

What is a Carbon Footprint? Why is it important to offset your Carbon Footprint?

Our carbon footprint is the direct effect our actions and lifestyle have on the environment in terms of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. CO₂ increases greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming. We all contribute to global warming every day. Carbon Footprints are made up of two parts, the direct or primary footprint and the indirect or secondary footprint. The primary footprint is a measure of our direct emissions of CO₂ from the burning of fossil fuels. These are probably the biggest contributors to your [Carbon Footprint](#); they include electricity consumption and transportation. The secondary footprint is a measure of indirect CO₂ emissions from the entire lifecycle of products we use - from their manufacture to their eventual breakdown in the ecosystem. The greenhouse effect is the increase in Earth's temperature caused by the growing amount of certain gasses in the atmosphere – nitrous oxide, methane and carbon dioxide. These "Greenhouse gases" have the same effect on Earth as a greenhouse; letting sunlight in and keeping heat from escaping. The greenhouse effect is important to human life; otherwise, it would be too cold to live on the Earth. By burning fossil fuels, we have tremendously increased the amount of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere. Earth is now heating up excessively, a process called "global warming." You can reduce your carbon footprint by changing things that you do in your daily life. These are a few things you can do to reduce your personal carbon footprint:

- Walk to your destination if possible instead of driving.
- Recycle glass, metals, plastics and paper.
- Select the most energy-efficient models when you replace your old appliances. Look for products that have earned the ENERGY STAR® label.
- Turn off and unplug stereos, radios, TVs, and DVDs when you leave home for a few days. These appliances have a stand-by function that uses energy even when they are turned off.
- Only run your dishwasher when full, and let dishes air dry.

There are many things you can do to offset your [Carbon Footprint](#) as well; one good choice is to plant a tree! An average tree absorbs more than 650 pounds of CO₂ over its lifespan. Trees act as natural filters of our air; through the process of photosynthesis they absorb CO₂ from the atmosphere and store it in their trunk, branches, leaves, and roots while releasing oxygen back out.

About the Author

If you are interested in learning more about offsetting your [Carbon Footprint](#), check out <http://www.begreennow.com>. There are simple tips to begin decreasing the energy you use each day, and offset the rest of your carbon-emitting energy use with their easy-to-use carbon calculator and BeGreensm [carbon offset](#) products. Be part of the solution to save the world from ourselves; we are all part of the problem.

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