

# A Newbie's Quest for Greater Sustainability Knowledge

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Are you relatively new to sustainability? Looking to pursue greater sustainability knowledge? Well, you're not alone.

First let me introduce myself. My name is Will Wallak, public relations coordinator with Syracuse University's Sustainability Division of Energy and Computing Management. Since joining the Sustainability Division in February, I've been on a quest to learn more about all things green and sustainable. Thanks to my knowledgeable and patient co-workers, I've come a long way in a very short time. Let me share with you a glimpse into my recent journey.

Well, my past professional experiences did not necessarily bend toward sustainability, but I wasn't totally ignorant to green ways. My family and I religiously recycle according to county laws, use mostly energy-saving compact fluorescent light bulbs and recently installed a low-flow shower head. And when it came time to replace our tired old linoleum floor a few years ago, we chose [bamboo hardwood flooring](#), a sustainable material.

However, I now realize that sustainability is much more than just being eco-friendly. I learned that there are three important aspects to balance in trying to achieve sustain-ability. They are the so called "three legs" of the sustainability stool: environmental, social and economic aspects. One leg of the stool shouldn't benefit at the expense of another leg or the other two legs. What a concept, considering the current state of our industrialized American "throw away" society!

A part of ramping up my newbie sustainability knowledge included reading some excel-lent books. "[A Hot Planet Needs Cool Kids](#)" by Julie Hall was an easy read about all things climate change and sustainability related. Yes, it's geared toward kids, but being relatively new to this field, I found it was a great starting point for me. I then read "[The Complete Idiot's Guide to Greening Your Business](#)" by Trish Riley and Heather Gadonniex, and "[The Complete Idiot's Guide to Green Living](#)" by Trish Riley. No, these books are not *really* for idiots! But seriously, both books detailed lots of great ways to become more sustainable both at work and at home, without all the technical details to weed through. I found the "Guide to Green Living" especially motivating and helpful because of its simple and practical tips. All of these books are available at the [SU Book-store](#).

Wow, I can't believe I've already been here two months... each day is an exciting continuation of my sustainability journey! In such a short time, I've already learned and written about [rain gardens](#), the "Lights Out" campaign and [the University's recognized leadership role as a top green power partner of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#). I am realizing the impact we all have on our planet, and I hope you will continue your journey along with me toward a more sustainable home and work life.