A FREE 5-DAY MINI-COURSE FROM GREEN LIVING NOW

5 Steps
to Ditch Everyday Toxins
Without Overwhelm

Step 1: The Air You Breathe

Step 2: Your Plate

Step 3: Your Waste

Step 4: Your Laundry

Step 5: Your Self-Care

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WELCOME

Small Changes, Big Ripples

Ready to start living cleaner, healthier, and more intentionally, without feeling overwhelmed?

In this mini-course, you'll make five simple but powerful shifts to detox your home, food, and daily habits. Each step is designed to be doable and immediately useful, even if you're just getting started.

Here's how it works: each day you get one step and one small challenge. You don't need to gut your house or buy a cart full of new products. You just need to make one swap at a time.

Small changes really do ripple out to create a healthier body, a safer home, and a more sustainable planet. Let's dive in.

What You'll Learn

DAY	THE STEP	YOUR CHALLENGE
1	Detox the Air You Breathe	Swap one cleaning product
2	Clean Up Your Plate	Make one organic meal
3	Cut the Waste, Protect Your Health	Replace one disposable item
4	Detox Your Laundry	Make one laundry swap
5	Clean Up Your Self-Care	Upgrade one personal care product

STEP 1 OF 5

Detox the Air You Breathe

Your home should be your sanctuary, not a source of hidden toxins.

Did you know the air inside your home can be more polluted than the air outside, even in big cities? According to the EPA, Americans spend about 90 percent of their time indoors, where levels of some pollutants are often 2 to 5 times higher than typical outdoor levels.

Much of it comes from products we've been taught are normal. From your couch cushions to that lemon-scented cleaner under the sink, everyday items can release chemicals like formaldehyde and other volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the air you breathe. This is called off-gassing.

That "new" smell? It isn't freshness. It's chemicals in the air.

But here's the empowering truth: you don't need to gut your house to make a real difference. You just need to start, one conscious swap at a time.

Your Challenge: One Product, One Shift

Open your cleaning cabinet and pick just one product to swap for a safer alternative. Look for:

- **"Fragrance-free"** labels. Note that "free & clear" and "unscented" aren't always the same thing.
- **Third-party certifications** like EWG Verified or the EPA's Safer Choice label.
- **Or go DIY** with simple ingredients like vinegar, baking soda, and castile soap.

Why this matters

Even this one change can lower your exposure to hormone disruptors and asthma triggers. It's about taking back control of your health, one breath at a time. Let this be the first of many lightbulb moments.

STEP 2 OF 5

Clean Up Your Plate, One Meal at a Time

Your food should feed you, not your toxic load.

More than 10,000 chemicals are allowed in food sold in the U.S. And according to an analysis by the Environmental Working Group, nearly 99 percent of the food chemicals introduced since 2000 were approved by the food and chemical industry itself, not by the FDA.

It's not just about what you eat. It's about everything that comes along for the ride. Here are some of the top offenders:

WATCH FOR	WHY IT MATTERS
Pesticide residues	Some are linked to hormone disruption, harm to developing brains, and cancer. In 2026, EWG found pesticides on 75% of conventional produce tested.
GMO crops	Most are engineered to tolerate weed killers like glyphosate, which means heavier herbicide use.
Artificial dyes and preservatives	Some are banned or restricted in other countries but still allowed here.
Synthetic sweeteners and "flavors"	Research is still emerging, but some have been linked to changes in gut bacteria and metabolism.

It sounds like a lot, but you don't have to overhaul everything overnight. You just need to begin.

Your Challenge: Make One Organic Meal

Choose one meal today to make with organic ingredients, or as organic as you can manage. Some easy ideas:

- A colorful salad with organic greens and avocado
- A cozy soup using organic broth and vegetables
- Your favorite dish, with just one or two smart swaps

Your shortcut: EWG's 2026 Shopper's Guide

BUY ORGANIC (DIRTY DOZEN)	LOWER PRIORITY (CLEAN FIFTEEN)
Spinach; kale, collard and mustard greens; strawberries; grapes; nectarines; peaches; cherries; apples; blackberries; pears; potatoes; blueberries	Pineapples, sweet corn*, avocados, papaya, onions, frozen sweet peas, asparagus, cabbage, cauliflower, watermelon, mangoes, bananas, carrots, mushrooms, kiwi

*About 94% of U.S. corn acres are planted with genetically engineered varieties. Most of that is field corn, and some sweet corn is too, so I still buy organic corn.

AMY'S RECIPE

Massaged Kale with Creamy Peanut-Ginger Sauce

Even people who don't like kale love this dish.

For the kale

- 1 bunch fresh organic kale, stems removed, torn into bite-size pieces
- About 1 tablespoon organic lemon juice
- About 1 tablespoon organic olive or sesame oil
- 1/4 teaspoon Himalayan salt

In a bowl, massage the kale with the lemon juice, oil, and salt for a minute or two, until it turns darker green and softens. Set aside.

For the peanut sauce

- 1/2 cup organic peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons toasted organic sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon organic rice wine vinegar
- 1 to 2 cloves organic garlic, crushed
- About 1 inch fresh organic ginger, grated (or crushed organic ginger from a glass jar)
- About 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- Warm water, to reach the consistency you like

Combine everything in a bowl or food processor until smooth. Pour over the kale and serve.

One organic meal may seem small, but it's a powerful vote for your health, your future, and a more conscious food system. And I think it tastes much better. Perfection isn't required. Progress is transformational.

STEP 3 OF 5

Cut the Waste, Protect Your Health

You might be throwing away more than trash.

The average American produces about 4.9 pounds of trash every day, according to the EPA's most recent national figures. Much of it comes from things we barely notice: plastic bags, paper towels, food wrappers, and to-go coffee cups.

And here's the surprising part: most plastic you put in the recycling bin never gets recycled.

The EPA last estimated the U.S. plastic recycling rate at 8.7% in 2018. A 2022 analysis by Beyond Plastics and The Last Beach Cleanup found it had dropped to just 5 to 6% by 2021. Most of the rest goes to landfills or incinerators, or ends up polluting waterways and breaking down into microplastics.

Your Challenge: Ditch One Disposable Item

Pick one single-use item you rely on and swap it for a reusable version:

INSTEAD OF	TRY
Plastic grocery bags	A reusable tote
Paper towels	Cloth towels
Plastic wrap	Beeswax wraps or glass containers with lids
Disposable coffee cups	A travel mug
Plastic water bottles	A stainless steel or glass bottle

Why this matters (more than you think)

- **Plastics leach chemicals** such as BPA and phthalates, especially when heated.
- **Microplastics** are now found in water, food, and the human body.
- **PFAS, the "forever chemicals," are still out there.** The FDA confirmed in 2024 that PFAS grease-proofing agents are no longer sold for U.S. food packaging, a real win. But PFAS are still used in other products, like some nonstick cookware and stain-resistant fabrics.

Reflect: Which disposable item feels hardest to give up, and why? Journal about it or just notice. Awareness is a powerful first step.

STEP 4 OF 5

Detox Your Laundry

Your clothes might smell "clean," but that fresh scent can hide chemicals of concern.

Laundry is an often-overlooked source of daily exposure. Conventional detergents, softeners, and dryer sheets can leave residues that touch your skin all day and night and release vapors into the air you breathe. Some of the most common ingredients to watch for:

INGREDIENT	WHY IT'S A CONCERN
Synthetic fragrance	Undisclosed blends that can include phthalates, which are hormone disruptors
Optical brighteners	Designed to stay on your clothes after washing, so the residue stays on your skin
Quats (in fabric softeners)	Quaternary ammonium compounds, linked to asthma and skin irritation
Chlorine bleach	Harsh on the lungs, and dangerous if mixed with ammonia or acidic cleaners

Your Challenge: Make One Greener Laundry Swap

You don't need to change everything at once. Start with one:

- Switch to a fragrance-free, plant-based detergent
- Replace fabric softener with 1/2 cup of white vinegar in the rinse
- Trade dryer sheets for wool dryer balls
- Or simply read your current detergent's label. What do you notice?

Every load of laundry is a new chance to lower your exposure, for yourself, your family, and the planet. You're almost at the finish line.

STEP 5 OF 5

Clean Up Your Self-Care

Your skin is your largest organ, and it's in contact with everything you put on it.

Lotions, deodorants, shampoos, and makeup are applied every day and often left on for hours. In this final step, you'll choose one personal care product to upgrade, so you can care for your body without the toxic baggage.

Your Challenge: Start with Just One Product

Pick one personal care item to evaluate and upgrade. Could it be your deodorant? Your shampoo? Your lotion?

Not ready to buy something new? Coconut oil is one of my favorite multi-use staples. It works as a moisturizer, makeup remover, or hair mask.

Reflect: Read the label on one of your personal care products. How many ingredients can you recognize? How many would you feel good putting on your skin every day?

You Did It!

This 5-step challenge was just the beginning. You've already taken real action to protect your health, your family, and the planet, and that's worth celebrating.

YOUR NEXT STEP

The 10 Words on Food Labels That Are Fooling You

You've started reading labels. Now learn which words to trust. My free quick-reference guide shows you the 10 label claims that fool even savvy shoppers, including some on certified organic products, and what to look for instead.

Get your free guide at greenlivingnow.com/10-words

Keep going. You're building a healthier, more vibrant life, and I'm cheering you on.

Amy

About Amy Hartshorn

Amy Hartshorn (formerly Amy Todisco) is a certified organic farmer, green living educator, and host of the Green Living Now podcast, with more than 34 years of experience helping people create healthier, less toxic lives. She was the founding Executive Director of the Household Toxins Institute (started by the Founder of Seventh Generation), served as technical editor of *Green Living for Dummies*, and is an invited TEDx speaker.

She has been featured on HGTV, Vermont Public Television, and Vermont Public Radio. In the summer, Amy leads farm tours, workshops, and retreats at her certified organic farm in Waitsfield, Vermont.

Her mission: to inspire and empower you to live a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable life, one simple step at a time.

Connect with Amy

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This guide is for general education and is not medical advice.