

Seven Steps to a Healthier Happier Earth

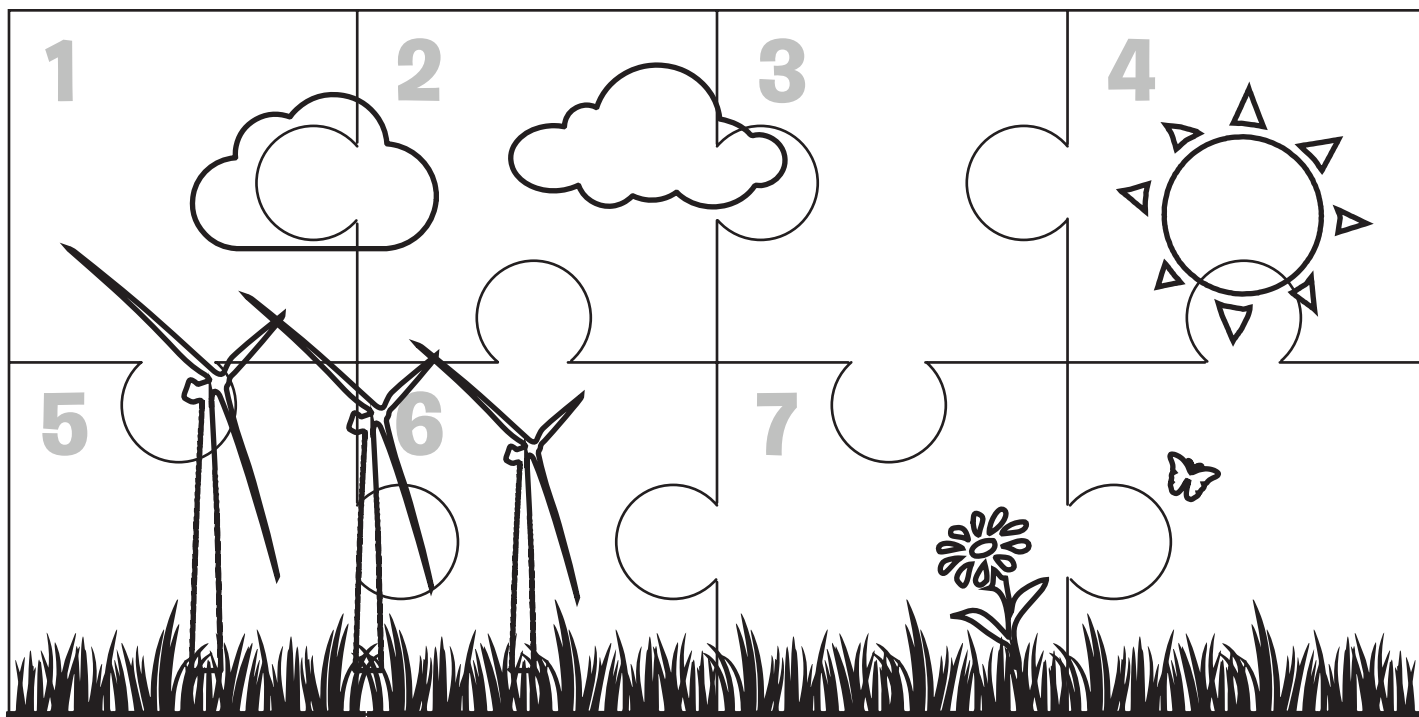
Below are some earth-friendly educational activities, organized into a puzzle board – one for every day of the week!

Step 1: Print the puzzle board.

Step 2: Color in the pieces as you complete each challenge. The last piece is a free space!

Step 3: Once your puzzle is completely colored in, autograph it and mail it in for special prize!*

*The County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation is located at 5500 Overland Ave., Suite 410, San Diego, CA, 92123. Please mail completed puzzles to this address, c/o Marketing Department.



Activity 1

Create an “upcycled” craft using items you can find, lying around the house.

Bring new life to things you either don’t use or were planning to throw away, by turning them into your very own artist installation!

Go on a scavenger hunt to find things like scrap paper, bottle tops, empty containers, old magazines, string, foil, toilet paper/paper towel rolls, empty cans and more. Based on what you find, build whatever comes to mind...

Did you know that recycling a single aluminum can saves enough energy to run a television or computer for three hours? You can also make 20 cans from recycled materials with the same amount of energy it takes to make a new one!

Activity 2

Create a reusable shopping bag by repurposing an old shirt – no sewing required!

- Find an old shirt you are no longer wearing.
- Turn it inside out and lay it flat.
- Cut off the sleeves, the collar, and the bottom (right past the hemlines).
- Cut 1-inch strips on the bottom.
- Tie the strips into knots (the front and the back of the shirt, so there are no holes).
- Turn the shirt outside in, and... ta-da! You have a reusable bag!
- Widen the collar if you need a larger hole.

Did you know that a cotton shirt takes 1 to 5 months to decompose? This is the same amount of time it takes for your hair to grow an inch!

Activity 3

Plant a bean and watch it grow!

Dry beans like lima beans, pinto beans, mung beans and lentils work best. These can be purchased in small doses from grocery stores that sell in bulk.

- Presoak the beans for a day in a cup of cold water.
- Dampen some paper towels (at least two layers).
- Squeeze out any extra water. Lay the towels flat.
- Place the beans on the paper towels, leaving at least 1 inch between each bean.
- Roll the paper towels with the beans inside.
- Place the towels in a clear cup or a jar (so you can watch them sprout!).
- Put the cup or jar in a windowsill – or wherever they can get plenty of sunlight.
- When it’s big enough, consider planting your bean plant it in your patio or yard!

Did you know that plants can help improve air quality? They are also helpful at lowering background noises, and in reducing environmental stress. Test your green thumb today!



Activity 4

Take the Nature Explorers Pledge.

Copy this text onto your own piece of paper. Sign it and take a photo with it to show your commitment to reducing your carbon footprint.

I _____, pledge to do my best to uphold the values associated with being a Nature Explorer.

Being a Nature Explorer means doing your best to follow these principles, do you have what it takes to RISE to the top?

RESPECT – Treat others better than you would like them to treat you. Leave nature in a better state than it was in when you arrived.

INTEGRITY – Doing the right thing even when no one is watching and nobody will find out.

STEWARDSHIP – Responsible use and protection of the natural environment through conservation and sustainable practices.

EXCELLENCE – Giving your best effort to be the best that you can be.

I agree to RISE to the challenge of becoming the best Nature Explorer that I can be.

I pledge to do my best to respect the environment and protect the resources that it provides so that future generations can also enjoy the outdoors.

I pledge to encourage and challenge others to respect and protect the environment.

I pledge to respect plants, animals, and persons in the wild and in my community by following Leave No Trace principles.

I pledge to do my part in reducing water waste and in reducing waste of resources to make small yet significant energy choices on a daily basis.

I pledge to limit my use of electronics and get outdoors to be active more often.

I pledge to avoid people, places, and activities which encourage violence and delinquency.

I understand that as a Nature Explorer, we all have a responsibility to protect the environments that we encounter. I will do what I can, at home and anytime I am outdoors, to make sure the generations after me can enjoy the same adventures that I have the opportunity to participate in.

Name

Date

Signature

Take a picture with your pledge to post on social media. When you do, be sure to make it public and to include these hashtags: #upsideofinside #energysavingadventures

Activity 5

Spend some quality time outside your home, to save energy during peak hours (4 – 9 p.m.).

Need ideas? How about the following?

- Read a book under a tree (consider downloading the free Libby app!).
- Use sidewalk chalk to draw pictures, write phrases and play hopscotch.
- Play catch with (your family or your dog).
- Set up a campsite in your backyard. Watch the sunset, gaze at the stars!
- Choreograph a dance. Video-share it with your friends.
- Play “I Spy” or “Telephone”.
- Go skateboarding, scootering or ride a ride.
- Rake up a leaf pile... and jump through it!

Did you know? Peak hours refer to time of day with the highest energy demand. Energy is limited with so much use, and it ends up being more expensive to consumers.

EXTRA CREDIT: Time your next shower! What’s your favorite song? See if you can get in and out of the shower in the time it takes to sing that song from start to finish. This saves both water and the energy that’s required to heat your water and power your bathroom lights.



Activity 6

Harness the power of the sun and brew solar sweet tea!

Ditch the microwave! Take advantage of our typically sunny skies with a refreshing recipe that looks good, tastes good and curbs power use.

For 1 serving you will need:

- 16 oz. mason jar or clear glass
- Drinking water
- Tea bag of your choice
- Honey or sugar (to taste)
- Thermometer

Instructions:

- Fill $\frac{3}{4}$ of your glass or mason jar with water.
- Place the tea bag and thermometer in the water.
- Place the mason jar/glass in an area that allows the jar to be completely exposed to the sun.
- Check the mason jar's temperature every 15 minutes.
- When the water temperature no longer rises, the tea is ready.
- Stir, sweeten, and serve!

If you don't have a thermometer, you can use the color of the tea to determine whether it is done or not. When the tea is fully brewed, it appears to no longer get any darker because the tea bag has seeped for long enough.

Activity 7

Identify “energy ghouls” in your house!

Draw ghosts on eight sticky notes. Then, using the items and related costs listed below, write those details on the sticky notes below the ghosts. Place them around your house, wherever you can find those objects. They'll serve as helpful reminders to think twice about turning on a device, or to leave things on when they're not in use.

- TV: 0.02 – 0.04 cents/hour
- Video games: 0.02 cents/hour
- Cell phone charger: 1 cent/hour
- Computer: 4 – 6 cents/hour
- Microwave: 23 – 38 cents/hour
- Toaster: 1 cent/hour
- Blender: 2 cents/15 minutes
- Coffee maker: 4 cents/pot

EXTRA CREDIT: Keep track of how much money you can save in a day, when you avoid or limit use of those objects. Take a picture and post it on social media. When you do, be sure to make it public and include these hashtags: #upsideofinside #energysavingadventures

