

Sustainability

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Power Down: Electronically and Mentally



February 2, 2018 | Synneva Hackman

Sharing the importance of reducing energy/electricity in your daily routine while keeping your health and wellbeing in mind.

Power Down month is about conserving energy in your household while powering down mentally and taking a break from technology to get outside to exercise, relax, regroup, destress and appreciate the beautiful outdoors we have in Duluth, Minnesota. Living a sustainable lifestyle not only saves you money but is a healthy one too!

Although efforts are being made to produce electricity more naturally through solar, wind and hydropower, the cheapest form of electricity to attain is through burning fossil fuels. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, in 2016 coal was the second largest energy source for electricity generated in the United

States which is also the main fuel source that MN Power uses to produce electricity in Duluth. This production of electricity releases harmful greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere through the burning of fossil fuels. Reducing our use of electricity in the long run can help reduce money, pollution and the depletion of natural resources. **Try some of these ways to reduce electricity in your home or workplace!**

- Turn off lights/use more natural lighting
- Turn off computers and phones
- Replace existing light bulbs with LEDs
- Reduce heating and cooling systems
- Unplug electronics/chargers when not in use
- Use one power strip to limit plug load

Technology has been one of our biggest innovators in the 20th century but also a down fall as well. According to Pew Research Center “Roughly three-quarters of Americans now own a smartphone, with 92% of 18- to 29-year-olds owning one”(Smith, 2017). Technology has become a large part of young adults, especially college students, day to day life style. In having this technology close at hand (literally) we are forgetting to take breaks in our busy schedules to get outside and destress. “Nature deprivation” the lack of time in the natural world, largely due to hours spent in front of a TV, phone or computer screen, has been associated with depression (Does Nature impact our Wellbeing?, 2016). The National Center for Biotechnology Information and U.S. National Library of Medicine states that “Proximity to green space has been associated with lower levels of stress and reduced symptomology for depression and anxiety” (Pearson and Craig, 2014).

Duluth has amazing outdoor sites and activities. Taking the time to power down your technology and get outside can be very beneficial for your health and good for the environment! **Here are some ways to power down mentally...**

- Go outside for 30-50 mins a day or few times a week
- Try yoga, meditation or going for a walk
- Try an outside activity or try sitting by a window when reading/doing homework
- Turn your phone off for an hour or two each day or just when you go outside
- Turn your phone off an hour before you go to bed



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