



10 Minutes For The Planet

Depollute your Home©

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Vocabulary & pronunciation study by

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Words are explained alongside the text

Stressed syllables are underlined and in bold*

Hi everyone and welcome to "Ten minutes for the Planet". Today we're going to speak about an **issue** that silently **harms** your life, your families' lives and the planet, when it could in fact be easily **improved**.

If you remember, a few weeks ago, we talked about **outdoor** air pollution and how it is a serious hazard for all of us. However, we only spend, **on average**, between 10 and 30% of our time **outdoors**. The rest of it is *indoors*. So, if we only talk about outdoors we are **missing** the biggest part of the picture.

Indeed, indoor air pollution levels are usually more than twice as high as those outdoors! Based on a 2014 study, it is estimated that indoor pollution in France kills over 20,000 people every year. And the study only looked at 6 **pollutants** - **pretty scary**!

Indoor pollution sources are different to those outdoors and as an **individual** you have more **control** over them. Some of the sources are air **conditioning** or heating systems, indoor **equipment**, cleaning agents, and **activities** such as cooking or smoking. All of these **load** the air with **humidity**, and toxic and **volatile** substances. So firstly, **make a habit of** checking that your **appliances** are not **clogged up** or in need of maintenance as this increases energy consumption and can increase humidity in your home, which in turn **encourages** the proliferation of **bacteria**.

Another important source of indoor pollution is, surprisingly, cleaning agents. Most of the **mainstream** products **meant** to clean our houses **ironically** contain pretty harmful volatile substances that are released into the air and stay in our

issue (n.) problem

to harm (vb.) to cause damage

outdoor (adj.) exterior

on average (exp.) typically

outdoors (adv.) outside

missing (adj.) lacking

pretty scary (exp.) frightening

control (n.) mastery

to load (vb.) to fill

make a habit of (exp.) do regularly

appliance (n.) a device used in the home

to clog up (phrasal vb.) to cause to become blocked

mainstream (adj.) conventional

to mean (meant, meant) (vb.) to intend

homes as we **inhale** them day after day. **Alternatives** here are really **cheap** and easy to use. The “60 million de consommateurs” magazine published a thorough guide on natural cleaning in 2016, but you can also find good websites or guides that explain how to replace toxic products with **effective harmless** alternatives. Basically, white **vinegar**, black soap, sodium bicarbonate and lemon can replace the vast majority of items in your cleaning cupboard for a really low price and with efficient results.

If you are doing some big or even small construction work in your home, be careful with the products you choose or that are used by your **contractor**. Some well-known harmful **materials** are lead paints, and **asbestos** which was **extensively** used in construction before it got **banned** twenty years ago. But there are still some **widely-used** products such as **chemical** paints or glues that are in fact **seriously** harmful. It is however possible to find good alternatives or easily make them yourself if you just do **a bit** of research on what best **suits** your needs.

Reducing the source is one thing, **evacuating** the rest is another. **Airing** your home is the best way to **purify** the air that’s inside. And it’s also better for your heating bill as it gets the humidity out and dry air is **way easier** to heat than humid air, and feels warmer too. But there are a few rules first. You need to create a **rush** of air with multiple open windows for 5 to 10 minutes. Making a **tiny** opening in a window for an hour will only result in **letting** the warmth out. Also, levels of outdoor pollution vary widely during the day so it’s best to air before 11 am or after 10pm.

That’ll be it for today and I hope it’s enough to convince you to add those easy habits to your resolutions!

So bye everyone! And see you next week for a new episode of Ten minutes for the Planet.

cheap (adj.) not expensive

harmless (adj.) inoffensive

contractor (n.) a person who performs work or provides supplies

asbestos (n.) a material used for insulation and fireproofing

to ban (vb.) to prohibit

widely-used (exp.) used by lots of people

a bit (n.) a little

to suit (n.) to make appropriate

to air (vb.) to ventilate

way easier (exp.) a lot easier

rush (n.) rapid movement

tiny (adj.) very small

to let (vb.) to allow

***Tip!** Syllable Stress can help us to understand spoken words, let’s take the words 'humid' and 'humidity' as an example.

First count the syllables: 'hu•mid' has 2 syllables 'hu•mid•i•ty' has 4 syllables

Syllable Stress is when you say one of the syllables slightly louder and with more emphasis.

So in this example we say: **humid** and **humidity**