

# Twelve Ways To Reduce Your Carbon Footprint

---

We can all play our part in tackling climate change. If you are looking for ways to reduce your own carbon footprint, the ideas listed below will help.

The more you do, the more impact it will have, but even if you can only do one thing, that's a great start.

**Do you know what your carbon footprint is?** You can find out on the Hanley Carbon website: <https://www.hanleycarbon.org/calculate-your-carbon-footprint>. Knowing what your carbon footprint is will help you to prioritise the ways that will help reduce it the most.

---

## 1) Walk, cycle or take public transport

In 2017, motor vehicles were used for approximately 60% of journeys of 1-2 miles. By walking or cycling for shorter journeys or using public transport where possible, you could drastically reduce your carbon footprint, as well as help to reduce air pollution locally.

Challenge yourself to rethink how you travel.

- If it's less than a mile, could you walk?
- If it's less than five miles, could you cycle?
- If you must drive, could you share your journey with someone?

## 2) Consider an electric car for your next vehicle

The government has announced that new petrol and diesel vehicles will no longer be available for sale from 2030 onwards. If you need to replace your car before then, you could consider an electric or hybrid vehicle instead. There are currently government grants of up to £2,500 available to purchase a new electric vehicle, and other grants to help install an EV charger at your home.

## 3) Maintain your vehicle and "drive clever"

Another simple way to reduce your carbon footprint is to make sure your car is regularly serviced and maintained. For example, inflating tyres to the correct pressure could improve petrol consumption by more than 3%. Other tips to reduce fuel consumption include:

- Switching up a gear earlier
- Sticking to the speed limit: the faster you drive, the more fuel you consume and pollution you cause
- Avoid sudden stops and starts and rapid acceleration
- Turn the engine off when you're stationary – this saves fuel and reduces pollution

## 4) Fly Less

Unfortunately for keen travellers, flying is one of the most carbon-intensive things we can do as individuals. Domestic flights have the largest emissions per person per kilometre. If you fly a lot, reducing the number of flights you take will make a considerable difference to your personal footprint.

Train journeys can have less than a fifth of the impact of a domestic flight, although they can be more expensive. Booking in advance can help reduce the cost.

### **5) Think before you buy**

The most sustainable item is one that already exists. Consider purchasing second-hand furniture or clothing items or buying refurbished electrical items instead of brand new. Buying local from charity and second-hand shops will also reduce emissions from transport.

You can also limit your impact by repairing minor faults in items rather than replacing, donating rather than throwing away and choosing higher-quality items that you think will last longer.

The **Repair Café** in Malvern runs 10 am to 1 pm every third Saturday in the month at the Malvern Cube for all repairs including sewing. There is no charge for their work, but donations are welcomed. <https://www.malvernhillsrepaircafe.co.uk/>

An increasing number of companies are offering clothes to rent, which helps reduce waste in the fashion industry.

### **6) Cut down on single-use items**

We generate around 5 million tonnes of plastic each year in the UK. That includes 15 million 'single use' plastic bottles per day. There's a growing list of products designed to decrease the use of single-use products. Having milk delivered to your door in glass bottles is another easy way to reduce plastic bottle waste.

### **7) Cut down on meat and dairy**

Emissions from meat and dairy production are much higher than emissions from the production of grains, pulses, fruits and vegetables.

If you don't feel you can go vegetarian or vegan full-time, you could instead aim to go 'Flexitarian' and be meat and dairy free for one or two meals or days per week. Organic farming is kinder to the animals and the environment, so switching to organic grass-fed meat and dairy will also help.

### **8) Eat local and seasonal**

By eating food produced locally, you lower the carbon footprint that arises through transporting food. This also helps to support the local economy. The monthly **Café Market** at Hanley Swan Village Hall has a range of local suppliers offering seasonal produce. **The Big Barn** is a local food website that helps people to find good, safe and accountable food from local sources. <https://www.bigbarn.co.uk/local-food-map/>

Alternatively, you could have seasonal produce delivered, straight to your doorstep. Companies such as **Riverford** and **Abel and Cole** tell you what you are going to receive before delivering so you'll be able to create a meal plan around the food that is arriving.

Best of all, try growing your own. It doesn't have to take up a lot of space and when you grow your own there are no food miles.

## 9) Reduce portion size and food waste

The world wastes between 25% and 30% of its food, according to the Waste & Resources Action Programme. Check 'use by' dates and ensure you store food correctly to prolong its shelf life. Make smaller portions and save leftovers for later.

## 10) Reduce your energy use

Reducing the amount of energy used at home is as important as using renewable energy. If you're not sure how much energy you're using, we offer free energy usage surveys, which will help you understand this better. Email us at [carbonhanley@gmail.com](mailto:carbonhanley@gmail.com) to arrange a visit.

Quick Tips on using less energy:

- a) **Turn down your thermostat** – You could save £80 per year by turning your home's thermostat by just one degree. Always set your thermostat to the lowest comfortable temperature and aim for around 18-21°C. These are optimum temperatures for individual rooms, balancing comfort with energy efficiency:
  - **Living room** 19-22°C
  - **Bathroom** 21°C
  - **Bedroom** 15-20°C
- b) **Improve your home's insulation** – Fitting adequate loft insulation (at least 8"), filling cavity walls and even adding letterbox bristles can stop you losing energy from your home and reduce how much you spend on electricity.
- c) **Make small lifestyle changes** – Little things make a difference here, so drop your washing machine setting to 30°C, wash dishes by hand more and defrost your freezer every few months.
- d) **Get a smart thermostat** – If you want more control, a smart thermostat is essential to allow you to regulate the amount of energy you use.
- e) **Switch to a renewable energy provider.** Switching means that more renewable energy is being provided into the UK's energy mix, reducing the country's overall carbon footprint annually.
- f) **Go for the most energy efficient appliances (A or A+++).** The Energy Saving Trust <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/home-appliances/> offers good advice.

For more ways to reduce your energy consumption, see the new **Home Energy Efficiency Guide**, available at: <https://www.hanleycarbon.org/resources>.

## 11) Reduce water use

The average UK household uses 330 litres of water every day. Treating water to make it clean and safe to use produces a carbon footprint.

To help reduce water use, repair any leaky taps and ensure that you don't leave taps running when washing up or brushing your teeth. Aim to take shorter showers of 5 minutes or less or use a water-efficient shower head.

**If it's not dirty, don't wash it!** Most clothes do not need washing after one wear only. Over washing needlessly wears out your clothes, releasing tons of microfibres and using

unnecessary energy and water. If you wash less, it's a win-win: clothes last longer, and you'll use less energy. Oh....there'll be less ironing too!

Obviously, there will still be wear-once items. The point is not to bung things in the machine for the sake of it; think about whether they need washing. For more information visit Clothes Doctor UK <https://clothes-doctor.com/>

Outside, install water butts on your downpipes to capture rainwater for use in the garden and in hot weather follow 'water wisely' advice from your water supplier.

## **12) Reduce light pollution**

According to the State of Nature Report published in 2019: "*Artificial night lighting is one of the most pervasive – and yet under-recognised – causes of environmental pollution*".

Apart from simply closing curtains at night:

- switch off exterior lights at night and fit a motion sensor so they only come on when needed
  - focus security lights more precisely, and angle them downwards
  - choose bulbs with lower light intensity and avoiding placing outside lights on white walls, where their effect is magnified
-