

# 15 Things We Can Do about Global Warming

You *can* make a difference

- 1) **Get a Grip on Guzzling** ... At the grassroots level, greening our cars is the biggest single impact we can make.
  - Make the most of what you've got ... In your existing vehicle, learn how to improve your fuel economy. [www.LegacyLA.net/transformation/?p=147](http://www.LegacyLA.net/transformation/?p=147) summarizes efficient driving tips from [fueleconomy.gov](http://fueleconomy.gov)
    - Don't sit idly by ... Idling wastes gas. Turn off your car when you're simply sitting in it.
    - Combine your errands ... Combine trips so that you are not using your car for single-purpose trips.
    - The more, the merrier ... Organize carpools to get to work or to events. Consider transportation sharing options like Flexcar [www.flexcar.com/](http://www.flexcar.com/) and Metro <http://mta.net>
  - Green your next vehicle purchase ... Particularly here in L.A., buying wiser is a huge step. Plan a wiser purchase by reviewing [www.greenercars.com/bestof.html](http://www.greenercars.com/bestof.html) and [fueleconomy.gov](http://fueleconomy.gov)
  - Park it ... Use human-powered transport whenever possible by walking, biking. L.A. County Bicycle Coalition [www.labikecoalition.org](http://www.labikecoalition.org)
- 2) **Don't Waste a Watt** ... Electricity generation accounts for 22% of California greenhouse gas emissions
  - Buy better bulbs ... Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) use 60% less energy than a regular bulb. Join the Environmental Defense's "Make the Switch" campaign [www.environmentaldefense.org/page.cfm?tagid=483&campaign=mts](http://www.environmentaldefense.org/page.cfm?tagid=483&campaign=mts)
  - Fill 'er up ... Only run the dishwasher, washing machine and dryer when you have full loads.
  - Switch to the "save" setting ... Use energy-saving settings on refrigerators, dishwashers, washing machines, clothes dryers and other appliances. Wash clothes in warm or cold water, not hot. Keep your water-heater thermostat no higher than 120°F. Move the air-conditioning thermostat up to 78° or higher in summer. Make sure your computer goes into 'sleep' mode when not in use (80% savings in its energy use).
  - Double-up for extreme weather ... Switch to double-pane windows. Insulate and weatherize your home, for comfort and energy savings in both winter and summer. Proper insulation and ventilation can reduce heating and air conditioning needs to one-third or even one tenth of what an average house would need. Wrap your water heater in an insulation blanket.
  - A clean filter is an efficient filter ... Clean or replace furnace, air-conditioner and heat-pump filters so they run as efficiently as possible.
  - Bring on the 'Stars ... When shopping – for anything everything from a refrigerator or dishwasher, to a telephone or TV – choose products with the government's Energy Star label. [www.energystar.gov/](http://www.energystar.gov/)
  - Turn 'em off ... Most modern electric appliances consume electricity even when turned off (TVs, VCRs, faxes, HiFis, computer screens, cable boxes, and broadband modems). Plug them into a multi-socket power strip and turn the strip off when the devices are not in use. Saves an estimated 5% of our power load.
- 3) **Take charge of your power** ... In many areas, you can switch to electricity generated by clean, renewable sources such as wind and solar.  
For LADWP customers, see [www.ladwp.com/ladwp/cms/ladwp000851.jsp](http://www.ladwp.com/ladwp/cms/ladwp000851.jsp) Other areas see [Green-e.org](http://Green-e.org)
- 4) **Every drop counts** ... Our water system is the largest consumer of energy in California, using 19% of total electricity and 32% of total natural gas consumed in the state - with accompanying greenhouse gas emissions! Each gallon of water you save reduces the amount of energy to collect, treat, deliver, consume, treat, and dispose of it as wastewater. See [www.watersavingtips.org/saving.html](http://www.watersavingtips.org/saving.html) for the Top 12 Water Saving Tips.
- 5) **Practice the four R's: reduce, reuse, recycle, rebuy** ... Realize that this is stated in priority order, thus *Reduce* is the most important.
  - *Reduce*: Opt-out of excess consumer goods to *Reduce* the greenhouse gasses of manufacture and transportation. Avoid heavily packaged products. Opt-out of junk mail. Go paperless at the office. Get in touch with "need" versus "want." Rise above the vagaries of fashion. Practice "Unshopping" [www.coopamerica.org/programs/shopunshop/unshopping/index.cfm](http://www.coopamerica.org/programs/shopunshop/unshopping/index.cfm)

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[www.LegacyLA.net](http://www.LegacyLA.net)

website includes "What Can I Do?" ♦ Positive Environmental News ♦ *Legacy*, the visionary environmental novel ♦ Resources

- Use *Reuseable* cloth napkins, dishtowels, shopping bags, dishes. When we choose *Reuseable* goods, we use the resource-manufacture-transport-disposal chain (with accompanying greenhouse gas emissions) only once.
  - *Recycle* everything possible, at home and at your office.
  - *Rebuy*: Buy products made from recycled materials. It takes 70 to 90% less energy to make recycled paper and it prevents the loss of forests worldwide. 100% Recycled copier paper and notepads are available at Staples. 100% recycled toilet paper is available through Trader Joe's, Seventh Generation, and other sources. Read "Dispense with Disposables" [www.LegacyLA.net/transformation/?p=112](http://www.LegacyLA.net/transformation/?p=112)
- 6) Buy organic** ... Organic soils capture and store carbon dioxide at much higher levels than soils from conventional growing practices. Biodynamic and sustainable techniques take 'organic' a step further. Vote with your \$\$\$ "Why Organic?" [www.nofavt.org/why.php](http://www.nofavt.org/why.php)
- 7) Buy local** ... Buying locally means less energy is required to drive your products to the market. Look for local fruits and vegetables. Try to buy clothes and other items that are manufactured close to home. "10 reasons to eat local food" [www.eatlocalchallenge.com](http://www.eatlocalchallenge.com)  
Find your local Farmer's Market [www.cafarmersmarkets.com/](http://www.cafarmersmarkets.com/)  
Learn more about eating locally at [www.LegacyLA.net/transformation/?p=162](http://www.LegacyLA.net/transformation/?p=162)
- 8) Plant a tree** ... A single tree will absorb one ton of carbon dioxide over its lifetime. Plant shade trees around your house to help reduce your summer air-conditioning bills. Emphasize drought-tolerant California native trees, or "invest" the water you spend on fruit trees which bear food. Check out LADWP's free shade trees program. If you don't have room on your own property, make contributions to our urban forest through TreePeople [www.treepeople.org/](http://www.treepeople.org/)
- 9) Drop yer bloomers** ... Ornamental gardens and lawns demand water, land use, and often chemicals. Try edible landscaping, and grow at least some small portion of your food. It's beautiful, it's yummy, it's fun. It's one way to get both Local and Organic (#6 and #7 above). The water you use on your landscape serves dual purpose, growing both aesthetic and food. But above all, gardening a portion of our food puts us back in touch with the earth and its cycles. [www.FoodNotLawns.com](http://www.FoodNotLawns.com) and [www.LegacyLA.net/EdibleLandscape.htm](http://www.LegacyLA.net/EdibleLandscape.htm) (Apartment? Condo? Do it in containers!)
- 10) Erase your carbon footprint** ... Through carbon credits you can immediately participate in reducing worldwide greenhouse gasses (even if you can't go buy a solar-powered Prius today). Your \$\$ help establish the fledgling industry of carbon sequestration. Joanne's review of the various carbon offset programs: [www.EnviroChangeMakers.org/CarbonCredits.pdf](http://www.EnviroChangeMakers.org/CarbonCredits.pdf)
- 11) Use your Voting power** ... Demand that your elected representatives implement programs that combat global warming, such as the California Global Warming Solutions Act. At election time, learn the position your candidate takes on global warming and let candidates know you'll vote accordingly.
- 12) Connect** ... Invite others to join you on this journey. Adopt the above changes together, with friends and family. It's easier in the midst of a peer group. Do it with your church group (Faith-Based environmentalism resources [www.LegacyLA.net/transformation/?p=177](http://www.LegacyLA.net/transformation/?p=177)). Do it with your business leads circle, your co-workers, your PTA.
- 13) Rethink and Evolve** ...
- Rethink transportation ... Consider whether you really need to take this trip. Try telecommuting from home. Use surface transportation instead of flying short distances. Fly only when absolutely essential. As future decisions arise about moving or changing jobs, weigh transportation among your considerations.
  - Rethink your "need" for energy ... Use a clothesline instead of a dryer. Use a push mower and get a workout while you cut the lawn. Or better yet, try [www.foodnotlawns.com/lawns\\_to\\_gardens.html](http://www.foodnotlawns.com/lawns_to_gardens.html) . Consider where else changing your habits could change your energy consumption.
- 14) Adjust your Expectations** ... Understand that our future will be quite different from the trajectory of our historic and economic past. It must be. To reduce greenhouse gas emissions 70-80% over the next few decades, we must reThink and reDesign all of our fossil-fuel intensive habits. From our food supply to our transportation preferences, everything will change. Welcome the transformation!
- 15) Continue** ... Think of these things as a constantly moving standard in which the test is: Are we constantly doing what is more respectful, less damaging to the earth than we did last year? (paraphrased from Arthur Waskow)

Compiled by Joanne Poyourow from tips offered by the Sierra Club, the Union of Concerned Scientists, Greenpeace, the website of the movie "An Inconvenient Truth," and many other sources. Revised 3/07. A version written for children is available through [www.LegacyLA.net/Articles.htm](http://www.LegacyLA.net/Articles.htm)

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