

Module 11, Lesson 1 Tool:

Ways to Reduce Carbon Footprint

Scientists estimate that we make about 35,000 decisions in a day. Any of these choices are opportunities for us to better the environment. It may not seem like a big deal, but simple choices we make in our everyday lives can help in reducing our individual carbon footprint. This adds up over time, contributes to the bigger purpose in life, and can ultimately lead to improvements in individual health - that's Living Consciously in a Nutritious Life. Here are some things you can do to reduce your carbon footprint.

At Home:

- Turn off lights when you're not in a room, and unplug devices that aren't in use (think coffee maker, toaster oven etc.)
- Switch out old light bulbs for LEDs, which use a quarter of the energy
- Use less heat in the winter and less air conditioning in the summer
- Take shorter showers and turn down your water heater
- Recycle plastics, cans, bottles, paper, old electronics, batteries...whatever you can! Look into your town's recycling program to know what is accepted
- Invest in energy efficient appliances, such as updating your refrigerator, washer/dryer, and dishwasher, and if possible, install alternative energy sources like solar panels
- Get an energy audit of your home to find out how much energy you use and exactly where you can improve. The Department of Energy has guides on where to find a professional and how to do it yourself
(<https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/weatherize/home-energy-audits>)

On Your Plate:

- Eat less meat. Commit to one plant-based meal every day, go vegan before 6 pm, celebrate Meatless Mondays, or just simply cut down on the amount of meat you're eating now
- When you eat meat, eat smaller portions and choose the most sustainable options available
- Shop from local farms or a farmers market
- Buy staples from the bulk bin, and bring your own reusable containers to the store
- Skip the plastic bags in the produce department
- Eat your leftovers! Plan out meals so that nothing goes to waste

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- Get creative in cooking and minimize what goes to waste. Saute beet or radish greens, keep the skin on potatoes and carrots, eat the stalks of broccoli and make “hashes” out of leftover vegetables
 - Compost your food scraps

At the Store:

- Choose clothing from sustainable brands. Look for a Fair Trade logo or consult the Fair Trade Shopping Guide (<https://www.fairtradecertified.org/shopping-guide/fair-trade-clothing-guide>)
- Donate clothing you no longer wear that is still in good condition. Some companies, such as H&M, have collection programs where they take back old clothing (from any brand) to be repurposed, reworn by others in need or recycled
- Repurpose old clothing like T-shirts or sweatshirts into cleaning rags
- Buy less stuff! Ask yourself how many times will you wear/use this before you buy
- Avoid items with excess packaging
- Bring your own shopping bags or large tote bag

On the Go:

- Bring your own reusable...utensils, tote bags, coffee cups, water bottles, etc. when you travel, shop or go out for the day
- Walk or bike when possible, use public transportation or carpool
- Consider investing in a hybrid or electric vehicle
- Take care of your vehicle with regular service to make it more efficient
- Choose green hotels when you travel
- Choose airlines that are working towards carbon neutrality in their environmental programs. Before booking your flight, read into the company's policies to know you're choosing a responsible brand