



## Checklist of Personal Actions To Reduce Climate Change

There are simple steps we all can take, which, added together, will help to reduce climate change. We can't each do all the things on the list, but every little step helps. Happily, many of these actions will directly help to improve our own health. To reduce climate change more fully, we need large changes at the societal level, so, in addition to personal changes, advocacy with policy makers, business leaders, and others is also important.

Climate change is occurring because the release of carbon, largely from burning fossil fuels (gas, oil, coal, etc), is resulting in a growing carbon halo around the earth that traps heat from solar radiation. The most important step in reducing climate change is reducing the use of energy produced by burning fossil fuels.

### Food

- Eat a more plant-based diet, consuming less meat and dairy products
  - *Food lower on the food chain requires less energy to produce. Livestock and dairy animals release methane (a potent greenhouse gas). Grazing land has reduced tree cover; trees absorb carbon dioxide.*
- Eat locally grown food when possible
  - *Less energy is required to transport local food*
- Buy foods in bulk and use your own reusable containers
  - *Packaging materials require energy to be produced and need to be discarded or recycled*
- Reduce food waste (reuse or freeze excess)
  - *Less waste of energy used in producing food*
- Compost remaining food waste
  - *Returns to earth to nourish the soil*

### Shopping and products

- Buy fewer things. Replace items only when needed. Buy used items when possible.
  - *Most things require energy for production. Reduced demand reduces energy use.*
- Buy locally produced items when possible.
  - *Less energy used in transportation*
- Go reusable. Shopping bags, food storage, toweling, etc.
  - *Reduces energy expended in production. Reduces waste.*
- Buy/use Energy Star products when possible. <https://www.energystar.gov/>
  - *Use less energy in operation*
- Buy from environmentally responsible companies (B corporations). <https://www.bcorporation.net/en-us/>
  - *Values and actions are certified as climate friendly*
- Use a laptop instead of desktop computer
  - *Uses less energy in operation*

## Home energy use

- Do an energy audit of your home and make recommended changes.
  - *Can reduce heating and AC costs by 20 – 50%. Many states have programs to offset costs.*
- Change incandescent lightbulbs to LEDs over time (*last 25x longer and use ¼ the energy*)
- Switch off lights when leaving a room and unplug electronic devices when not in use
- Turn your water heater down to 120F
- Install a low flow shower head
- Lower your thermostat as tolerated in winter and/or when sleeping
- Increase your thermostat as tolerated in summer (if air conditioned)
- Heat or cool only the spaces you actually use and close off others
- Wash clothing in cold water using a cold water detergent
- Hang dry laundry. Air dry hair.
- Buy electricity from clean energy sources thru local utility or renewable energy provider [www.green-e.org](http://www.green-e.org)
- Install home solar panels or other renewable energy sources if possible
- Consider air/ground source heat pumps and induction cooktops for lower energy use

## Transportation

- Drive less. Walk, bike, rideshare, take public transportation more.
  - *Fewer emissions, better health*
- Avoid unnecessary braking and acceleration when driving
  - *Acceleration uses more energy than maintaining speed*
- Keep tires properly inflated and car tuned
  - *Saves fuel*
- Combine errands to reduce driving
- Avoid traffic jams (Use a traffic app to avoid)
  - *Fuel wasted idling, stopping, and starting*
- Use cruise control for longer trips
  - *Avoids unnecessary acceleration*
- Turn down air conditioning and heat in your car
  - *Reduces fuel use*
- Drive an electric or hybrid car if feasible. Better still if charged by solar panels.
  - *Reduces or eliminates fossil fuel use*
- Avoid flying whenever possible. When you must fly...
  - *Fly non-stop - take-off and landing use the most fuel*
  - Buy carbon emission offsets or make other contributions to climate organizations

## Advocate for Climate Friendly Policies and Investments

- Get politically active in support of policies that reduce climate change, *for example*
  - Tax credits or other subsidies for renewable energy installation
  - Incentives for weatherization
  - Support of net-metering (sale of excess home-produced energy to energy companies)
  - Expansion of municipal renewable power generation
  - Community power aggregation. Allows your community to shop for the cheapest, most renewable sources of electricity and make available to its citizens <https://www.cpcnh.org/>
- Support green investments for yourself and for organizations
- Talk about climate and health whenever and with whomever possible!