




A CRASH COURSE IN

# SUSTAINABLE LIVING

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Breaking down sustainable living  
into simple steps  
to avoid the overwhelm



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# What Is Sustainable Living?

Trying to lead a more sustainable lifestyle can often be an overwhelming journey. There are so many contradictions of what is sustainable and what is not.

Also, I think people sometimes misinterpret what sustainable living actually means.

You speak to some people and they will throw out words like recycling, vegan, carbon footprint etc. Which yes, can all form part of living a sustainable lifestyle but it's not the whole picture.

I feel that sustainable living is so much more than that!

The official definition for sustainable is...

*‘able to be maintained at a certain rate or level’*

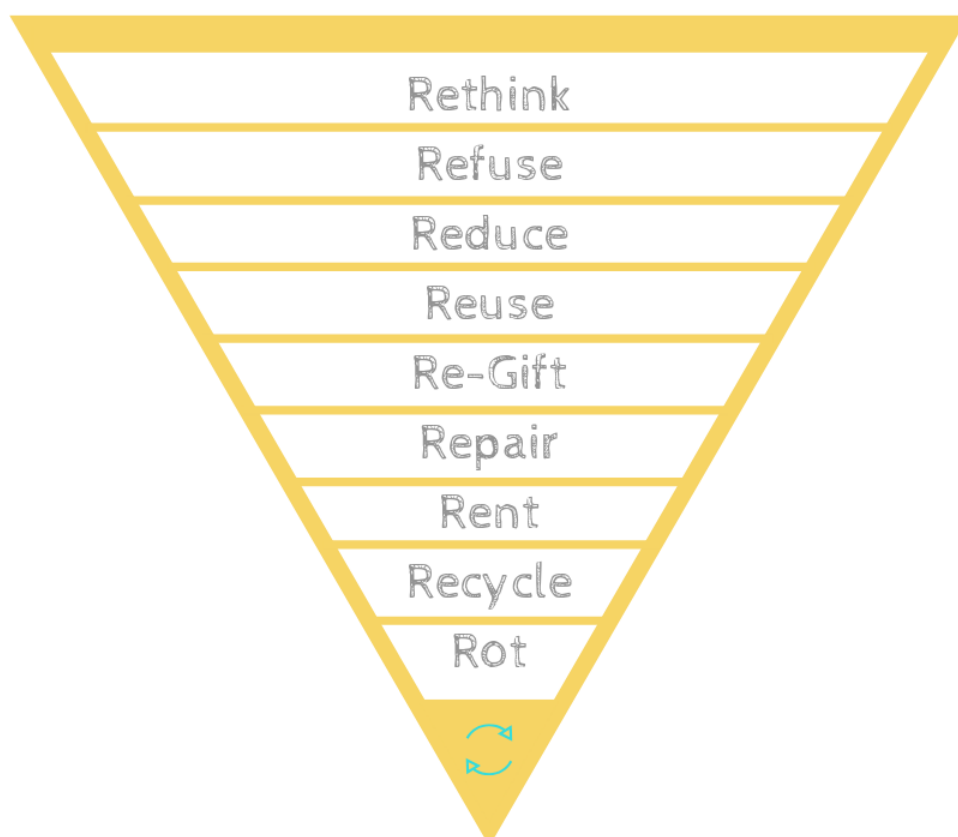
The ‘living’ part refers to your life. So to me, sustainable living means to create a lifestyle that you not only enjoy & love living but one that you can also maintain without too much stress.

Sustainable living isn't only for 'hippies', 'tree huggers' or 'earth lovers'. Having a sustainable lifestyle is something that we should all be embracing and aiming to achieve in our lives.

## How To Start with Sustainable Living

Whenever I start to get overwhelmed with trying to lead a more sustainable lifestyle I always refer back to the 9 R's...

Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Re-gift, Repair, Rent, Recycle & Rot.



# Rethink

The best place to start with trying to live a more sustainable lifestyle is to rethink or reassess what you're currently doing.

Markdown any areas of your life that you're not happy with and then start to formulate a plan for how you can make changes.

"Recognising that you are not where you want to be is a starting point to begin changing your life."

If you're unhappy with how much rubbish you produce then do a waste audit.

If you're surrounded by too much clutter then plan a decluttering session.

If you're health & wellbeing isn't as good as you'd like it to be, then think about what you can do to improve that.

Then Get Inspired...

Start reading blogs on sustainable living.

Start watching inspirational Ted Talks

Read books on simplifying your life

Join relevant groups on Facebook. Making changes in your life is so much easier when you surround yourself with like-minded people that inspire and encourage you on with your journey.





# Refuse

One of the first steps in living a more sustainable lifestyle is to start refusing things that you don't need in your life.

Whether that be toxic relationships, physical clutter, mental clutter, bad habits, fears or grudges.

Anything that won't or doesn't bring value to your life, just say no!

For physical clutter start doing things like opting-out of junk mail. Say no to the plastic straw at the bar. Stop buying products that come in too much packaging.



# Reduce

Once you've had a rethink and have established which areas of your life you're not happy with it's time to put plans into action.

One of the easiest ways to live a more simple and sustainable life is to reduce what you have and need.

*"The less you have, the less you have to lose"*

When I was in my teens and early twenties I would constantly look at other people's lives and all of the things they had.

I'd get jealous by all their fancy stuff and get depressed that I didn't have all of those things myself.

In around my mid 20's, I started to reassess what I wanted out of life and completely changed my outlook on almost everything.

Now when I see people with big houses, fancy cars and all that stuff I have one thought...

I would not want the pressure of trying to maintain all of that!

Because having stuff causing pressure and stress. As I said above 'the less you have, the less you have to lose'.

So, what have you got in your home or life that you could reduce? What products or items could you go without?





# Reuse

Reusing items you already have rather than opting for single-use products forms a big part of living a sustainable lifestyle.

There are so many great reusable products out there these days from reusable coffee cups to reusable baking mats. It's made it so much easier to switch to eco-alternatives.



# Regift

Re-gifting is a concept that some people struggle with as you're giving away a gift that some else has bought you.

However, surely it's much better to pass the gift along rather than it stay in a cupboard in your home collecting dust?

I find it helps to remind yourself that the person that gave you the gift got the pleasure out of giving you the gift in the first place.

Therefore the gift served a purpose. If it's not something you are going to use then pass it along to someone that will.

The vlogger, Jenny Mustard even goes as far as having a gift cabinet in her living room where her guests can help themselves to anything that takes their fancy.

Personally, I really like this idea.

If you can't quite bring yourself to re-gift it to someone you know then you can always give it to a charity shop.

# Repair

Repairing our worn out goods used to be common practice but it slowly became a lost art in today's throw away culture.

Before you go rushing off to the shops when something breaks or gets worn out could you repair it?

Upcycling has had a huge resurgence over the last 10 years and there are lots of tutorials online to help you.



# Rent

When you do need to get something new have you considered renting the item rather than buying it?

Instead of borrowing from rental shops, more and more people are hiring stuff straight from their neighbours and saving huge amounts of money in the process.

Websites like [\\*Fat Lama](#) are at the heart of the growing sharing economy, which includes Uber and Airbnb.

By renting stuff from your neighbours instead of buying not only are you saving yourself a lot of money but you're also reducing the number of products you own and have to store in your home.

# Recycle

If you can't reuse, re-gift or repair an item then you can, hopefully, recycle it.

You may be surprised to find recycling so far down on the list but it should really be seen as a last resort if you haven't managed to do the other R's above.

This is because recycle products uses up a lot of energy!

Now don't get me wrong I'm definitely not saying stop recycling just try to consider the other R's first.

Most councils in the UK now have doorstep recycling schemes for things like glass, plastic, tins, paper, cardboard and garden waste.

For anything else check online to see what you can recycle in your local area.

Websites such as Recycle Now are great for finding out what you can and can't recycle near to you. It's worth taking a look as you might be surprised by what you can recycle.



# Rot

For anything that can't be reused, regifted, repaired or recycled can you put it in your compost?

Starting a composting system in your home is not as hard as you might think. There are also lots of different types to suit all homes.

After a bit of research, I discovered that our local council sell start-up kits for residents that would like to try their hand at composting and they were only £12!



# That's It!

If you are wanting to start living a more sustainable lifestyle then following the 9 R's is a great way to begin.

If you'd like to learn more about starting to live a more sustainable lifestyle then visit my blog

[www.gypsysoul.co.uk](http://www.gypsysoul.co.uk).

And remember...

*"Living a sustainable lifestyle is a journey  
not a destination"*



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