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**Carbon Handprint Actions**

There are many things you can do to reduce your carbon footprint and climate impact! Read through this list and identi- fying one action that you can take in the next week.

## — TRANSPORTATION —

### Cut down on short car trips.

* **Action #1:** As a family, list the places that you will drive to this week. Identify one that you or your family could walk, bike, carpool, or take public transportation to.
* **Action #2:** For an even larger envi- ronmental impact, map a two mile circle around your home. For a whole week walk or bike to any destination within this zone.

### Maximize miles per gallon.

* **Action #3:** Driving with properly inflated tires and a well maintained engine can increase fuel efficiency by 5-10%. Find out when your family car last had an oil change. If it's been over a year, offer to help make this happen over the weekend.
* **Action #4:** Check the gas cap of you family car. A loose or damaged gas cap wreaks havoc on the environ- ment and wastes fuel, but can easily be tightened or replaced if necessary.
* **Action #5:** Do you know someone who is buying a car this year? Find time this week to ask them if they are factoring miles per gallon into their decision.

### Advocate for transportation diversity.

* **Action #6:** This week find a nonprofit that promotes safe bicycle and pe- destrian infrastructure projects. See if you can volunteer and help them for an hour.
* **Action #7:** Find a non profit that fixes old bikes and then gives them to communities in need. Donate your old bikes or - if you’re good at bike repair - volunteer.
* **Action #8**: Write an email to your local government asking them what they are doing to improve pub-

lic transportation and to promote transit-oriented development. Let them know that you care about the transportation and development choices they are making.

## — HOME ENERGY USE —

### Adjust your home’s temperature.

* **Action #9:** If you are using your air conditioner, adjust your thermostat to run 2 degrees warmer this week. If you are using heat, adjust your thermostat to run 2 degrees cooler this week. Even though you likely won’t notice much of a difference in temperature it is best to ask your family before doing this!
* **Action #10:** For a whole week play accomplice to your HVAC. If the air conditioner is running, close blinds/ curtains during the day and find ways to skip using the oven, dish- washer, and clothes dryer during the day. If the heating is running, open the blinds/curtains during the day and close and (safely) seal vents in any unused rooms.
* **Action #11:** Give your HVAC system a spa day. Make sure floor registers are free of dust and debris, that out- side evaporators and condensers are also unblocked, and that the filters are clean and/or have been replaced in the past three months.
* **Action #12:** Prepare a pitch to make a home energy saving investment such as a programmable thermostat, door and window whether strips, or home insulation. This pitch should include an estimate of the initial cost and the projected yearly savings.

### Reduce electrical use.

* **Action #13**: Replace any incan- descent light bulbs with CFL or LED lights.
* **Action #14:** Reduce computer, TV, or game console use by 30 minutes a day for the week.
* **Action #15:** Many large appliances have energy saving modes. Check your home for any appliances with this feature. If you have one run a controlled experiment where you compare the appliances performance in both the default and energy ef- ficient settings.
* **Action #16:** Ask your family to consider a home energy audit. Professional energy audits can be expensive but often pay for them- selves with energy bill savings. Alternatively, the Department of Energy has a guide for doing your own energy audit [(www.energy.gov/](http://www.energy.gov/) energysaver/home-energy-audits/ do-it-yourself-home-energy-audits).

### Reduce water (and especially hot water) use.

* **Action #17:** Reduce your shower time by one, five, ten etc. minutes. If you’re competitive recruit friends or family to try the 5 minute shower challenge.

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**Invisible Footprints: Seeing CO2**

**EDVO-Kit 930**

**Carbon Handprint Actions, continued**

* **Action #18:** Check all taps in your home for leaks.
* **Action #19:** Shock your parents by offering to do your laundry for a week and then use cold when pos- sible.

### Switch to renewable energies.

* **Action #20:** For a week take over drying the laundry and then hang it to dry. Clothes hung outside dry quickly but drying clothes over an

indoor drying rack is also a good op- tion.

* **Action #21:** Find out the sources of your electricity. How much of your electricity is coming from non- renewable sources? How much is coming from renewable sources? You may have to contact your utility company to do this.
* **Action #22:** Contact your utility com- pany and ask them about any green pricing programs (programs where you play slightly more in exchange for electricity generated from clean, renewable power). How much would such a program cost your home? Would you be willing to fund your family’s switch?
* **Action #23:** Use google’s Project Sunroof to calculate the benefits of adding solar panels to your home, a friend or relative’s home, or to a

local business or organization. Before you start, ask your family/friend/ organization if they would like you to do this!

* **Action #24:** This week research cur- rent jobs in the renewable energy field. Are there any that you think suit your interests and strengths? Make a list of skills that you would need to cultivate in order to be amazing at the job.

**— DIET —**

### Eat lower in the food chain.

* **Action #25:** For at least two meals this week increase your portions of vegetables, fruits, grains, eggs or beans and lower the amount of meat that you eat.
* **Action #26:** For at least two snacks this week skip the meat or dairy option and go for a serving of veg- etables, fruits, grains etc.
* **Action #27:** Offer to cook your family a vegetarian meal.
* **Action #28:** If your family has a go- to beef dinner on heavy rotation ask to substitute white meat, vegetarian meat, or mushrooms one time. Then compare notes - was the new dish something everyone could eat again or a one time experience.

### Eat seasonal and local foods.

* **Action #29:** Research and make a list of what fruits and vegetables are in season where you live. Put this somewhere that the family's grocery shopper will see.
* **Action #30:** Plant a community gar- den. Meet neighbors and grow food at the same time by volunteering at or founding a public garden. Begin by going to the American Commu- nity Garden Association website and checking out their interactive map and resource page.
* **Action #31:** Plant your own veg- etable garden or make plans to. This will take time and space so okay it with your family first and, if you can, recruit some help for the growing season.
* **Action #32:** Support a local farm by going to a roadside stand or farm- ers market or by investigating CSA (community supported agriculture) options in your area.
* **Action #33:** If you’re in the city find a nearby rooftop farm, urban orchard, or vertical farm and see if they offer tours.

### Reduce your food waste.

* **Action #34:** This week take smaller portions and ask for seconds (and thirds) rather than have uneaten food on your plate at the end of the meal.
* **Action #35:** Research if there is com- munity composting site near you or ask other family members whether they have ever considered beginning a compost heap in the backyard.
* **Action #36:** Organizations around the country are findings ways to ad- dress food loss and food waste. See if there is one located near to you and consider volunteering or intern- ing there.

### Ditch the packaging.

* **Action #37:** Find a reusable water bottle or travel mug that you like and use it for the whole week.
* **Action #38:** As a family, brainstorm what items you can buy in bulk. Help this conversation by preparing a price per ounce comparison.

## — PURCHASES —

### Embrace “second hand goods” as good and “no goods” as great.

* **Action #39:** Go to a nearby vintage clothing store, consignment shop, or thrift store and see if there are any items you can give a second life.
* **Action #40:** Thinking of purchasing something new this week? Before you do, ask: How often will I use it? For how long will I use it? Do I really want it? Can I borrow it?

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**Invisible Footprints: Seeing CO2**

**Carbon Handprint Actions, continued**

### Send your old items off in style.

* + **Action #41:** This week make a list of nearby locations that allow you to either donate, sell, or simply recycle used clothing, games, and other

household items. Then ask your fam- ily to schedule a weekend afternoon where everyone will pack up things they no longer need and can give to you to be donated, sold, or recycled.

* + **Action #42:** Is your family looking into purchasing a new electronic de- vice? This week come up with a plan to sell, donate, or recycle the older one.
	+ **Action #43a:** If you do not have recycling pick up services or if you have limited recycling pick up, find a recycling center near you and for one week expand your home’s recycling program.
	+ **Action #43b:** If you do have recycling pick up services, assess whether your family is making full use of this service. Is there anything you can do to help your family better remember to recycle paper, plastics, glass, and especially cans/metals?
	+ **Action #44:** Artistic? Undertake an upcycling project. Upcycling is the process of converting old or discard- ed materials into something useful and often beautiful. Look online for examples or come up with your own.

### Use your consumption powers for good.

* + **Action #45:** Many manufacturers have begun publishing the carbon footprint of their products. Ask your family to help identify a purchase that you are planning to make in the next month. Next, research to see if the items you may buy have an estimated carbon footprint. If they do, try to factor this into your purchase decision. If they don’t, let the company know that you would like this information.
* **Action #46:** Do you have a favor- ite company or brand that you buy

repeatedly from? If so, research what they are doing to minimize their carbon footprint. Then write to them this week. You can thank them for what they are doing, ask them to do more, and let them know that their decisions in this area are important to you.

**— CHANGING THE SYSTEM\* —**

### Get people talking.

* **Action #47:** Write a letter to the editor about carbon footprints and climate change and send it to a school, local, or national newspaper.
* **Action #48:** Post about this activity on your favorite social media plat- form.
* **Action #49:** Listen to someone. Most people don’t like to be told what to do but do like to be listened to. Pick a friend, family member, or family friend and ask them their thoughts on energy conservation and climate change. With any luck they may then ask you what you think.

### Communicate with your representatives.

* **Action #50:** Contact the office of an elected official representing you

(congressman, senator, state senator, governor, mayor etc.) and ask what their plans are for climate change.

* **Action #51:** Find an upcoming town hall near you and ask your repre- sentative about climate change in person.

### Learn.

* **Action #52:** Read a newspaper or magazine article OR listen to a pod- cast OR watch a video about climate change and how youths and students are affecting the conversations around it.
* **Action #53:** Learn from others. Does your school have a climate club or is there a nearby chapter of a national student climate change organization? If so commit to going to their next meeting.
* **Action #54:** Find an answer. Is there a questions about climate change that you have? (How does climate change influence weather? What are biofuels? How do we know the climate is changing? How will my surroundings be affected 50 years from now? etc.) Write the questions down and then use online resources to find the best answer.

*\*Around one fourth of an individual’s carbon footprint is unrelated to their per- sonal energy and consump- tion choices. This systematic*

*carbon load is part of the basic services offered to all citizens in a country - police, roads, libraries, military, courts, etc. It’s one reason that carbon reductions need to occur at*

*all levels. In addition, these higher system changes make climate conscious habits much easier for a large number of people to begin.*

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