

20 Simple Steps to Reduce Global Warming

Whenever you save energy—or use it more efficiently—you reduce the demand for gasoline, oil, coal, and natural gas. Less burning of these fossil fuels means lower emissions of carbon dioxide, the major contributor to global warming. Right now the U.S. releases about 40,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per person each year. If we can reduce energy use enough to lower greenhouse gas emissions by about 2% a year, in ten years we will “lose” about 7000 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions per person.

Here are 20 simple steps that can help cut your annual emissions of carbon dioxide by thousands of pounds. The carbon dioxide reduction shown for each action is an average saving.

HOME APPLIANCES

1. Run your dishwasher only with a full load. Use the energy-saving setting to dry the dishes. Don't use heat when drying. Carbon dioxide reduction: 200 pounds a year.
2. Wash clothes in warm or cold water, not hot. Carbon dioxide reduction (for two loads a week): up to 500 pounds a year.
3. Turn down your water heater thermostat; 120 degrees is usually hot enough. Carbon dioxide reduction (for each 10- degree adjustment): 500 pounds a year.

HOME HEATING AND COOLING

4. Don't overheat or overcool rooms. Adjust your thermostat (lower in winter, higher in summer). Carbon dioxide reduction (for each 2-degree adjustment): about 500 pounds a year.
5. Clean or replace air filters as recommended. Cleaning a dirty air conditioner filter can save 5% of the energy used. Carbon dioxide reduction: About 175 pounds a year.

SMALL INVESTMENTS THAT PAY OFF

6. Buy energy-efficient compact fluorescent bulbs for your most-used lights. Carbon dioxide reduction (by replacing one frequently used bulb): about 500

- pounds a year.
7. Wrap your water heater in an insulating jacket (but only if the water heater is over 5 years old and has no internal insulation). Carbon dioxide reduction: Up to 1000 pounds a year.
 8. Install low-flow shower heads to use less hot water. Carbon dioxide reduction: Up to 300 pounds a year.
 9. Caulk and weatherstrip around doors and windows to plug air leaks. Carbon dioxide reduction: Up to 1000 pounds a year.
 10. Ask your utility company for a home energy audit to find out where your home is poorly insulated or energy-inefficient. Carbon dioxide reduction: Potentially, thousands of pounds a year.

GETTING AROUND

11. Whenever possible, walk, bike, carpool or use mass transit. Carbon dioxide reduction (for every gallon of gasoline you save): 20 pounds.
12. When you buy a car, choose one that gets good gas mileage. Carbon dioxide reduction (if your new car gets 10 mpg more than your old one): about 2500 pounds a year.

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

13. Reduce waste: Buy minimally packaged goods; choose reusable products over disposable ones; recycle. Carbon dioxide reduction (if you cut down your garbage by 25%): 1000 pounds a year.
14. If your car has an air conditioner, make sure its coolant is recycled whenever you have it serviced. Equivalent carbon dioxide reduction: Thousands of pounds.

HOME IMPROVEMENTS

15. Insulate your walls and ceilings; this can save about 25% of home heating bills. Carbon dioxide reduction: Up to 2000 pounds a year.
16. If you need to replace your windows, install the best energy-saving models. Carbon dioxide reduction: Up to 10,000 pounds a year.

17. Plant trees next to your home and paint your home a light color if you live in a warm climate, or a dark color in a cold climate. Carbon dioxide reduction: About 5000 pounds a year.
18. As you replace home appliances, select the most energy-efficient models. Carbon dioxide reduction (if you replace your old refrigerator with an efficient model): 3000 pounds a year.

SCHOOLS, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITIES

19. Reduce waste and promote energy-efficient measures at your school or workplace. Work in your community to set up recycling programs. Carbon dioxide reduction (for every pound of office paper recycled): 4 pounds.
20. Be informed about environmental issues. Keep track of candidates' voting records and write or call to express concerns. Carbon dioxide reduction (if we vote to raise U.S. auto fuel efficiency): Billions of pounds.