




TAKING ACTION FOR CLIMATE CHANGE



Climate change issues affect us all in some way. Because of that, there are many ways that each of us can help in solving the problem. Actions we take can range from simple consumer choices to a more active role in community decision making to more responsible activities at the workplace. Read on for a list of 32 actions and choices that you can take personally to help.

1. Conduct an energy audit of your school or workplace. Organize teams to evaluate how the school or office uses energy and where it can cut down. You might look particularly for places where air can escape, lights are left on when no one's using them, and natural light can be used instead of electric lights. Contact your local electric company for more ideas and help. One organization, after conducting an energy audit, replaced its cooling plant and lights and saved \$1.8 million over 3 years.
2.  Invest in compact fluorescent light bulbs and encourage your employer or school to do the same. They use one-fourth of the energy of an incandescent bulb, last at least 10 times longer, and release much less CO₂ into the atmosphere.
3. Plant deciduous trees on the south side of your home to provide summer shade and cut air conditioning costs. In some studies, researchers have seen a 20 to 30 percent reduction in electricity consumption for air conditioning when residents planted shade trees.
4. Paint your home a light color to help reduce home cooling costs and energy consumption. Researchers have found that houses painted white are 5°F cooler than those painted gray, and 4°F to 8°F cooler than those painted black.
5. Recycle your metal food cans and anything else containing tin. Reusing the material in tin cans reduces related energy use by 74%, air pollution by 85%, and solid waste by 95%.
6. Keeping your car tuned up so that it's fuel-efficient will save you in fuel costs. A well-tuned car will also pollute less. The simple step of keeping tires properly inflated can reduce gasoline consumption by 5 percent.
7. If you're buying a new car, buy one that gets good gas mileage. That car could save you at least \$1,500 in gasoline costs over its lifetime. And if all of America's 187 million drivers switched to more energy-efficient cars, we'd reduce the amount of CO₂—a key greenhouse gas—by more than 3 billion tons.



**BIODIVERSITY
911**

Saving Life on Earth is a traveling exhibit developed by World Wildlife Fund (WWF). Find out more at <www.biodiversity911.org>.

8. When buying a new car, go fuel-efficient. If you switched from a car with average gas mileage to a large sport utility vehicle (SUV), you'd consume as much additional energy in one year as you would if you left your refrigerator door open for six years!
9. If you're buying a new car, consider a hybrid electric car. Hybrids get excellent gas mileage (some can travel up to 700 miles on a single tank of gas) because an electric motor helps share the work with a gasoline-powered motor. But unlike electric vehicles, these cars don't need to be plugged in.
10. Encourage your employer to set up a carpool program for employees. Carpooling saves on gasoline, pollution, and parking spaces.
11. If possible, ride a bike or walk to school or encourage your parents to carpool. Every year, the average car pumps its own weight in CO₂—a gas that contributes to global climate change—into the atmosphere. But the only CO₂ that bikers and walkers emit is from their own breath!
12. If your community provides mass transportation like buses, use it. Sharing rides on buses and trains helps cut down on emissions of CO₂ from cars.
13. If your community provides mass transportation in the form of buses, encourage your community to use the most fuel-efficient buses possible. Many communities are investing in electric and hybrid electric buses to help cut greenhouse gas emissions.
14. Contact the city planners in your community to find out what they're doing to help residents cut down on driving. Encourage planners to consider providing sidewalks and bike paths, public transportation, and other options to help residents eliminate or consolidate driving trips.
15. Insulate your hot-water heater to cut down on energy use around your home: \$3 to \$4 worth of insulation could save \$20 a year in energy costs and help cut down on greenhouse gas emissions.
16. Turn down the temperature setting on your hot water heater and save one percent on your energy bill for every degree you turn it down. Most manufacturers set the thermostat at 140°F, which is hotter than you need it. By turning it down, you'll save money and help the climate. But don't set your thermostat below 120°F because harmful organisms can grow in a tank kept below this temperature.
17. Shorten your showers to help save energy. Not only will you be saving water, but also you'll be saving energy by giving your water heater less water to heat.
18. Have your home furnace and air conditioner tuned up, and change or clean your air filter regularly so that the units run at their maximum efficiency. This will save you 5 to 15 percent on your energy bills and reduce destructive emissions.
19. Set your thermostat at your home and office a little lower in the winter and a little higher in the summer. For each 2°F reduction in winter and 2°F increase in the summer, you can avoid creating about 500 pounds of CO₂ a year and you will also see a reduction in your monthly energy bills.



20. In the winter, put weather stripping and caulking around doors and windows to avoid sending your heat "out the window." This will save you 10 to 30 percent on your energy bills.
21. Check for places where heated or cooled air can escape from your home, like cracks or holes in walls and ceilings; sites where plumbing or wiring penetrate walls, floors, and ceilings; and leaks in attic doors. Seal those leaks in the appropriate manner to help save on heating and cooling costs. Look under "energy" or "heating" in the Yellow Pages for professional assistance.
22. In older homes that have only single-pane windows, install thermal replacement windows or add storm windows. This could save up to 25 percent on your energy bills.
23. Install insulation in your attic and walls to reduce your home energy consumption and cut down on CO₂ emissions. The insulation currently in place in buildings in the United States reduces the amount of CO₂ emissions by 780 million tons every year.
24. Pull down window shades at night and close the curtains when the weather is cold. Window coverings make a "wall" that helps keep heat inside your home, reducing your need for furnace heat.
25. Install an attic fan or exhaust fan in your home to cool your rooms. These fans can supplement or replace air conditioning on summer days, resulting in lower utility bills.
26. Look for energy-efficient appliances when buying new air conditioners, refrigerators, furnaces, hot water heaters, and clothes dryers. The EPA's Energy Star rating will help you identify the most efficient appliances.
27. Help your refrigerator run at optimum efficiency by using a vacuum cleaner or brush to clean the condenser coils on the back or bottom at least once a year.
28. Clean or replace the filters on your air conditioner once a month. If you don't, the fan has to work harder and it consumes more electricity.
29. When setting a washing machine, use a warm-water wash and a cold rinse. Warm water washes clothes just as well as hot water but uses much less energy.
30. Whenever possible, try to use a microwave oven when cooking, especially when you are cooking one or two smaller items. Microwave ovens use only one-third the energy that conventional ovens do. Toaster ovens are also more energy efficient than large conventional ovens.
31. Turn off the lights and other electric appliances when you're not using them. You not only will save money, but also will reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Electricity is often generated by burning coal, which produces gases that contribute to global climate change.

