

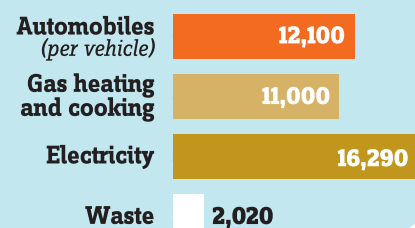
It's time for a carbon clean sweep!

The Seattle Times
Climate Challenge

The Seattle Times is challenging readers to trim their greenhouse gas emissions by at least 15 percent during the month of May. For more on the project, including a household emissions calculator: seattletimes.com/climatechallenge

Our carbon footprints

Typical annual CO₂ emissions for a two-person household, in pounds



Source: Environmental Protection Agency

The average two-person household produces about 41,500 pounds of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases every year, mostly from the fuel that powers our cars, heats our homes and helps make all the stuff we buy. But there are lots of things we can do — from baby steps to giant leaps — to shrink our carbon footprints.

Reducing your carbon footprint

Baby steps

Walking the walk

Giant leap for mankind

RECYCLE paper, printer cartridges and other goods. Use two-sided printing and copying to save paper.

UNPLUG your TV, DVD player, computer, other electronics when not in use, or use a power strip to shut them down.
CO₂ savings: 500 pounds a year.

REPLACE conventional light bulbs with energy-efficient compact fluorescent bulbs.
CO₂ savings for replacing six incandescent bulbs: 566 pounds a year.

USE GREEN POWER. Both Seattle City Light and Puget Sound Energy have programs that allow you to purchase, for an extra monthly charge, power from renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and biomass.
www.seattle.gov/light/green/greenpower/greenup.asp
www.pse.com/solutions/home_greenpower.aspx

INSTALL low-flow shower heads.
CO₂ savings: 370 pounds a year.

DON'T LET THE WATER RUN while shaving or brushing your teeth. Fix toilet and faucet leaks and take shorter showers. Municipal water systems use energy to purify and distribute water.

IF IT'S YELLOW LET IT BELLOW IF IT'S BROWN FLUSH IT DOWN

WASH clothes in cold water, wash and dry full loads and clean the dryer lint filter after every load.
CO₂ savings: 500 pounds a year.

LOWER your water-heater temperature to 120 degrees, and insulate your tank.
CO₂ savings: 500 pounds a year.

EAT LOCALLY-GROWN FOOD. On average, fresh produce travels 1,500 miles from farm to plate. Increasingly, more of what Americans eat is shipped from overseas.

SEAL UP leaky drafts, keep the damper closed on the fireplace and wood stove when not in use, and use energy-saving windows when replacing old windows.
CO₂ savings: 2,480 pounds a year.

TURN OFF unneeded lights.

UNPLUG your cellphone, MP3 player and other personal electronics as soon as they're finished charging.
CO₂ savings: 200 pounds per year.

USE toaster ovens and microwaves to reheat small portions. They use much less energy than conventional ovens.

BUY products with less packaging and those in containers that can be recycled. Use products made from recycled material.
CO₂ savings: 230 pounds a year.

PAPER OR PLASTIC at the checkout line? Plastic bags take less energy to produce, but the better choice is to bring a reusable bag, such as a canvas bag, to carry your groceries home.
CO₂ savings: 34 pounds a year.

RUN your dishwasher only with a full load.
CO₂ savings: 100 pounds per year.

VACUUM your refrigerator and freezer condenser coils once a year, keep the door gasket and seals clean, and don't open the door longer than necessary.
CO₂ savings for unplugging that extra fridge: 2,000 pounds a year.

RECYCLE your paper, cardboard, beverage containers, glass and metal, and compost food and yard wastes.
CO₂ savings: 850 pounds a year.

PLANT A TREE. Well-placed trees create shade and lower cooling bills. They also use carbon dioxide during photosynthesis and can remove 50 pounds of CO₂ a year.

USE a push mower on your lawn.
CO₂ savings: 80 pounds a year.

TRADE IN that gas hog for a more fuel-efficient car. Each gallon of gasoline saved keeps 20 pounds of CO₂ out of the atmosphere.

CAR POOL, ride the bus, bike, walk or telecommute. Transportation accounts for half of all greenhouse gases produced in King County, and much of that is from people driving alone to and from work.
CO₂ savings from leaving your car home two days a week: 1,590 pounds a year.

UNLOAD unnecessary items in your trunk to reduce vehicle weight. If you have a removable roof rack and aren't using it, take it off. That can improve fuel economy by as much as 5 percent.

KEEP tires properly inflated. Under-inflated tires reduce your fuel economy by as much as 3 percent.
CO₂ savings: 250 pounds a year.

LOWER your furnace thermostat in the winter by 2 degrees.
CO₂ savings: 353 pounds a year.

CLEAN or replace furnace air filters every two months during the heating season, and have your furnace inspected and tuned every two to three years.