

Green Earth



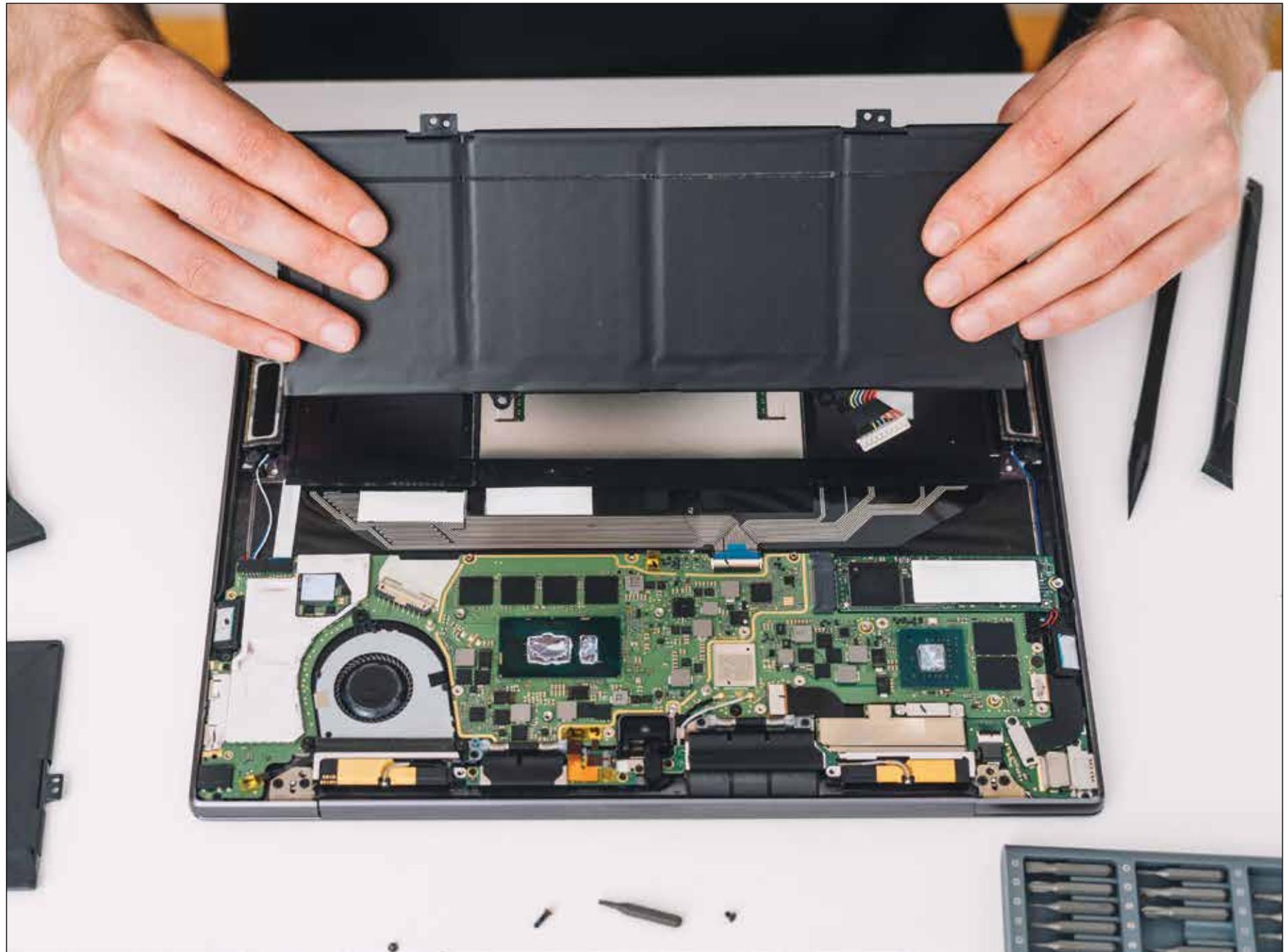
The Right to Repair Movement

If we've bought it, it's ours to do what we please with, or so it may seem. However, with many items in our modern life, that's not exactly the case.

In many cases, especially with electronics and automobiles, the manufacturers require their own tools, services or software to repair things. The concept "right to repair" is that owners of devices, equipment and vehicles have the right to freely maintain, repair or modify their things as they see fit, and there's a movement to push back against manufacturers' requirements for repair or modification.

WHAT IS THE RIGHT TO REPAIR?

Manufacturers' restrictions on access to parts, tools, software and more creates a repair monopoly, the Digital Right to Repair Coalition says. That locks independent repair shops out of making repairs, often forcing consumers to pay higher prices for repair or opt to purchase another item. The coalition says manufacturers withhold repair documentation, making do-it-yourself repairs more difficult and dangerous. Some manufacturers block third-party options. For example, the group says some tractor manufacturers put equipment



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into a limp mode until proprietary dealer software clears the errors.

If consumers could repair their products, proponents say, fewer things such as electronics and appliances would be trashed for new. Items could be kept in use longer and more sustainably. U.S. PIRG, another advocate for right-to-repair

legislation, says Americans purchase 160 million new smartphones each year, using 23.7 million tons of raw material. That level of consumption isn't sustainable, it says.

RIGHT-TO-REPAIR MOVEMENT

People in a variety of industries as well as regular people

who want more control of their things are pushing for legislation to force manufacturers to sell spare parts at a reasonable price to owners and independent repair shops, make repair information available, and allow repair professionals and product owners to access tools needed for repairs.

Eight states have passed right-to-repair legislation and it has been introduced in all 50 states. It has been repeatedly introduced at the federal level but has failed to make it out of Congress. States with right-to-repair laws include California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Oregon, Texas and Maine.

The Carbon Cost of Get It Now

Fast shipping is a part of modern life and consumers are becoming conditioned to getting whatever they buy online as soon as the next day, at minimum.

But while this may be free shipping for consumers, it comes at a high cost to the planet.

Fast shipping increases emissions 10-12%, MIT research scientist Sreedevi Rajagoplan told the Associated Press. That comes from trucks leaving warehouses while not full, looping neighborhoods several times a day and even using airplanes to make sure the things we buy arrive as fast as possible.

“Consumers need to acknowledge that just a click of their mouse has physical and environmental repercussions,” says UC Davis’ Miguel Jaller, co-director of the Sustainable Freight Research Center. “Consolidation is what drives better efficiency. That’s why public transit is better than everybody using their own cars — you are consolidating a lot of trips in one train or bus. The more packages you can consolidate in one vehicle, the less resources you’re using.”

However, when consumers demand quick delivery, companies prioritize speed over sustainability. Some companies even use passenger cars to



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deliver packages driven by workers with no logistics training, creating more congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

It’s up to consumers, experts say, to take steps to reduce the carbon footprint of our e-commerce habits. Jaller encourages shoppers to avoid impulse buys and think ahead, planning purchases more carefully and avoiding returns. Companies

can take steps to be more transparent about the environmental effects of deliveries and offer consumers a more green option.

“It would be good if companies can educate consumers about the differences because right now the consumer may only see that all delivery options are free, so why would they choose something that

takes longer,” Jaller asks.

Delaying delivery by one or two days can result in a 36% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions and opting for three to four days pushes that up to 56%, Sreedevi says. He adds that people are more likely to delay or consolidate orders once they have a good understanding of the environmental impact of fast shipping.

Sreedevi says a 2024 study of consumers in Mexico backs that up.

“A significant number of consumers decided to wait for longer delivery or delayed their shipping when we showed them the environmental impact information in the form of trees,” Sreedevi says. “So, it’s important that they are educated.”

Reducing Light Pollution

Light pollution is the human-caused change to outdoor light levels above those that occur naturally.

Adding artificial light to the environment can negatively affect animals including migratory birds, sea turtles and pollinators. Components of light pollution include:

- **Glare:** An excessive brightness that causes visual discomfort.
- **Sky glow:** The brightening of the night sky over inhabited areas.
- **Light trespass:** Light falling where it is not intended or needed.
- **Clutter:** Bright, confusing and excessive groupings of light sources.

Dark Sky International says 80% of the world's population lives under sky glow and it's up to 99% in the U.S.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF LIGHT POLLUTION?

Light pollution has an effect on all kinds of animals and plants that depend on Earth's daily light-dark cycle. Scientist Christopher Kyba told Dark Sky that, for nocturnal animals, artificial light has a drastic effect on nocturnal ecology, disrupting reproduction and other behaviors. For instance, baby sea turtles find the sea by using the bright horizon over the ocean. But in areas where artificial lights



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line the beach, the tiny turtles turn toward that light instead, pulling them inland to almost certain death.

Light that shines where it's not needed is wasteful. In an average year in the U.S., Dark Sky says, outdoor lighting uses about 120 terawatt-hours of energy, mostly to light streets and parking lots. The group says at least 30% of outdoor lighting is wasted, mostly by

lights that aren't properly shielded or directed. The cost of that lighting is up to \$3.3 billion and 21 million tons of carbon dioxide annually, or about 875 million trees.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Dark Sky says there are things we can do to mitigate light pollution. Outdoor lighting should be shielded and directed to where it's needed.

These lights often use less energy and cost less, too. Turn off unnecessary indoor lighting, such as in empty office buildings. When possible, equip lights with warm-white LEDs and compact fluorescents as well as dimmers, motion sensors and timers to reduce illumination levels and save energy.

Dark Sky offers a self-assessment to measure your

light pollution and create a healthier environment for plants, animals and people. It even includes recommendations for people who live in apartments or rental units who may not be able to modify outdoor lighting. At the end, you can submit a photo and sign the Home Outdoor Lighting Pledge, earning a free Dark Sky Friendly sticker for your window.

Investing Sustainably

Sustainable investing can make you feel good about earning more green.

It's the practice of making capital allocation decisions based on socially responsible and ethical strategies to ensure the companies you invest in maintain a high standard of sustainability principles. Morgan Stanley says most companies see sustainability as a way to help the Earth and to make money. It says 88% of companies view sustainability as a way to create long-term value.

ESG PRINCIPLES

ESG stands for environmental, social and governance. It refers to a framework of understanding and measuring how sustainably an organization is operating.

It takes the holistic view that sustainability goes beyond environmental issues, including fair wages, shareholder rights and more. The term comes from a 2004 UN report and evolved into a more proactive movement into the 2020s. It now includes key elements related to environmental and social impact and stakeholder well-being.

There are a variety of platforms that issue ESG scores evaluating an organization's performance on sustainability metrics.

These scoring systems are either industry-specific or industry-agnostic, the



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Corporate Finance Institute says. The industry-agnostic scores tend to incorporate factors such as climate change; diversity, equity and inclusion; and human rights.

Some scoring systems include the Global Reporting Initiative, Principles for Responsible Investment and the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board.

TYPES OF SUSTAINABLE INVESTORS

The Corporate Finance Institute says there are different types of sustainable investors in the marketplace, including development banks, pension plans that support environmentally conscious corporations, religious institutions, nonprofit foundations, and socially conscious individuals. These

investors wish to advance environmental, social or governance principles.

Some funds and brokerages are putting together sustainable investing plans to cater to these customers. These ETFs and securities may not be driven just by profit but also by a desire to contribute towards moving the world to a more sustainable and ethical future. Even though

profit isn't the main focus, Morgan Stanley says sustainable funds are showing promise in the marketplace. In the first six months of 2025, the bank says sustainable funds posted a median return of 12.5% while traditional funds saw just 9.2%. Assets under management grew to a new high of \$3.92 trillion as of June 30, up 11% from December 2024.

Using Greywater

Greywater is untreated wastewater from household sources such as sinks, showers and washing machines, but not toilet waste, which is referred to as blackwater.

In most of our homes, greywater goes out to municipal waste systems along with blackwater and we don't think about it again. But there are more efficient ways to use it.

WHAT IS A GREYWATER SYSTEM?

Greywater systems collect water from the sources in your home and filters it to remove pollutants such as lint, hair and chemicals. The filtered water can then be reused, commonly in irrigation systems, even during water restrictions. Greywater shouldn't come into contact with edible parts of plants, such as vegetables or fruits, and people using greywater irrigation should take care to use as many plant-friendly products as possible. For some households, it's even possible to reuse greywater inside the house to flush toilets and in other nonpotable situations.

GREYWATER GUIDELINES

Greywater isn't fresh water and shouldn't be treated like it. Greywater Action offers these



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basic guidelines for using greywater.

- Don't store greywater more than 24 hours. Any longer than that and nutrients in it will start to break down and cause bad odors.
- Minimize your contact with greywater because it could potentially contain a pathogen. A greywater system should be

designed for water to soak into the ground and not be available for people or animals to drink.

- Don't allow greywater to pool or run off. Pooling greywater can give mosquitoes a place to breed and increase the chances for humans to come into contact with it.
- Keep greywater systems as

simple as possible. Avoid using too many pumps and filters that need upkeep. Simple systems last longer, require less maintenance and less energy.

- Install a three-way valve for easy switching between a greywater system and the sewer or septic system.
- Match the amount of greywater your plants receive with

their watering needs. Greywater Action suggests constructed wetlands to help ecologically dispose of excess greywater in areas that are home to naturally occurring wetlands. Wetlands may not work as well in arid climates where they would use too much water and not leave enough available for irrigation.

Sustainability in the Afterlife

The death of a loved one is fraught with big emotions and big decisions. If you or a loved one is committed to sustainability, that commitment can extend to death as well.

Green funerals conduct post-death care through natural means from start to finish. This can involve practices such as home funerals, green burial preparation and green burials, the Green Burial Council says.

GREEN FUNERAL PRACTICES

Many people aiming for sustainable afterlife outline wishes for a home funeral or home vigil, where their body will be cared for using natural, noninvasive procedures. Families, friends and spiritual care teams bathe and dress the body at home. In blended funerals, the family holds a home vigil but hires a funeral director for filing paperwork and other aspects of the funeral that the family may prefer to hand over to a professional. In some areas, professional green burial body preparation may be available to prepare and hold a body for burial without embalming.

WHAT IS A GREEN BURIAL?

A green burial allows full



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body interment in the ground in a way that does not inhibit decomposition. It typically does not have a vault, includes a nontoxic preparation of the body and uses containers made of organic materials. The Green Burial Council says dead bodies, when prepared and stored correctly, pose no threat of infection or other health risks. Furthermore, green burial sites take contamination very

seriously and often undergo testing at both local and state levels. Burial sites are often located a certain distance from known drinking water sources and other infrastructure.

Some people may not know what to expect at a green burial. The council says while each site has its own practices, typically families and friends are greeted at the cemetery by a funeral director. People

attending the burial should wear sturdy, outdoor footwear and dress for the weather. The body will be in a biodegradable container, such as a pine coffin, a wicker or grass basket, a papier mache pod or any other container that will decompose quickly in the ground. Shrouds are another good choice, but families should know that, with a shroud, the body form will be visible.

Green burial graves are dug about 3 to 4 feet deep. Wide boards are often placed on the edges to stop collapse and those boards are then covered in greens. The gravesite may be covered with natural greenery, including on the grave floor and covering the excavated dirt to soften the experience. The casket or shroud will be lowered either by a motorized device or by hand using ropes.

Managing Ecological Anxiety

It seems like every day there is more concerning news about the climate.

Record high temperatures, rising sea levels, stronger storms and more are all sounding alarm bells that can be difficult for people to cope with. Here are some coping tips for managing anxiety related to ecological distress.

WHAT IS ECO-ANXIETY?

Eco-anxiety is often rooted in feelings of uncertainty or a lack of control, the University of Colorado says. Climate change is a universal, chronic stressor that has the potential to effect people from all walks of life. More than two-thirds of Americans experience some form of climate anxiety, the American Psychological Association says. Learning to cope with eco-anxiety can help people avoid becoming overwhelmed and stay engaged in climate action.

EFFECTIVE COPING TIPS

To help deal with climate change and any anxiety you have around it, remind yourself that climate change is a complex issue that cannot be solved by one person, one organization or one government. Focus instead on what you can control, such as participating in climate change initiatives, calling on legislators to act, building more sustainable habits, engaging family and friends in



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meaningful conversations, and donating to organizations and causes you care about.

Avoid overload from working on too many climate projects or advocating for too many causes. Focus instead on a select number of issues to help reduce your overall

stress, find balance and maintain momentum. Let go of the urge to say yes to everyone and everything. Prioritize activities that feel the most meaningful to you. Approach the situation with kindness and compassion, including for yourself. Give yourself space

to sit with painful emotions. Name them by saying you are feeling disappointed or hurt to help you clarify what you're feeling. It's OK to feel stressed. Remember you can make a difference, even if you decide to take a break.

You may find the occasional

break from climate news helpful. Instead, engage with other activities and hobbies that fill your cup. Spend time in nature, take a day off to take care of yourself. If you step away for a little while, it won't change anything that happens.