

The 10 Essential Secrets to a greener & healthier office - revealed!

1. Don't waste energy

Office buildings account for 28% of commercial energy demand, according to the Department of Energy, a few simple changes can decrease office energy use. How you may ask? Adjust the sleep mode on your computer to be start after 5 minutes of idle time. Desktop computers can cause 1500 pounds of carbon dioxide a year and by enabling sleep mode you can reduce energy consumption by up to 70.

2. Don't become allergic to your Office

Dust is the second leading cause of allergies, followed by pollen. Many offices have a very serious dust mite problem and there are likely millions in yours. Each dust ball can contain as many as 250,000 mites. Avoid dust and other contaminant by using an air purifier that uses a true-medical grade HEPA in combination with a granular carbon filter. The HEPA filter helps trap contaminants like dust and other particles of .3 microns or larger, while the carbon absorbs toxic chemicals that may be emanating from office equipment like the printer and fax.

3. Create a green Sanctuary.

Many plants like Gerber daises, philodendrons and peace lilies absorb airborne pollutants, making the air you breathe cleaner. Although plants are not a replacement for an air purifier they do a great job of filtering out various contaminants like formaldehyde and others. They also help to create a better atmosphere to work from.

4. What's outside your drinking water?

Over 1 million plastic bottles go into landfills every day in America, which requires 1.5 million barrels of oil to produce and more than 1 million tons of plastic that emits more greenhouse gas than 500,000 cars. They also pose health risks; make sure to check the labeled number under the bottle inside the triangle. Use only plastic bottles that are numbered #1, #2, #4 and #5. They contain polyethylene or polypropylene and require the use of less toxic additives. They also are non-chlorinated. Make sure to avoid bottle numbers PVC (#3), polystyrene (#6), and polycarbonate (#7) which contain hormone disruptors or other horrible chemicals.

5. See the light

Artificial lighting accounts for more than 25% office energy use. Reduce office electric bills by using light-emitting diode, LED bulbs instead of the more popular energy efficient, compact fluorescent bulbs, CFLs. Although LEDs are initially more expensive, swapping out incandescent bulbs can save \$700 over its lifetime.

6. Conserve Paper

Paper makes up 40% of trash and that is more than any other type of waste. Printed proposals, emails and documents cause the average employee to use 10,000 sheets of paper a year. Also the paper making process in itself causes deforestation, water pollution and demolishes habitats of thousands of animals. When buying paper look for recycled products like the post-consumer recycled content paper that does not rely on newly cut trees. Also, go digital and make sure you only print what is absolutely necessary. Pay your office bills online and don't print unnecessary handouts. In most cases people are completely fine with receiving electronic documents.

7. Avoid "Electromagnetic Pollution" in your Office

With the increased use of wireless office laptops, wireless keyboards and mouse and cell phones many people are literally becoming ill from the 21st century office. Make sure to be using cable modems when ever possible and utilize air tube wireless head sets during cell phone use.

8. Use Eco-Friendly Cleaners

The National Research Council estimates that fewer than 30% of the roughly 17,000 petrochemicals available for use have been tested for their effects on human and environmental health. That is why it is important to use healthy organic cleaning products. Recommend to your facility manager that he or she should utilize cleaning companies that use healthy cleaners. If this can't be changed, at least make sure you're wiping down your office with eco-friendly healthier multi-purpose cleaners.

9. Beware of the Office Break Room

Far too often people like to watch their food cook in the microwave and unknowingly subject themselves to harmful microwaves. Make sure to be at least six feet away from the microwave when it is in use. Also another concern is unfiltered water from the kitchen sink. Tap water is poorly regulated and most water public utilities test for only 100 chemicals out of potentially 1,000's that can be present. Convince your office manager to invest in a reverse osmosis or carbon based water filter. This will provide you with a better source for cleaning fruit brought to the office and better drinking water.

10. Don't trash it

When throwing out old office electronics make sure to dispose of it in the proper manner. In many states in the US it is illegal to throw out old electronics and you can incur a fine. Instead, look for community recycling events or local drop off stations that will recycle and reuse salvageable materials. In addition to electronics you have to be careful in the disposal of your Ink cartridges. They can take up to 450 years to decompose. Instead recycle your old ones, and next time you buy, go with refilled cartridges, which cost up to 75% less than new ones.

Learn more by visiting www.the9to5greened.com