

# Make earth hour last longer...



# ECO-SEX!

By Sharon McIver

→ ON THE MONDAY AFTER LAST YEAR'S EARTH HOUR A CARTOON APPEARED IN *THE PRESS*. Under the caption "Earth Hour after the lights go back on" was a picture of a couple in bed – Man and Nature. Lying back on the pillows, he was smoking a cigarette and looking very, very smug. "So... was it good for you?" he asked. Hands clasped, and looking far from impressed, you could almost hear the terseness in our substantial lady's reply: "Would have been better if it had lasted longer."

Exactly.

What is of more concern is what was missing in this picture: the condom packet. Lousy sex, smoking in bed, *and* leaving her with yet another mouth to feed – girlfriend, this boy needs to go.

In all the talk about how we can become more ecologically conscious, the one topic that few want to raise is choosing *not* to contribute numerous pairs of little feet to our collective carbon footprint. Population on its own is a global issue, but population times consumption – the vast levels of material consumed by a minority of the world's population – is the ecological killer.

So having kids is right up there with lifetime choices like not driving, not eating, and building an off-the-grid house out of telephone books.

Not that we want everyone to stop having children of course – who'd look after us when we're old? So perhaps a better solution for the Western World might be to think about parenting in terms of quality, rather than quantity. If you want to improve the future you're leaving your beloved offspring – try not to be greedy.

Besides, as Whitney Houston said, "I believe that children are our future", and there's some really cool ones coming through. Kids who hassle their parents for smoking and wrapping their sammies in plastic wrap, and who think that camping is far cooler than any virtual world the PS-Boxes can conjure, will hopefully emerge from their Macca's-munching, petrol-burning teenage years as gurus of self-sufficiency. And if you do decide to be child-free, being a cool aunty/uncle figure is a great way to invest in the next generation. As the song says, "teach them well, and let them lead the way."

So yeah, there's plenty of good reasons for having kids – and not.

Of course, you can also make a case for celibacy being an effective solution to the global ecological crisis – but that's a topic that several of the world's religions have already got well covered. And, whilst celibacy can certainly be good for the heart, mind, and soul, a lifetime of it would be a bit of a shame – because, let's face it, sex is fun. And, provided that it's between consenting adults who "have a little respect when they get home" (and know how to be safe), it too can be good for the planet.

## WHY SEX IS GOOD:

- ✦ It reminds us that the hippies were right – making love is far pleasanter than making war.
- ✦ It's a great workout – it burns calories, gets the heart rate up, and can be an excellent way of toning bums and thighs. Assuming that you like who you're sexercising with (and they like you), such activity can also be good for one's mental health.
- ✦ In terms of saving electricity, a night of romance is also a winner – candlelight, blankets, and no TV (I said *romance*, not porn) will all help save power, and have the added bonus of using renewable energy to keep you warm.
- ✦ Sustainability is all about connection, so the buzz you get from doing all those cutie-pie things when basking in the afterglow of an evening of lurve-making is *really* important in reminding us of that (and might just lead to more action).

So yeah, sex is good – especially when it's safe. And, if you want to be really eco about that, there is a range of vegan lubes available from Piko Wholefoods, and the online SAFE (Save Animals From Exploitation) shop also has vegan condoms ([www.choosercrueltyfree.org.nz/skinAndBodyCare](http://www.choosercrueltyfree.org.nz/skinAndBodyCare)). Most modern condoms are no longer made from animal innards, but the stuff they put on the regular kind may contain casein (a dairy product), so the vegan ones are not only more sustainable, they are also less "icky", and at \$6 for 10, they're affordable. (Of course, in terms of packaging and disposal, condoms are manifestly not sustainable, but they're one of those items where it's a minor sacrifice worth making for the greater good.)

Eco-wise, there are also websites dedicated to green alternatives to sex toys, which may be of use to anyone who wants to spice things up but can't cope with the thought of their delicate bits coming into contact with molded petrochemicals ([www.thefrisky.com/post/246-come-and-go-green-with-eco-friendly-sex-toys](http://www.thefrisky.com/post/246-come-and-go-green-with-eco-friendly-sex-toys)). Because no matter how upmarket a specialist shop pretends to be, they're loaded with so much plastic and packaging they come off looking like an adult (and far more expensive) version of the \$2 Shop. This is where the home garden may also be worth investigating – it's free, organic, and you can throw it in the compost when you're finished.

So you could celebrate Earth Hour with a good shag (or whatever it's called these days). And if you don't have the means by which to indulge in such wholesome activities, an alternative would be to find some place where they've turned the lights off, the music down, and created an atmosphere that is both flattering and conducive to flirting. Because there's nothing like the flickering of candles, the strumming of an acoustic guitar, and a jolly good batting of the eyelashes with a hot honey or two, to create a greater sense of community amongst your fellow earth passengers, *and* save power.

But whatever you decide to do for Earth Hour this weekend, please, please try and make it last a little longer. ←

Earth Hour, Saturday 27 March, 8.30pm. [www.wwf.org.nz/earth\\_hour](http://www.wwf.org.nz/earth_hour)  
[www.sustain.canterbury.ac.nz](http://www.sustain.canterbury.ac.nz)