

# Do One Thing.

Our *carbon footprint* is our individual contribution to the causes of climate change. The key to reducing our carbon footprint is to rethink our consumption habits. Everything we consume – energy, goods, food – has to be produced, manufactured, grown, and transported. Currently, all of these practices contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and other critical environmental problems, such as the pervasiveness of plastic in ecosystems around the globe.

What can we do? It might seem overwhelming at first. But we have to start somewhere.

Do one thing. Choose one thing on the list below, and commit to it.

Some things on the list are pretty straightforward. Some are a little harder to do. Allow yourself some trial and error. Get creative. Ask others for tips.

Once you have that one figured out, go back to the list, and find your next challenge.



For more information and ideas, check out our website: [www.fredonia.edu/cei](http://www.fredonia.edu/cei)

Most of the things on this list can be tied to one of the following slogans, which might be helpful reminders throughout the day:

**Refuse, Reduce, Reuse.**

**Burn calories, not fossil fuels.**

1. Always bring reusable shopping bags – keep them in your car or next to the door.
2. Refuse the straw and other one-use disposable plastic – plan ahead to bring your own reusable straw, cup, napkin, take-out containers, etc.
3. Unplug electrical devices when not in use, especially when you go on vacation. (When devices are in “stand by” mode, they continue to use electricity.)
4. Plant a tree.
5. Use clothing for as long as possible, mending as you go, and donate or repurpose worn-out clothing (for example as cleaning rags).
6. Buy used whenever you can. Hit up the thrift stores.
7. Repair things that are broken rather than replacing them – furniture, clothing, appliances.
8. Borrow tools or appliances that you don’t use often, rather than buying your own.
9. Improve the insulation in your home.

10. When light bulbs burn out, replace them with long-lasting LED bulbs and use the minimal wattage for the purpose.
11. Skip the bottled water. Bring your own bottle, and refill with tap water.
12. Bring your own produce bags to the grocery store, rather than using one-use disposable plastic bags.
13. Make more foods from scratch, rather than buying them ready-made.
14. Switch from tree-based toilet paper to bamboo-based or recycled paper.
15. Buy food in bulk rather than in individual packages, and bring your own bags or containers. (Weigh the container and write the weight on it in marker.)
16. Bike, walk, or carpool when possible.
17. Stock up on local produce during the growing season, and preserve it for use throughout the year.
18. Reduce your consumption of meat and dairy. Try Meatless Monday or VBN (Vegetarian Before Noon).
19. Switch from paper towels to cloth for spills and cleaning.
20. Compost food waste instead of throwing it in the trash.
21. Air dry clothing (on an indoor rack or outdoor clothes line) instead of using a dryer.
22. Rake leaves instead of using a leaf blower.
23. Switch from liquid shampoo and conditioner to shampoo bars.
24. Reduce the size of your lawn, or switch to a mechanical reel mower.
25. Switch from paper tissues to handkerchiefs.
26. Always turn off your engine if you're going to be idling for more than 90 seconds, unless you're in traffic.
27. Choose native and/or drought-tolerant plants for your garden.
28. Hold off on buying clothes until you *need* them, rather than just to stay in style.
29. Replace some store-bought gifts with handmade, upcycled, or re-gifted items ("shop at home first").
30. Make your own skin lotion – find recipes online.
31. Start an environmental action group with friends, or encourage kids to start one at school.
32. Reuse wrapping paper, or switch to reusable gift bags.
33. Skip the drive-through – park and go inside.
34. Take shorter showers.
35. Ask stores to carry the low-impact products you care about, and to reduce packaging.
36. Buy local – from local growers, business-owners, and makers.
37. Wash your car less often, and only at a commercial automatic car wash (it uses less water and sends less polluted water into sewers).
38. Buy carbon offsets when you fly (most airlines offer them).
39. Participate in clean-ups at beaches, parks, and along waterways.
40. Make your own laundry detergent – find recipes online.
41. Work with local government to make walking, biking, or public transportation more accessible.