

10 REALLY EASY THINGS YOU CAN DO TO DECREASE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

1. BYOB: BRING YOUR OWN BAG.

Use reusable bags for all your shopping needs, reducing landfill and aquatic waste and saving energy at all levels. Each bag has the carrying capacity of 2-3 plastic bags saving a minimum of 150 plastic bags/year from landfills and the ocean.

2. THE 4 R's: REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE, REFURBISH.

Reduce by buying items with the least amount of disposable packaging. Buy in bulk. Avoid plastics and styrofoam. Go paperless whenever possible. Print on both sides of paper. Use print preview before printing to eliminate unnecessary last sheets. Reduce travel by communicating more by phone, by teleconferencing, and by email. Telecommute, take public transportation, walk, bike.

Reuse the unused 2nd side of paper for drafts, notes, and internal memos. Reuse containers, cups, and utensils instead of using disposables.

Recycling aluminum, steel, glass, and newspaper saves at least 50% the energy as creating new. Every 10 aluminum or steel cans recycled saves 4 pounds of CO₂, every 10 glass bottles recycled saves 3 pounds of CO₂. Recycle as much as your local community allows, reducing waste put into landfill and the energy required to transport it there. Donate before disposing.

Refurbish many electronics, such as computers, monitors, keyboards, printers, fax machines, and cell phones. Some parts may be recycled.

3. DRIVE SMART.

Carpool, consolidate trips, drive the speed limit, use cruise control on highways, maintain vehicle and tire pressure. Optimum fuel efficiency in most cars is between 45 and 60 mph. Most cars get 20% more mpg at 55 mph than at 70 mph. Carry less - an extra 100 pounds in your car can reduce mpg by up to 2%. Every mpg saved reduces CO₂ emissions by 1 pound.

4. EAT MORE VEGGIES. BUY LOCAL.

Become a **Flexitarian**. Swap out one meat dish/week for a vegetarian dinner. Raising produce is cheaper in terms of energy, than raising animals. **Buying local** brings you fresher food, reduces shipping, storage, and waste and supports your local farmers.

5. DECREASE FOOD WASTE, COMPOST THE REST.

Millions of pounds of food are wasted each day. It is estimated that one quarter of all food is wasted at groceries, restaurants, and homes. Order less, take home excess, buy only what you need, and be conscientious about eating leftovers.

Composting kitchen and garden waste reduces trash and provides a local, organic source of nutrients to the garden. Coffee grounds are a nitrogen source that can be directly applied to the soil surface. The grounds also help acidify the soil.

6. **BYOL: BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH.**

Reduces energy required for off-workplace travel. Reduces disposable waste associated with take-out. Further reduce waste by using reusable containers. Decreases home food waste by using leftovers.

7. **BYOC: BRING YOUR OWN COFFEE/WATER CONTAINER.**

Significantly decreases the energy required to produce and process the waste from the disposable containers. Many businesses offer discounts when you bring your own travel mug.

8. **CHANGE TO CFL'S.**

Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL's) use 60-80% less energy and last up to 10X longer than incandescent bulbs. If every American swapped one ordinary light bulb for a CFL bulb, the energy saved could light more than 2.5 million homes/year. A 27 watt CFL bulb saves 140 pounds CO_2 /year; an 18 watt CFL saves 110 pounds CO_2 /year. Bring used CFL's to Home Depot for proper disposal.

9. **UNPLUG, TURN DOWN, TURN OFF, RECHARGE.**

Unplug chargers when not in use. They continue to draw power even when not actively charging.

Turn down air-conditioners and heaters, more so when away. Moving the thermostat down 2°F in winter and up 2°F in summer saves about 2,000 pounds of CO_2 per year. For each degree, you save about 1% on heating and cooling costs and CO_2 emissions. Keep refrigerators at 37-40°F and freezers at 0°F to maximize efficiency.

Turn off computers and printers when not in use. Standby settings continue to draw power even when not in use. Turn off water while brushing teeth and soaping up in shower. Turn off lights and fans when exiting rooms.

Rechargeable batteries, initially more expensive, can be recharged thousands of times. Ultimately can be recycled at www.rbrc.org.

10. **OFFSET YOUR LIFE.**

Calculate your footprint: Numerous websites offer CO_2 calculators.

Travel: Every passenger mile flown emits an average 0.64 pounds of CO_2 .

Driving: Each gallon of gas emits an average 20 pounds of CO_2 .

Home: Electricity emits an average 1.34 pounds of CO_2 /kwh; natural gas, 12.06 pounds CO_2 /therm; heating oil, 22.38 pounds of CO_2 /gal; propane, 12.8 pounds CO_2 /gal.

Offset: Calculate your yearly total and purchase the appropriate amount of carbon credits. Carbon credits are sold on a per ton basis at approximately \$5-12/ton. Programs are offered by Travelocity, Expedia, cleanair-coolplanet.org, carbonfund.com, etc.

11. **THINK!! (We lied about 10)**

Be more conscious of your actions and how they affect the planet, in both personal consumption and waste. Always consider ways to decrease your carbon footprint.