

TAKE THE CHALLENGE! Ideas & resources to reduce carbon impacts:

Idea: Make yourself a 'points goal,' and see what you can rack up **between April 13th, and May 13th**--Make it EarthMonth, instead of Earth Day!

Point System that SEI is working with:

- Made this choice/did this thing for myself: 1 point
- Instigated this choice/change for my whole household: 2 points
- Got a friend/family member to meet me in this challenge: 1 additional point

[Visit Project Drawdown to for a glance at 9 sectors, and ways to improve carbon impacts: https://drawdown.org/.](https://drawdown.org/)

Plant 1 (or more) trees, on your property, or in community space. *(Share your pics so we can tie this to SEI campus tree planting, and urge others on through social media!!)*

Begin composting food scraps at home: *Americans produce an average of 1.5 pounds of food waste daily, if this goes into nutrient cycling instead of to landfill where it generates methane, that makes a big difference!*

Begin composting 'yard waste' at home

Help your kid's school start composting at school

Wash your clothing in cold water. *The enzymes in cold water detergent are designed to clean better in cold water. Doing two loads of laundry weekly in cold water instead of hot or warm water can save up to 500 pounds of carbon dioxide each year.*

Notice 5 grocery items you often buy in plastic packaging: Find alternatives that = no packaging or no plastic for these items...

Ask your local restaurants to stop using styrofoam, (nicely of course).

Go Low Flow: Check yourself, or get an assessment on if your home has low-flow taps, and if not, make the transition to low-flow: *In the United States, 60 percent of home water use occurs indoors, primarily for toilets, clothes washers, showers, and faucets. Low-flush toilets and efficient washing machines can reduce water use by 19 and 17 percent respectively. Low-flow faucets and showerheads and efficient dishwashers can also contribute. In total, these technologies can reduce water use within homes by 45 percent.*

[Order a home energy audit:](https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/weatherize/home-energy-audits)

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You can install an energy monitoring system and then try to turn off everything in your house and see what it is still drawing. This will help you identify loads that you may not even be aware of. It can also help you determine when to do things that draw a lot of electricity and be strategic about when to do them. Even if you don't have a renewable energy system providing energy for your home, if you decide to do energy intensive activities like drying clothes or using large amounts of hot water during the day, there is a

much greater chance they are being powered by a PV system operating somewhere else that is connected to the same utility grid you are!

[Sign up to get your electricity from clean energy through your local utility or a certified renewable energy provider. Green-e.org can help you find certified green energy providers.](#)

Food! Everyone eats, and plant-based diets are much lower impact on the planet. If you eat animal protein, consider how you can transition to some percentage of your meals vegetarian, suggestion, to start, 25% of meals. For each week that you meet your 'percentage of plant-based meals', earn 2 points.

Join a farm CSA, or find another avenue to make at least 30% of what you and your family eat from local sources. *Earn bonus points for sharing your CSA e-news, or a picture of your CSA box to staff.*

Turn your water heater down to 120°F. This can save about 550 pounds of CO2 a year.

Alternative forms of transportation: Walk, Bike, Skateboard, Carpool, use Public transit. *(bonus point for sharing your pics about this!)*

Share with neighbors: can you buy more food in bulk? Like rice, beans, flours, baking products? Consider talking to a couple neighbors and seeing if you can 'split' some bulk purchases together. Less trips to the store, less packaging, less shipping of products, more interconnectedness with the folks near you. *Bonus point if you share a picture of yourself or your family with your bulk food purchase!*

Garden? Plant an extra row: In 2020, food prices will rise on produce due to border closures and resulting labor restrictions. Plan to give your extra row to your local foodbank or lower income friends.

Recycle broken electronics: Many local electronics stores offer free recycling programs for old goods.

Speak to your local representative. Participate in things your city or town can do to reduce its carbon footprint, like developing a town action plan, improving recycling, and adopting green energy policies.

Family Planning: Securing people's right to high-quality family planning around the world has powerful positive impacts on the health, welfare of families, it also affects greenhouse gas emissions. Find a way to support health and education initiatives, (especially for women and girls) in a developing region of the world.

[Choose a cement alternative in building or fix-it projects](#)

Support Regenerative Agriculture: Invest in your local organic growers collective. *Bonus points if you send a picture showing your visit with a farmer to learn about what they do to improve soil health.*

Educate yourself about your area's landfill, learn what they are doing about methane: Over the course of a century, methane has 34 times the greenhouse effect of carbon dioxide. Landfills are a top source of methane emissions, releasing 12 percent of the world's total.

[Opt out of Junk Mail](#)

Choose Recycled toilet paper/facial tissue

Add power strips: Especially for your computer, TV, and other household electronics. Most of these are "phantom loads" and will draw power when they are plugged in even if they are turned off! You can use power strips as a way to switch them completely off without unplugging them.

Solar Cook: It's a great way to bypass the inefficient energy conversion that takes place in most other types of cooking. Plus you can just set it and forget if it is the right type of slowcooked meal!

LED Lighting: Replace all incandescent and compact fluorescent lights in your home with efficient LEDs. LEDs utilize up to 85% less energy than incandescent lighting. Even if you rent, it's not that expensive and could save you money over time on a long term lease, and you could also talk to your landlord and see if they would go in on the cost since they are benefiting in the long term.

Recycle plastic bags: Many recycling facilities will not accept plastic bags, but your local grocery store might-- so check into it. Definitely refuse, reuse, then figure out how to recycle!

Home Energy Efficiency: Things like replacing worn weatherstripping are easy to do and don't require an energy audit to start improving efficiency or a ton of work. Take a piece of incense and move it around the perimeter of your exterior doors and windows to see if the smoke is disturbed by leakage. If it is, you can just upgrade the weather seals and save on energy usage and bills!

AND, Come up with your own ideas that work for you and your situation; please share with SEI!