Because you care

116 Ways to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint

NOTE: The most important item is #101

General

1. Know the per centage of fossil fuel used by your electricity provider; use that knowledge in purchasing appliances, and making transportation decisions
2. Talk to others about climate and energy issues and solutions
3. Encourage your school or business to reduce emissions
4. Protect and conserve forests worldwide
5. Consider the climate impact of your investments

Reduce plastics

6. Carry your own knife, spoon, and fork to use when you go to fast food restaurants
7. Take your own container to restaurants for left overs
8. Buy and use glass or steel drinking straws
9. Tell wait staff at restaurants you don't want a straw with your beverage

Citizens' Climate Lobby

https://www.ccltacoma.org/

10. Shop where you can buy in bulk to avoid plastic containers
11. Save the plastic vegetable bags that are often used in grocery stores for fresh vegetables, carry them in your reusable shopping bag and use as needed
12. Carry your own glass water bottle; Use a glass drinking bottle when you travel; fill up after security
13. If you ask for water at a fast food restaurant, ask for a paper cup rather than Styrofoam for it if you haven't carried your own bottle
14. If a fast food restaurant (like Subway) puts their food to go in a plastic bag, tell them you don't want the bag
15. Use cloth bags for shopping
16. Use cloth bags for loose vegetables from the grocery

Reuse plastics

17. Use plastic containers that came with groceries or fast food to send home leftovers when you entertain
18. Reuse plastic bags from stores for garbage bags

Do your homework

19. Understand and be able to recognize "greenwashing"
20. Study – keep abreast of climate change news; try: https://energy.einnews.com/news/energy-climate-change
21. Read *Dire Predictions: The Visual Guide to the Findings of the IPCC*
22. Read *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*

23. Read climate science denier publications so you know what they are saying
24. Know climate myths vs climate science
25. Read *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming*

Driving and transportation

26. Plan errands to reduce driving trips
27. Walk to places
28. Keep your car properly maintained
29. Drive the speed limit – it's safer and burns less gas
30. Make your next car electric, hybrid, or fuel efficient
31. Ride your bike to work and for errands – saves carbon emissions and is good for your body
32. Don't leave an empty roof rack on your car – increases wind resistance and energy consumed
33. Keep your car tuned up
34. Drive carefully and do not waste fuel; Choose proper gears, do not abuse the gas pedal, use the engine brake instead of the pedal brake when possible and turn off your engine when your vehicle is motionless for more than one minute
35. Check your tires weekly to make sure they're properly inflated
36. Try telecommuting from home
37. Fly less (and use carbon offsets from a reliable source when you must)
38. Don't use drive-through lines at fast food joints
39. Carpool
40. Use mass transit
41. Drive slower

42. Next time you move consider travel carbon footprint – can you use public transit? Ride your bike? Live close to where you work or go to school? If you must drive, is it a short distance?

Don't buy things you know you will throw away; reuse rather than throw

43. Carry your own coffee or tea container to use at coffee shops like Starbucks
44. Use reusable and non-plastic beeswax food storage wrap to store foods (instead of plastic wraps like Cling Wrap)
45. Save your glass lidded jars from the grocery store for food storage
46. Save your printer paper that is printed on just one side and would otherwise be thrown away – then use it for informal printing like directions, drafts, or recipes
47. Use rechargeable batteries for small electronics like remotes
48. Buy whole vegetables and fruits rather than the ones that have been peeled, chopped, and packed in plastic containers
49. When the urge to purchase something strikes, ask yourself carefully if you really need this item or if you already own something that will serve the purpose. When we buy things that are manufactured and shipped, we add to our carbon footprint
50. Eat less meat, especially beef which produces prodigious amounts of methane; all meat combined contributes as much greenhouse gas as transportation
51. When choosing meat and dairy, choose grass fed
52. Use food in time, don't let it spoil – food sent to the landfill contributes to methane gas production; if it spoils, compost or put in yard waste

53. Don't waste food; getting food to your home or a restaurant that isn't eaten wastes energy for production, transportation, preparation[i]
54. Shop at consignment stores or thrift stores like Goodwill. Give your unwanted but usable items to the same. You'll be a contributor to "reuse."
55. When you buy clothes, buy garments that don't have to be dry cleaned
56. Use cloth napkins and wash and reuse them instead of using paper napkins
57. Use cloths for wipe up instead of paper towels; try reusable bamboo paper towels
58. Use LED lights when you replace lights or install new

Around the house:

59. Put up a clothes line to dry your clothes – saves carbon footprint and the clothes and sheets smell good
60. Check your dishwasher owner manual and choose the lowest energy cycle for most of your dishwashing
61. Manage temperature as naturally as possible in your home by shading or opening windows
62. Consider energy consumption when you buy new appliances
63. Turn off lights when you leave a room
64. Use cold water for your washing machine – modern machines and detergents are designed for cold water
65. Use the high-speed or extended spin cycle in the washer. This will remove as much moisture as possible before drying, reducing your drying time
66. Use the moisture sensor option if your dryer has one. This will save energy and reduce wear and tear on your clothes caused by over-drying.
67. Use low temperature in your dryer (or hang clothes out to dry)

68. Use dryer balls. Wool or rubber dryer balls will help separate your clothes and get more air to them, cutting drying time. They can also reduce static, so you don't need dryer sheets
69. When you buy appliances like hot water heater or clothes dryer, buy electric (instead of gas) if you live in an area that has mostly clean energy (like hydro)
70. When buying a new dryer, buy a heat pump dryer. heat pump dryers can save 20%-60% over conventional dryers
71. Don't plant a lawn – or convert your lawn to low maintenance native plants
72. If you have a lawn that you want to maintain, use an electric mower (better yet, don't have a lawn)
73. Clean or replace filters on your furnace and air conditioner as recommended by the manufacturer
74. Do not leave appliances on standby
75. Wrap your water heater in an insulation blanket
76. Defrost old fridges and freezers regularly
77. Replace your old single-glazed windows with double-glazing
78. Get a home energy audit
79. Cover your pots while cooking – use a pressure cooker
80. Use the washing machine or dishwasher only when they are full
81. Take a shower instead of a bath
82. Use less hot water by installing a low flow showerhead
83. Recycle your organic waste
84. Buy recycled paper products
85. Buy refills instead of the original product when you can
86. Reuse your shopping bags
87. Buy locally grown and produced foods
88. Buy fresh foods instead of frozen; frozen food uses 10 times more energy to produce

89. Buy organic foods as much as possible; organic soils capture and store carbon dioxide at much higher levels than soils from conventional farms. If we grew all our corn and soybeans organically, we'd remove 580 billion pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
90. Caulk, weather-strip, fix air leaks in your house
91. Use eco-certified or used lumber
92. Install on-demand water heaters
93. Eat locally grown and produced organic foods
94. Put on a sweater instead of turning up the heat
95. Buy tree-free paper or post-consumer paper
96. Put solar on your house (it pays for itself over time) (form a solar community if your house isn't amenable to solar installation) (yes solar works great in Washington!)
97. Unplug or use a power strip with a switch to completely turn off these high energy using appliances: Desktop computers; Laptop computers; Televisions; DVD players; other infrequently used appliances like paper shredders
98. When purchasing new electrical appliances, study the energy rating; reduce carbon footprint and save $$ over the course of the appliance's life
99. Plant a tree. A single tree will absorb one ton of carbon dioxide over its lifetime. Shade provided by trees can also reduce your air conditioning bill by 10 to 15%

Political action

100. **SPEAK OUT!** Call or email your elected representatives; meet with them in person; attend town halls and speak. Speak out in your church, community organization or service club. Individual action can only get us so far – 2/3 of the causes of climate change are beyond individual control – things like power plants and industry. Only concerted political action can

change these things. Help to create the political will to bring about needed change.

101. Join national, state and local organizations that are acting on climate change – organizations like Sierra Club, Audubon Society, League of Women Voters, Climate Reality, 350.org, Citizens for a Healthy Bay, **Citizens' Climate Lobby** https://www.ccltacoma.org/
102. Advocate for your city or the state to use native plants on public land
103. Write a letter to the editor or op-ed for your local paper
104. Email (preferred) or call your U.S. Senators and Representative. Send them postcards (letters in envelopes may be held up for security purposes.) Tell them you are concerned about climate change and urge them to act. Keep bugging them. Thank them for supporting bills that will mitigate climate change.
105. Let your state and local officials know that you want them to act on climate change NOW!
106. Advocate for climate action where you work – advocate for your place of work reducing its carbon footprint. Study online resources such as the Environmental Defense Fund's *A roadmap to corporate GHG programs* or the Harvard Business Review's *Case for Sustainability*
107. If you think a price on carbon will help (and economists say it is a great way to reduce GHG emissions), join the **Citizens' Climate Lobby**
108. Join an energy, climate, or sustainability group
109. Talk to your mayor, your state and federal representatives and senators or their aides.
110. Speak up in public and make your votes count for the climate
111. Lobby local and state government for better mass transit and electric vehicle infrastructure
112. Push to shut down coal-fired power plants and prevent new ones
113. Encourage your state and local governments to support the Paris Accords of 2016

114. Vote for politicians who share your climate concerns
115. Push local leaders to pursue climate-friendly policies
116. Join in on efforts to increase voter turnout and registration (especially in swing states) – the large majority of Americans are concerned or alarmed by climate change. If all of them vote we'll have elected representatives who are climate aware and ready to act to mitigate climate change.

HINTS: Don't be overwhelmed by long lists of things you should do. Start by picking one thing, something that is both impactful and readily achieved, and then go from there. Keep a separate list of long term and short-term goals.

Reduce, **Reuse**, **Recycle** – in that order, and know that recycling is in trouble in our community due to contaminated materials being dumped in recycle bins – and because many consumers are not properly sorting and separating items for recycling. When recycling programs become financially unsustainable for these reasons, everything thrown away goes to the landfill or the incinerator. **Empty – Clean – Dry** If in doubt, throw it in the garbage.

Citizens' Climate Lobby

Get active with Citizens' Climate Lobby:

https://citizensclimatelobby.org/

Or text to join: 619-675-7507

[i] According to the USDA over 1/3 of the food produced in the United States is wasted; that waste produces methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Municipal solid waste landfills are the third-largest source of human-related methane emissions in the United States, accounting for approximately 14.1 percent of these emissions in 2017. https://www.usda.gov/foodlossandwaste/why