

Reducing Your Carbon Footprint

Do you know how and how much greenhouse gas emissions you are responsible for? Americans annually emit more than 7.5 billion tons of carbon, contributing to a global increase in temperature, rise in sea level and dramatic changes in climate and weather patterns.

The Cleveland Carbon Fund wants to help. Visit www.clevelandcarbonfund.org/calculators to calculate your carbon footprint and learn ways to reduce it. In the meantime, here are some easy, inexpensive tips for reducing your carbon footprint.

Energy and Energy Efficiency

Replace Light Bulbs: Replace incandescent light bulbs with more energy-efficient compact fluorescents. While CFL bulbs cost a bit more, they last far longer and use 75% less power. This simple switch will save a household between \$100 and \$150 each year.

Keep a Closed Door Policy: Keep doors closed to limit turning on heating or air conditioning units. Also, maintain a more constant thermostat temperature. Moving a thermostat from usual settings—down two degrees in winter and up two degrees in summer—can save 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide and \$98 a year.

Un-Plug Electronic Devices: Electronic devices, such as VCRs and cell phone/iPod chargers, that stay plugged-in all day draw power (phantom load)—even when they are turned off. Ten plugged-in household items draw 240 watt hours a day. To reduce energy use, turn off computers or maximize its sleep mode and unplug all chargers or appliances that are not in use.

Conduct an Energy Audit: Schedule a free energy audit with your local utility provider. This exercise can help pinpoint where your home is energy inefficient.

Seal Windows and Doors: Use weather-stripping to seal drafts around windows and doors to cut heating and cooling expenses and reduce the burning of fossil fuels.

Water Efficiency

Replace Showerheads: Install low-flow showerhead valves that use half as much water and provide the same level of pressure. These valves save the average household \$11 in water heating every three months. Also, take shorter showers and use less heated water whenever possible.

Fully Loaded: Run dishwasher and laundry machines only when they are full to save water and protect the environment.

Sun-Dry Clothes. Don't turn on the dryer. Sun-dried clothes smell good, the sun bleaches whites whiter and this practice can significantly reduce utility bills.

Green Your Food

Bring A Cup: Each year, using disposable coffee cups everyday generates at least 20 pounds of paper plus several hundred plastic covers. Bring a cup when buying coffee—many local shops provide a discount for doing so.



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Support Local Farms: Fruits and vegetables are transported on trucks that drive an average of 1,500 miles from field to supermarket. Support local farmers to significantly reduce the number of miles food travels and cut down your carbon footprint. Visit www.localharvest.org to find local farmer markets or locate a Community Supported Agriculture Farm to buy produce.

Eat Less Meat: Growing numbers of intensively farmed livestock are responsible for 18 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions and account for 37 percent of methane emissions. (Methane has more than 20 times the global warming potential of CO₂ and 65 percent of emissions of nitrous oxide—another powerful greenhouse gas coming from manure.)

Shop Green

Buy Energy Star: Appliances use large quantities of energy. To help reduce your energy consumption, look for the Energy Star label; it's the mark of approval from the Federal government. Energy Star appliances use considerably less energy than standard appliances. See the details at www.energystar.gov.

Freebies: Every item that exists is a physical manifestation of the energy consumption that was required to produce and deliver it; each "thing" has a carbon footprint. Therefore, use the public library and borrow items that are only needed once or twice. Go to www.freecycle.org and join a local group to exchange or borrow things.

Cloth Shopping Bags: When shopping, bring a cloth bag to get items home. Messenger bags are great for running errands.

Transportation

Cut the Commute: Choose an energy-efficient car. More importantly, curtail driving; try biking or walking when possible.

Public Transportation: Use it! Visit Public Transit and Walking Directions at www.maps.google.com or use the Rapid Transit Authority's website, www.RideRTA.com, to learn about fares, schedules, and maps.

Carpooling: Visit www.OhioRideshare.com to find carpool partners from more than a dozen counties in Northeast Ohio.

Discover Trip-Linking: Plan car trips better to avoid spontaneous single trips and plan errand routes to minimize mileage.

Recycling and Waste Reduction

Recycle Paper Waste: The third largest industrial emitter of global warming pollution is the pulp and paper industry. Try using paper made from post-consumer waste and make sure to recycle paper and newspapers.

No Junk Mail: The average adult gets 41 pounds of junk mail a year. Think of the unnecessary energy consumed to produce and deliver this junk mail. Visit www.41pounds.com or www.GreenDimes.com for options to stop junk mail distribution.

Print Double-Sided: Don't toss old faxes, reports, letters, and other documents—reuse this paper in the printer. Once printed on both sides, make sure to recycle!

Reduce Packaging and Plastics: Wherever plastic is manufactured, harmful chemical emissions are released. Plastic bags and water bottles release endocrine disruptors like Phthalates and Bisphenol A, especially when they are reused or heated. Please recycle unwanted plastic.



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