

Polar Bears International

Conservation through research and education.

Simple Steps to Help Polar Bears

Reducing carbon emissions is a good insurance policy for the health of our planet. Polar bear scientist Andrew Derocher says that even small changes can make a difference if each of us helps. Here are some tips from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and keepwintercool.org on how to curb greenhouse emissions by reducing energy consumption.

Power Down and Clean Up

If you replace your current washing machine with a low-energy, low-water-use machine you will be able to reduce your carbon dioxide emissions by 440 pounds per year. For even more savings wash your laundry in warm or cold water, instead of hot. That will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by about 500 pounds per year.

Keep Your Water Heater Cozy

For a water heater more than five years old, wrapping it in an insulating jacket will result in a 100-pound reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. Keep your water-heater thermostat no higher than 120 degrees F and you can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 550 pounds a year.

Put the Freeze on Inefficient Appliances

Get rid of old, energy-inefficient appliances and replace with newer, energy-efficient models. For example, a high-energy-efficient refrigerator will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 450 pounds a year. For more information on energy-efficient appliances, visit the Energy Star Web site at www.energystar.gov. Look for the Energy Star label when shopping.

Reduce and Recycle

Reducing your garbage by 25% will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 1,000 pounds a year. Recycle aluminum cans, glass bottles, plastic, and cardboard to reduce your home's carbon dioxide emissions by 850 pounds a year.

Don't Give Energy Away

If you caulk and weather-strip around doors and windows to plug up leaks, you can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 1,000 pounds a year.

Take the Green Way

Leave your car at home two days a week (walk, bike, take public transportation) and you can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 1,590 pounds per year.

Slow the Flow

If purchasing a new vehicle, consider finding a car that gets more miles to the gallon than your current vehicle, and match that vehicle to your needs. The potential carbon dioxide reduction for a car that gets 32 miles per gallon is 5,600 pounds a year.

Make the Right Move

If you spend hours on the road every day to get to work, you could save significant time and money by moving closer to work and reducing your commute. The carbon dioxide emissions you save are icing on the cake.

Be a Turn Off

Turn off your TV, video player, stereo, and computer when you aren't using them. Turn off your lights when you don't need them, and start saving within a minute or two.

Trim Your Load

When you do drive, keep your car tuned and its tires properly inflated. This helps you save on fuel costs while reducing carbon emissions. A tune-up can boost your miles per gallon anywhere from 4 to 40 percent; a new air filter can get you 10 percent more miles per gallon. Take your roof rack off your car when you aren't using it, for more savings.

Other Important Tips

- Use programmable thermostats so you don't waste energy when you're at work or out of the house.
- Use lights that work off solar energy. They're quite common now and realistic in price.
- Change your heating and cooling filters every month. This not only saves electricity, but lengthens the life of the appliance.
- Dry your clothes on a clothesline instead of in a dryer. Not only will you save electricity or gas, your clothes will smell good, too!
- Plant trees. Set a goal of being CO₂ neutral, which means the amount of CO₂ that a family produces needs to be offset by planting trees that can transform it back into oxygen.
- Support the research and educational efforts of Polar Bears International by making a donation. Remember that every dollar donated goes directly to help the bears!