



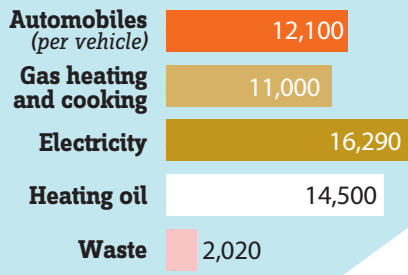
# It's time for a carbon clean sweep!

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](http://seattletimes.com/climatechallenge)

## Our carbon footprint

Average 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](http://www.seattle.gov/light/green/greenpower/greenup.asp)  
[www.pse.com/solutions/home\\_greenpower.aspx](http://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**  
unnecessary lights.

**UNPLUG**  
your cell phone, 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.

**CARPPOOL,**  
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.

\* Carbon dioxide savings are approximations and may vary.

Sources: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Rocky Mountain Institute, stopglobalwarming.org, Puget Sound Energy, Seattle City Light, carbonfootprint.com, climatesolutions.org, treehugger.com

Graphic by BOO DAVIS / THE SEATTLE TIMES