



IN COLLABORATION WITH
EARTH DAY NETWORK

Tips,
Tools and
Resources for
Individuals

Easy Ways to Help Others Go Green

Planet Earth has given us a lot – from the air we breathe and the water we drink to bounty of the oceans, rivers, mountains and fields. With simple steps, we can collectively return those favors.

INCLUDED IN THIS KIT:

- 1 Overview**
- 2 The Basic Steps: 1-2-3...**
- 3 Suggestions for Going Green**
- 5 More Information**

Overview

Going green is that rare chance to do something for yourself that also benefits your neighbors, your community, your children, grandchildren, and the rest of the world. This isn't about trying to save the planet with huge actions. It's about lots of people doing small things that all add up to make our world cleaner, greener and healthier.

The Problem

The Earth has limited resources. With an ever-increasing population, we are using those resources at a staggering rate. Some of the waste we generate pollutes our waterways, air and land, which can harm our health, and our natural surroundings.

The Solution

Each of us can help our planet by remembering to “reduce, reuse and recycle.” You can lead a cleanup of a river, beach or park in honor of Earth Day, use reusable shopping bags; or start a recycling project at work. Whether you like small projects or big ones, physical work or more brainy tasks – there's a bunch of ways for you to help others go green.

Time Commitment

Tasks can range from as little as 15 minutes (to help a neighbor replace old light bulbs with energy-efficient ones) to numerous days – for example, to plan and lead a river cleanup.

Special Considerations

None.

Who Can Do This

Everyone can go green!



You can reduce your carbon footprint with small actions or big ones. A ‘carbon footprint’ is a measure of the amount of carbon dioxide produced by a person or activity in a certain amount of time.

OVERVIEW, continued

Great Reasons to Do This Project

- Lowering your carbon footprint helps create a healthier planet for current and future generations.
- Using fewer resources helps lower America's consumption of energy – and that helps our country in many ways.
- Living greener helps clean up – and preserve – our treasured natural environment.
- Doing green projects with family, friends and neighbors strengthens the bonds that make a vibrant community.
- Involving your children and grandchildren in green projects enables you to teach – and learn from future generations.

THE BASIC STEPS: 1-2-3...

STEP ONE: Pick a Project

See a list of sample projects in this kit. Determine if you want to help a neighbor, help at work, or organize a project in your community. Consider planning a project for Earth Day, April 22, 2010 or for AARP's Week of Service, April 18-24.

STEP TWO: Set Measurable Goals

For example, "Meet a neighbor to take public transportation to work three days a week," is better than "Start taking public transportation to work." Write down your goals so you can refer to them and track your progress.

STEP THREE: Resources

Determine what resources you'll need to complete the project.

STEP FOUR: Get Started

Go for it! Start as soon as you're able.

STEP FIVE: Tell us your story

Please tell your story at www.CreateTheGood.org. You can also register your act at www.earthday.net.

SUGGESTIONS FOR GOING GREEN

Some projects are quick and easy, and some may require more time.

Take Action at Home and with a Neighbor

- Reduce, reuse, recycle! Examples: Buy products with less packaging – like loose potatoes instead of pre-bagged. Use reusable shopping bags. Keep some near the front door or in your car so you remember them when you shop. Recycle paper, plastic and glass.
- Ask a friend to go with you to a farmers' market, and buy local products when possible. A huge amount of energy is used to transport goods from where they are produced. Goods produced closer to home uses less of that energy.
- Improve energy efficiency: Replace all light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs (they use 75 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs); ensure doors and windows are as draft-proof as possible. Installing low-flow showerheads reduces your carbon footprint by up to 350 pounds per year.
- Work with your bank to change your bills from paper to digital. If every adult in the U.S. did this just once, we would save millions of paper sheets!
- Write a story with your grandchildren about an imaginary trip through the rainforest. Read them picture books about rainforests, mountains and islands so they can understand why we need to protect these environments.



By reducing your garbage by 10 percent you'll reduce your carbon footprint by an average of 1,200 pounds per year!

Take Action in Your Community

- Organize a clean-up of a neighborhood park, nearby river or beach, or local school or senior center. Or, you may want to contact a local organization such as the Boy or Girl Scouts to see if they have an existing project that needs more volunteers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR GOING GREEN, continued

- Check with your local school or community center to ask about starting a community garden or beautification project such as tree plantings. New trees help to reduce greenhouse gases.
- Work with your faith community to organize a household hazardous waste collection drive, or help promote an existing one in your community. Everyone has old paint, fertilizers, pesticides or other toxic materials stored around the house. Contact your local government to learn how to dispose of those items properly. It's not hard and you'll be helping neighbors (and yourself) dispose of toxic chemicals.
- Contact your local officials to ask whether they have environmental efforts in place or underway, and ask them what you can do to help (like talking to neighbors to help pass a ballot resolution).
- Organize a group of neighbors to conduct a [Sidewalks and Streets survey](#) to identify changes that would make your neighborhood better for walking.

Take Action at Work

- Organize a “Green Team” at work to motivate colleagues to reduce, reuse and recycle. (Be sure to get someone in management to support your efforts.)
- Convince your office building to choose reusable utensils, trays and dishes in the cafeteria. Keep a coffee mug, water glass and utensils at work to reduce your use of disposable dishware.
- Collect used printer, fax and copier cartridges to recycle. Work with your IT department to make sure outdated computers and other electronics are being recycled responsibly. Find recycling centers via www.electronicrecycling.net.
- Car pool or use public transportation to and from work.
- Set your office copy machines to automatically copy front to back. If you have a personal printer, reuse scrap paper.



For every mile you do not drive, you can reduce your carbon footprint by one pound.

MORE INFORMATION

For additional information and ways to get involved in helping the environment, here are just a few organizations to explore:

Earth Day Network - www.earthday.net

Earth Day Network was founded on the premise that all people, regardless of race, gender, income, or geography, have a moral right to a healthy, sustainable environment. While Earth Day Network includes information for environmental education and greening schools, the organization is always looking for volunteers to help organize or staff Earth Day events and provides useful green tips and activities for families.

American Rivers - www.americanrivers.org

Among other river-saving efforts, American Rivers provides information and support to volunteers who want to organize a clean up of a local river, stream, lake or beach. Check out the National River Cleanup section of the site.

National Resource Defense Council (NRDC) = www.nrdc.org

As an organization dedicated to safeguarding the planet, its people, plants and animals, NRDC provides advocates for the environment as well as information and activities for families who would like to live an eco-friendly lifestyle. To learn more about greening your home and/or business, visit the Green Living and Green Business sections of this site.

National Wildlife Federation (NWF) = www.nwf.org

With more than 4 million members, partners and supporters in communities, NWF is the largest conservation organization in the country. Members can get involved in restoring wildlife habitats, fighting global warming and connecting with nature.

MORE INFORMATION, continued

Sierra Club - www.sierraclub.org

As one of the oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization in the United States, the Sierra Club works to ensure a healthy and safe community for people to live in, identifies smart energy solutions to fight global warming, and is committed to America's wild lands.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) -
www.epa.gov

As the leading source on environmental science, research, education and assessment efforts, the EPA provides information, volunteer opportunities, as well as tips and actions that people can take at work, home or at school.

U.S. National Parks Service (NPS) - www.nps.gov

Safeguarding nearly 400 sites, the NPS works with over 2 million volunteers to help educate visitors and preserve history throughout America. There are multiple opportunities to get involved with or volunteer for the NPS.

CREATE THE GOOD

Thank you! It's so important to find ways to help that work for you -- whether you've got five minutes, five hours, or five days. And, if you do have more time, consider organizing [another event](#), finding more opportunities, and sending us your good ideas.

And of course, don't forget to tell your friends about Create The Good.

You Are The Power That Creates The Good.

Do you have a story to share? Have you helped someone to go green? Tell us your tricks of the trade.