sources in the world. With that said, say no to bottled water! If you still insist on getting your water filtered, look into purchasing a stainless steel water bottle so that you can simply refill it at any water fountain or bottled water fill up station.

c. Take the Stairs! Not the Elevator

Just like in your residence hall, especially those of you who take the elevator from the 1st Floor to the 2nd Floor. Yeah, you know who you are.

d. ReNew School

Have you heard of those crazy kids that took over two parking spots in September to make the space into a park for the day? Well the group behind that and other green events on campus is [ReNew School](#). The group aims to make the campus more sustainable and to educate the University community regarding environmental issues. Want to help get composting in our university dining facilities? Have an interest in networking with green organizations or companies for internships or jobs? Movie nights? Administrative proposals? Visit [ReNew School's](#) own site and on [Facebook](#).

Moving Out

You've just finished the year and you want to give yourself a big pat on the back. But then you realize that Housing gives you 24 hours to move out after your last final / project is completed. It's not exactly a long time to make sure your room is completely vacated, especially if you're sharing a suite with four or more people. Some quick tips will help make sure you're not just throwing away everything in the trash.

a. Donations / Curbside

Take a look around your room. Now imagine having to move all of it out. In all of that mess, understand that if you want to depart with your old electronic devices like printers, you can leave them behind with the school where it'll be collected and either donated or recycled. As for furniture, if you really want to get rid of that sofa/futon/ottoman, you can always bring it to a donation store or leave it on the curb. Usually if you leave a "curb alert" on [Craigslist](#), the couch will be gone the same day. Also don't hesitate to leave your stuff with RAs or friends that might be staying in the city over the summer.

b. Cleaning Supplies

Most of the residence halls to support the environment and recycling encourage residents moving out to not throw out cleaning supplies. Instead, we ask you to collect them in one place, please in a bag, and leave a note offering these items to the next occupants.



There is no Planet B.

Take care of our one and only home, Earth

New York City Organizations and Online Resources

Environmental Non-Profit Organizations / Job / Volunteer Opportunities

[The Lower East Side Ecology Center](#)

[Sustainable South Bronx](#)

[Envirolution](#)

[GreenMaps](#)

[Food Not Bombs \(NY Chapter\)](#)

[The Natural Resources Defense Council](#)

[Sierra Club](#)

[Idealist.org](#)

[The Salvation Army](#)

Cool Websites / Blogs

[TreeHugger](#)

[GreenBiz](#)

[DotEarth \("The New York Times"\)](#)

[Inhabitat](#)

[EcoGeek](#)

If you have ideas about additional information, tips and resources that can be added to the Little Green Book please e-mail Lenny Zeiger at zeigerl@newschool.edu.

Thanks in advance for doing your part to make our environment a healthier place to live.



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