



How to Reduce Your At-Home Carbon Footprint: **A Sustainable Switch Guide**

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Simple Ways to Reduce Your Footprint at Home

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Purpose

The aim of this guide is to provide Torontonians with simple ways to reduce their carbon footprints. This guide includes a number of examples showing how you making simple changes to your daily routine, and what small actions you should be more conscious of.

What is a Carbon Footprint?

A carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions which come from the production, use, and end-of-life of any product or service. This includes carbon dioxide (CO₂) the gas that is most commonly created by human activity, and others, including methane, nitrous oxide, and fluorinated gases - which trap heat in the atmosphere, causing global warming. More often than not, the majority of a person's carbon footprint will come from transportation, housing, and food.



How Do I Calculate Mine?

There are a number of online carbon footprint calculators available. For an accurate calculation, you'll have to know the following:

- About how many km you travel via car, bus, train & plane
- The energy usage in your home
- How much you spend shopping
- The composition of your diet

While there are a number of websites offering carbon footprint calculators, [Carbon Zero](#) provides a series of calculators; they have individual calculators for heating, flight, electricity, bus, and vehicle. As well, Carbon Zero has an all-in-one calculator encompassing all aspects.



Water

- Avoid dish soaps, body washes & other types of cleaning products with toxins in them - make the switch to natural or eco-friendly alternatives
- Opt for reusables! Most disposable items take gallons of water to make
- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth
- Use the dishwasher instead of washing by hand - just make sure it's a full load!

Food

- Try eating lower on the food chain; this means eating mostly fruits, veggies, grains & beans
- Choose organic & local foods that are in season
- Buy food in bulk when possible
- Opt for reusable containers & wraps instead of single-use options like sandwich bags
- Dispose of your food waste in the Green Bin
- Plan meals ahead of time & freeze the extras for later



Energy



- Switch lights off when you leave the room
- Unplug electronics & small appliances when they are not in use
- Change incandescent light bulbs to light LED bulbs - though LEDs cost more, they use 1/4 of the energy & last up to 25x longer
- Look for **Energy Star** products when shopping, they are certified to be more energy efficient
- Installing a low-flow shower head reduces hot water use & can save 350 pounds of CO₂
- Wash your laundry in cold water instead of hot

Reuse, Reuse, Reuse!

- When you order in food, don't throw out your containers right away! Instead, rinse them out & reuse them to store leftovers
- Buy yourself some reusable bags to use when you go grocery shopping; there are also reusable mesh produce bags that can be used instead of the plastic ones offered in-store
- Keep the plastic bags you get when shopping, you can reuse them for carrying items or for picking up dog poop
- Save boxes to reuse for packing, storing, shipping, or gift giving!
- When you receive gifts, save the gift bags to reuse when it's your turn to give a gift
- If you have old sheets or t-shirts that are not in good enough condition to donate, cut them up & use them as rags for cleaning

