

## The Green Notebook

### Let's Talk Paper Conservation

I use a lot of paper and I try not to. So what can I do to reduce my paper consumption? I looked through a few of my handy "green" guides, did a little searching on the internet and came up with these fairly simple everyday habits we can all try at work and at home to dramatically reduce paper use.

- \* Use a **message board** rather than paper notes for family and business communication, if you can.
- \* Stock your kitchen with lots of **cloth kitchen towels** which you can reach in a moment for spills and quick clean-up. Then just toss them in the laundry (decreasing your dependence on paper towels)
- \* **Share subscriptions** to your favorite magazine, newspaper or newsletter with a friend or relative.
- \* **Use cloth** handkerchiefs when feasible, cloth napkins, cloth diapers, reusable shopping bags, gift bags and lunch boxes. Explore washable air and oil filters and even coffee filters and tea infusers instead of their paper counterparts.
- \* This is a big one: when printing, ask yourself, "**Do I really need to print this?**" Use both sides of the paper (set your computer default to double-sided printing, widen your margins or use "Fit to Page" options in your software) when you can. At the office (and at home) put up a sign near the computer printer and the copier that says, "Do you really need to print (or copy) that? Check out [www.panda.org](http://www.panda.org) (the World Wildlife Federation) and do a search for "**Think Before You Print**"—you can download and print great posters to hang and also utilize a great inventory checklist for each department at work when thinking about printing/copying.
- \* When faxing, eliminate the cover page by using **stick-on fax labels**.
- \* When copying, use **image reduction** if possible to save space. Only make multiple copies when really necessary and copy to both sides of the page.
- \* **Reuse paper**—use the other side for note paper, to print drafts, etc...you'll be surprised at how much paper you save with this simple step.
- \* **Reduce your unsolicited mail** at work and at home. There are plenty of services out there—some for free and some for a nominal fee—that will help you stop getting mail you just have to toss or recycle.
- \* Use **electronic communication** as much as possible—E-vites, E-cards, E-mail...it all adds up to paper savings.
- \* Conduct a **paper-less meeting**—have everything available on-line with little or no handouts at the meeting.
- \* And don't forget to institute a workable **paper recycling** program at work, school and home—but the best answer is being mindful to reduce our consumption in the first place.

Hope this helps! I know I've found a few habits we need to instill at our house.

*Tuesday Trippier lives in Delaware, is a writer and mother of three with a special interest in green living.*