

Take steps to reduce your CARBON FOOTPRINT

Drive less and more ecologically.

Transportation is the single largest emitter throughout North America, contributing around 30 per cent of the man-made carbon dioxide that is accelerating climate change. Without buying a new, fuel-efficient hybrid, consumers can take action by using less fuel: drive less, carpool more, turn the ignition off if you are going to wait for more than 30 seconds and you are not in traffic, make shorter trips and refrain from making unnecessary trips.

Water: Many people will heat several cups of water to make one cup of tea without realizing that heating a whole kettle of water uses about as much energy as lighting the living room for the evening.

Turn down heat: Turning down the thermostat several degrees at night makes sense.

Using a programmable thermostat means the heat can be readjusted to a more comfortable level prior to the household awakening.

Sunlight: Open your curtains and window Blinds during the day to let some natural light in and warm the home at no cost.

Recycle: Recycle as much as possible and reduce consumption of goods wherever possible. Buy goods with less packaging and switch from disposable to reusable products.

Lightbulbs: Move from regular light bulbs to energy-saving ones. Though the initial price may be higher than for incandescent bulbs, the cost is offset later since fluorescent lights produce four times as much light per watt, last up to ten times as long and cost onethird as much to operate.

Computers: Use a laptop instead of a desktop PC. The latter relies on twice as much energy as a laptop; even better, a laptop relies on just one per cent of the energy when running on batteries..

Toilet: If you have a nonconserving toilet, retrofit it with a water-saving device. Fill a one-litre plastic bottle with water for each nonconserving toilet in the home, and submerge one bottle in each toilet tank to save a litre of water per flush and thousands of litres annually.

Showers: Take a shorter shower. With water flowing up to 20 kilolitres per minute from a nonconserving showerhead, showers consume about one-fifth of water used indoors.

Faucets: Fill a cup with water and use it instead of running water when brushing teeth or rinsing a razor.

Refrigerators: Twice a year, clean refrigerator gaskets and vacuum the condenser coils. The refrigerator will operate more efficiently and use less electricity.

Microwave: Cooking and reheating with a microwave is faster and more efficient than using the stovetop or oven, thus reducing up to 70 per cent of energy use.

Go vegetarian: According to a new report from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation (Livestock's Long Shadow), production of the world's estimated 1.5 billion cattle and buffalo — along with 1.7 billion sheep and goats — is contributing to river and waterway pollution and is one of the driving forces behind the burning of the Amazon forest.

Paint cans: Before discarding empty latex paint cans, leave the top off and allow the remaining paint to dry completely. Latex paint is not hazardous once it is solidified.

Laundry: Wash your laundry in cold water and save around \$70 a year.

Pre-packaged food: Stop buying pre-packaged foods and you can save money as well as packaging, which tends to be non-biodegradable. Take a few extra minutes to wrap crackers, cheese or sandwich .

Paper and plastic bags: Carry a tote bag for smaller shopping items.

Unplug appliances: Appliances, even when turned off, can still use electricity. Making the effort to unplug them will save energy.

Pay bills online: Pay your bills online and sign up for online statements to save paper, money on stamps, and time.

Walk: With weather conditions becoming more favourable, walk more or ride a bike to save gas and money, help the environment and become more fit.

Solar energy: Just as the sun can warm your home, it can slow climate change by powering gadgets. Use solar power to charge your cell phone, iPod and other devices.

Buy local: Several studies have shown that the average distance of a North American meal travels from farm to plate is about 2,400 kilometres. Take advantage of local produce in stores or farmers' markets.

Efficient appliances: If you need to buy a dishwasher, television, or other appliance, look for the most efficient one you can afford. As a minimum, you should choose one with the Energy Star label, which means it is significantly more energy efficient than minimum standards dictate. For example, there is a 40 per cent difference in electricity use between the most and least efficient 18-19 cubic foot refrigerator currently being sold.

Gardens: Plant a water-wise garden using native plants that require less water. Mulch

your garden to cool soil, minimizing erosion and evaporation.

Chemicals: As the warmer weather arrives, refrain from using chemical fertilizers.

Fertilizers increase the need for water and can generate runoff that goes into stormdrains and is toxic to aquatic and marine life.