



The ULS Report™

Helping people Use Less Stuff™ by conserving resources and reducing waste.

New Year's Resolution: Environmental Weight Loss

By Robert Lilienfeld, Editor

It's January and we're all in the throes of keeping our New Year's resolutions. Odds are, only 10% of us will. But what if keeping our resolutions will also keep some green in our pockets while keeping our planet green? Let's take a look at a few clever ideas.

Music, the Food of Love...

Many of you are trying to lose weight. That's great, because you'll reduce your size, your medical bills, your food budget, and your food waste. The problem is, it's hard to stop eating, especially when food tastes so good!

There's a new study done at McGill University in Montreal that indicates the pleasure we get from food is the same pleasure we get from listening to music! So instead of eating when you need a boost, listen to some of your favorite music. You'll feel better and so will your budget!



Keeping Your Cool...

Speaking of food, I'm always reminding viewers to consolidate trips while shopping so you can save gas. This creates fewer, but longer, trips. One of you wrote to tell me that you're concerned about food spoiling in the car during these longer trips, either because cold foods get too warm or hot foods get too cold.



I found a great answer at **Whole Foods** – these reusable bags are made of a tough plastic so they last a long time. I brought along a grocery sack and a lunch sack. As you can see, they're insulated with a zipper closure. They're great

for keeping hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Plus, recent news stories have shown that many reusable cloth bags contain lead-based pigments. These bags, which are made from polyester, are 100% lead free.

Greening Up the Laundry Room...

Here's one more arrow in my environmental weight loss quiver. It's called a dryer ball. Instead of paying for, using, and throwing away fabric softener sheets, put one of these in with a load of wet clothes.

It fluffs up the clothes, like the sheets do. And, because it helps air flow around your clothes, you should be able to get them dry in 25% less time, using 25% less energy, and saving 25% of the cost per load! I got these on line from **simplygoodstuff.com**.



They had two other laundry-related ways to save water, energy and money. First, we've mentioned over and over that the most efficient way to do laundry is by only running full loads. But what if you only have a small load? Maybe you're an empty nester, or living in a dorm, or simply have to get that one pair of pants clean – NOW!

This thing is called a WonderWash. It uses no electricity and very little water, but does a great job in a short time. You fill it with your clothes, warm water and detergent. Then, turn the crank for 2 minutes. Add fresh water and rinse for another 2 minutes. That's it! It costs less than \$50 and can save you up to \$200 a year.



Ready to dry the load? There's also a mini spin dryer that works just like your salad spinner. (See picture, next page.) Put the clothes in and turn it on for 2-3 minutes. It removes water and leftover detergents, and does so without heat, so it's safe for most clothes and uses very little energy or money to operate.

If clothes are still damp, you can run them in a traditional dryer for a couple of minutes, rather than the 30-40 minutes you're used to. Pretty cool (pun intended)!

Happy New Year from ULS! 🐼 🐼 🐼



How to Analyze Scientific Studies

We analyze quite a few scientific studies and research papers. Prior to reviewing the results, we always ask the following questions. (You should, too!)

What institution conducted the research?

Research should be conducted by institutions and not by individuals currently or formerly associated with them. Also, try and establish that the institutions are respected and credible, with a history of doing sound scientific research.

For whom was the research conducted?

Much of the time, reputable institutes are given research grants by government, environmental and industry groups. These groups are hoping that studies will either prove or disprove a particular perception or point of view. For example, the Tobacco Institute may fund a lung cancer study to be performed by Johns Hopkins University. There is nothing wrong with this situation, as long as the funder exercises no control over the study's design, execution, results or conclusions.

When did the study occur?

Make sure that results are recent. Otherwise, it's possible that the conclusions have been superseded by more current studies.

What are the credentials of the people conducting the research?

Medical research should include PhDs in the specific discipline being studied. Watch out for studies with "experts" whose credentials seem to be in fields that are not directly related to the research in question.

Were results published in a respected journal that routinely conducts peer reviews? Look for names like Nature, Science, The Journal of the American Medical Association or The Lancet.

Was the sample selected properly?

Try to make sure that bias is reduced through the use

of properly matched test and control groups. Check the reports for sections discussing methodology and any potential problems relating to it.

Is the sample size large enough to be projectable?

Studies of small samples are of dubious value. While such studies may be indicative of a trend or difference, they cannot be taken as scientific proof. If sample sizes are not listed, be very skeptical of the results.

Are differences between measurements statistically significant?

In order to claim that variable A is larger or smaller than variable B, the difference must be statistically significant. Generally, significant differences require there to be at least a 90% level of statistical certainty. Be wary of studies that do not list the statistical confidence level used when making comparisons or claiming differences.

Did the study contain other methods to eliminate bias and confounding variables?

Good studies go to great lengths to minimize the potential for error. They also go to great lengths to explain the bias or errors that may still exist.

Are results consistent with the generally accepted body of research on the subject?

Don't draw conclusions from single studies or ones that contradict the preponderance of available evidence. 🐼 🐼 🐼

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