



**RENN**

Regional Hubs for  
Sustainability Strategies

# Climate-friendly living at home

**The sustainable shopping basket:**  
Guide to environmentally conscious  
and social consumption





# The path towards a sustainable home

How much energy does the washing machine consume? What toxic substances are contained in wall paint, rugs and furniture? How should we deal with detergents and everyday garbage? At home, inside your own four walls, there tend to be many things that are not only less than sustainable – they're sometimes even harmful to your health. For those who would like to live sustainably at home, here are a few starting points for making a big difference: recycling, laundry and furniture purchases. Taking action around these specific areas is one way of doing something for your own four walls – and for your health and the environment.



## **ENERGY-EFFICIENT LAUNDRY**

Wash your clothes at the lowest possible water temperature setting. By regularly bringing the temperature down a notch, you can lower your energy consumption by up to 35 percent. However, for hygiene reasons, you should wash towels, sheets, dishcloths and similar items at higher temperatures. Even so, 60 degrees Celsius is always hot enough. You can reduce energy consumption a great deal more by using your washing machine's energy-saver cycle and by only using the machine for full loads.

## **THE RIGHT DOSE OF DETERGENT**

With every wash, toxic substances are released into our wastewater and bodies of water – which is why you should use your laundry detergent with care. Liquid detergents are a bigger burden on sewage treatment plants than powders. And whenever possible, go for refill packs. Both biological detergents as well as modern detergent pods are a good choice. Yet the right dosage is the decisive factor when it comes to the environmental impact of washing detergents.

## **DOING DISHES THE RIGHT WAY**

If you wash your dishes by hand, don't use running water. If you have a dishwasher, make sure to fill it up properly. And as often as possible, use the economy or short cycle at 50 to 55 degrees Celsius. When the dishwasher isn't in use, be sure to switch it off. The standby mode consumes energy unnecessarily.

## **FEWER CLEANING PRODUCTS**

Whenever you can, buy eco cleaning products that put less of a burden on human health and the environment. A minimum set of necessary cleaning products includes dish soap, a vinegar cleaner, an all-purpose detergent as well as a scouring agent. When it comes to household cleaning products, special detergents and disinfectants are not required.

## **MULTI-PURPOSE CLEANING TOOLS**

Always go for multi-use cleaning tools – in other words, avoid paper towels and use cloths that can be

washed at 60 degrees Celsius. Sponges should not be plastic-based but made of natural raw materials such as luffa. This way, you prevent micro plastic particles from being released into the water cycle.

## **A NON-TOXIC HOME**

Paints, varnishes, rugs and wallpaper from conventional manufacturing may contain toxic substances, and these can be released into the air you breathe at home, particularly during renovations, but also over time. This includes solvents, plasticizers, preserving agents, formaldehyde and terpenoid compounds. Their evaporation can lead to irritations or even allergies. To create a healthy indoor climate, it's helpful to air rooms regularly and, when carrying out renovations, to choose products that are gentle on your health and the environment. This includes low-emission wall paints and varnishes, rugs made from recycled paper, and environmentally friendly floorings.

## **SUSTAINABLE FURNITURE**

Sustainable furniture tends to be durable and strong. It's made from natural raw materials that have been grown or extracted and processed under responsible environmental and social conditions. When buying products made of wood, opt for domestic wood varieties and avoid products made of tropical wood, as these contribute to the deforestation of the rainforest and are frequently manufactured under questionable conditions – both environmentally and socially.

## **ALL WOOD IS NOT CREATED EQUAL**

The precise type of wood is also important: real wood and solid wood are time-tested as they don't need to be varnished with chemical additives. They prove more robust than such wood products as chipboard and laminated wood. While sustainable furniture may be more expensive than furniture from discount furniture retailers, the investment will prove worthwhile in the long



run. Solid wood furniture tends to survive multiple generations. And if you need furniture, it's always a good idea to be on the lookout for used pieces.

## ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY FLOORING

You should always opt for long-lasting, hard-wearing flooring that is not hazardous to human health. Textile floorings bind dust, thereby lowering interior pollution through fine dust. However, they tend not to be very durable and are high maintenance when it comes to cleaning. Wooden floors enhance the look and feel of a room and have a long lifespan. Take care not to choose wooden floors that have been sealed with solvents and formaldehyde. It's best to opt for wooden floors from ecological forestry.

## SEALS FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING

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The **Blue Angel** marks multiple household goods that comply with ecological criteria.



The **EU Ecolabel** identifies products with a low environmental impact.



**Ökocontrol** stands for sustainably produced furniture, upholstery and mattresses.



The **GuT signet** applies to rugs that have been produced in an environmentally friendly way.



The **Nature-Care-Product-Standard (NCP)** is an environmental seal for laundry and cleaning detergents.



The **Ecocert seal** marks environmentally friendly laundry and cleaning detergents.



# The sustainable shopping basket

Check out [www.nachhaltiger-warenkorb.de](http://www.nachhaltiger-warenkorb.de) for important information about sustainable consumption as well as independent information about the various seals and product labels. You'll find information about food, travel and mobility, living and building, housekeeping and electronics, as well as fashion and cosmetics.

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