



Erasmus+

TIPS &  
TRICKS



# Greendex

Greendex is a KA2 Strategic Partnership Project that aims to communicate to young people and youth workers that it is time to review our ecological habits by making them aware that they still have a lot of room for improvement. This tips and tricks guide is part of the project Greendex and seeks to transmit knowledge on how to develop more sustainable youth activities and youth organisations.



## Partners of the project



'Greendex' (2021-2-SI02-KA220-YOU-000049273) is a project funded by Erasmus+ under the Key Action 2: Cooperation among organizations and institutions section and is expected to result in the development, transfer and/or implement innovative practices at organizational, local, regional, national and European levels.

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# Tips and tricks For Individuals



# 1. TRAVEL



## 1.1 Stay closer to home for short vacations!

### Issue:

Airplanes leave the highest carbon footprint out of all the means of transport, Therefore, the luxury of travelling to your holiday destination by airplane to spend just a few days there burdens the planet in a significant way in comparison with staying there for a longer period.

### Solution:

Don't go far away from your home when having a short time for the holiday. Apart from using environmentally friendlier transportation, you will also be rewarded with more budget available for your next trips and appreciating more your surroundings.

### Did you know that...

Replacing a round-trip of 2 people flying around 1 000 km to reach the destination (520 kg of GHG emissions) by staying closer and travelling around 300 km with a patrol car (100 kg) could decrease CO2 emissions by 80%.

### Sources:

- Which form of transport has the smallest carbon footprint?
- Calculations are made through this carbon calculator for 2 people having round-trip Vienna-Brussels flight (2 x 1 000 km) and 2 people travelling 2 x 300 km in an average petrol car.



## 1.2 Plan a longer stay when flying to your destination!

### Issue:

Planes, despite releasing a huge amount of GHG emissions during the flight, could be a relatively justifiable means of transport when you plan to stay longer in your destination to keep you from plane hopping or from frequent travelling to different places. However, choosing flights with a layover for your trip would bounce you back to leaving a huge and unreasonable carbon footprint.

**Solution:**

Stay longer in your holiday destination! By having more time (and we talk about a few weeks here), you can truly experience the daily life of the place of your interest, immerse yourself more in the local culture and also significantly decrease your carbon footprint by reducing the number of flights per year. That's also a reason why to avoid flights with a layover as most of the aircraft fuel (around 23%) is being used just for taking off and landing and multiple flights could easily accumulate total carbon emissions.

**Did you know that...**

By giving up on every single flight of 2000 km, you could save around 210 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>. Otherwise, the carbon absorption of 10 trees in one year would be needed to compensate for your trip!

**Sources:**

- [Reduce Your Carbon Footprint As a Traveler](#)
- [Calculation of CO<sub>2</sub> offsetting by trees](#)
- [Calculation made through ICAO for 2 people having round-trip Lisbon-Bordeaux \(983 km distance\)](#)
- [Why Non-Stop Flights Are Better For The Environment](#)

**1.3. Avoid domestic flights!****Issue:**

When it comes to passenger transportation, domestic flights represent the biggest source of emissions due to the inefficiency of fuel consumption, when most of the energy (around 23%) is used just for taking off and landing to travel only for a short distance as we talk about transportation within the country.

**Solution:**

Even driving alone in the car is a more environmentally friendly solution than using domestic flights. However, the recommendation here is directed towards the use of trains or buses when not planning to cross the borders.

**Did you know that...**

By the average amount of grams of released CO<sub>2</sub> and its equivalents, one passenger is responsible for 255 g per km when using domestic flights, 192 g while driving alone in a car using petrol, 41 g when travelling with national rails or only 28 g when using long-distance buses?

**Sources:**

- [Which form of transport has the smallest carbon footprint?](#)
- [Why Non-Stop Flights Are Better For The Environment](#)



## 1.4. Support eco-friendly accommodations!



### Issue:

No, we don't necessarily talk about living in hippie places or sleeping under the sky. There are plenty of ways the lodge can be turned into a place with a low carbon footprint – using renewable energy systems, offering local and vegetarian meals or installing low-flow showers.

### Solution:

Search your eco-lodging on websites like [www.ecobnb.com](http://www.ecobnb.com) or [www.nature.house](http://www.nature.house). Also, many websites started using labels such as Travel sustainable property to distinguish the eco-friendly accommodations from the others. You can also do your own research by checking up on your accommodation and whether it has any certification confirming its eco-friendliness.

### Did you know that...

By using solar panels, the medium-sized hotel with annual electricity consumption of 6 900 kWh per room would avoid the production of 68 500 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. This amount of released CO<sub>2</sub> equals around 13 000 vegetarian lunch menus you could offer!

### Sources:

- How much CO<sub>2</sub> can you save with a green hotel?
- Values for calculating vegetarian lunch from 'CO<sub>2</sub> Everything' (3 eggs + 100 g cheese + 150 g tofu + 100 g rice + 100 g tomatoes + 50 g chocolate + 1 banana = 2.8 m<sup>3</sup> of CO<sub>2</sub> = 5.24 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>), conversion 1.87 kg/m<sup>3</sup>, see 'Safety advice. Carbon Dioxide'

## 1.5. Offset your carbon footprint when travelling!



### Issue:

Every means of transport you use leaves a different carbon footprint, therefore the need of compensating for this footprint varies as well. Many airlines or bus companies can help you with this compensation by supporting projects connected to reaching carbon neutrality.

### Solution:

Financially contribute to offset carbon neutrality while buying the tickets. The companies usually calculate this extra fee based on the number of km you travel.

### Did you know that...

Apart from relying on travel companies to invest your carbon offset contribution into the project of their choice, certifications from The Gold Standard or Green-e can also help you to identify carbon offset projects that are worthwhile to support.

#### Sources:

- [The beginner's guide to carbon offsetting your flights](#)
- [Do Airline Climate Offsets Really Work? Here's the Good News, and the Bad](#)



## 1.6. Pack light!

#### Issue:

Apart from the number of km of your trip, the amount of fuel consumed while travelling also depends on the weight you take with you. And the more weight to carry, the more fuel used, hence the bigger carbon footprint you leave.

#### Solution:

Try to be as minimalistic as possible when packing up for the trip. There are many things that can be rented locally, or you can focus more on carrying only quality clothes that can survive without a need to be washed for a couple of days – the ones made of merino wool are perfect examples.

### Did you know that...

Even reducing the luggage by 15 kg could save between 100 and 200 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> on a return flight from London to Tenerife (distance reaching 6 000 km in total).

#### Sources:

- [How to Reduce the Carbon Footprint of Your Travels](#)
- [Sustainable tourism: four ways to reduce your carbon footprint as you travel, from packing light to using trains](#)



## 1.7. Choose a bicycle over a car or public transport!

#### Issue:

Passenger transport by using cars, motorcycles, buses, and taxis accounts for 45.1 % of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions coming from transport. Also, average car usage is responsible for nearly 90 % of GHG emissions released during the car lifecycle. Hence, we should challenge ourselves by trying to reduce these emissions by switching to eco-friendly means of transport like bicycles.

**Solution:**

For short distances, always consider bicycles when possible. Many cities nowadays offer a bicycle-sharing system, where you can jump on and off using any bicycle in the city belonging to this system. The usage of bicycle transportation can be still combined with using public transport.

**Did you know that...**

When using a bicycle, you are responsible for releasing only 21 g of CO<sub>2</sub> and its equivalents per km, while using the tram increases this number to 35 g, bus to 105 g, taxi to 150g and medium petrol car to 192 g in case you travel alone?

**Sources:**

- [Cars, planes, trains: where do CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transport come from?](#)
- [Cycle more often 2 cool down the planet!](#)
- [Which form of transport has the smallest carbon footprint?](#)
- [The environmental impacts of cars explained](#)

**1.8. Use carpooling services!****Issue:**

While on land, cars are considered to be the most polluting means of passenger transport as they can carry only a few passengers. Hence, driving alone or in two is considered to be very irresponsible towards nature in comparison with using other means of land transportation.

**Solution:**

When using a car, make sure you don't leave any car seat empty e.g., by using carpooling services like Blablacar. Through such a service you can let the public know about your travel plan and people can join you and share the bill for the fuel with you as well. It also means that the average amount of released CO<sub>2</sub> per person can decrease significantly.

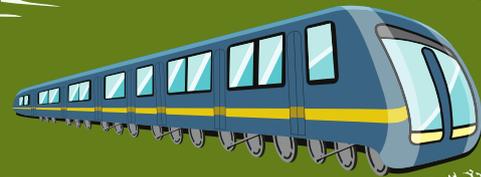
**Did you know that...**

Carpooling currently saves more than 1.6 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> every year. To put it on an individual level, every 100 km of driving alone would result in around 19.2 kg of GHG emissions, while by travelling in four, this number could be reduced to 5 kg.

**Sources:**

- Which form of transport has the smallest carbon footprint?

## 1.9. Train as the greenest option for travels!



### Issue:

From land transportation, trains are the ones releasing low amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in comparison to other means of transport used for medium or long-distance travelling. Hence, they represent a great alternative to planes or long-distance buses.

### Solution:

Switch from plane to train, especially when it comes to domestic travel. This will have a great impact on reducing carbon footprint. Despite taking a long time to travel, you will be rewarded with more comfort and landscape scenery that can be seen only from the railway.

### Did you know that...

Travelling around 500 km by plane would result in 127 kg of released GHG emissions per person, while by bus or train it would be max. 20 kg? We talk about emission reduction by 80 %, so choose wisely!

### Sources:

- [Which form of transport has the smallest carbon footprint?](#)



## 1.10. Reduce using air conditioning while driving!

### Issue:

Maybe not so obvious at first glance, but air conditioners in passenger cars and buses consume considerable amounts of energy. Because of that, the vehicles require more fuel and also the leaks of refrigerant are responsible for some amount of GHG emissions.

### Solution:

Give up on a bit of comfort inside the car and travel with the car's windows opened instead of AC. Opened windows will help with circulating the air inside the car and cool it down. No redundant carbon footprint is left by this solution!

### Did you know that...

AC typically uses between 3% and 50% of the vehicle's fuel consumption. Hence by not using AC, you can lower the demand for fuel. Also, the leaks of refrigerant annually account for 30-82 g of GHG emissions.

### Sources:

- [The future of air conditioning in vehicles](#)
- [The life-cycle costs and greenhouse-gas benefits of switching to alternative refrigerants and improving system efficiencies](#)

## 2. FOOD



### 2.1 Reduce food waste!

#### Issue:

Current research estimates that between 33 to 50% of all the food produced globally goes straight to the trash can. Wasted food contributes hugely to our GHG emissions and the main reason for that is the methane that gets emitted by all this food decomposing in the landfills.

#### Solution:

There are plenty of ways how to reduce your food waste: planning your meals ahead and sticking to the shopping list you make accordingly in order to avoid buying unnecessary items, buying loose products, being creative with the usage of leftovers, regular check-up on expiration dates of your food, buying visually 'ugly' but perfectly fine fruits and vegetables, freezing products to eat them later or donating surplus food to charities, food banks or through apps such as Olio or Too Good To Go.

#### Did you know that...

If global food waste was a country, it could be considered the third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, behind China and the United States. The US Environmental Protection Agency estimates that global food waste represents 8% of all human-caused GHG emissions.

#### Sources:

- [Food waste is the world's dumbest problem](#)
- [A Methodology for Sustainable Management of Food Waste](#)
- [9 Nutrition Tips for Reducing Your Carbon Footprint](#)
- [From Farm to Kitchen](#)



### 2.2. Give a plant-based diet a try!

#### Issue:

Livestock farming, hence, the carnivore diet, is a major contributor to our carbon footprint as animals cultivated industrially produce excessive amounts of methane, a GHG even more potent than CO<sub>2</sub>. This industry also requires large amounts of water and land to cultivate food for the animals – 9 000 litres of water to produce 0,5 kg of beef, but only 95 litres to produce the same amount of wheat!

**Solution:**

Try to limit your meat consumption. We don't necessarily mean cutting animal products from the diet completely, but, as a starting point, you can commit to a few vegetarian dinners per week. And if you are not the most creative cook, YouTube is always a great source of numerous recipes for plant-based meals.

**Did you know that...**

If the entire population of the United States decided to cut off meat and cheese for one day per week, it would have the environmental impact of taking over 7 million cars off the road! For a better understanding of the carbon footprint decrease potential by just changing diet, 100 g of beef accounts for 15.5 kg of GHG emissions while the same amount of tofu is only 0.08 kg!

**Sources:**

- [Embracing a plant-based diet](#)
- [Tackling climate change through livestock](#)
- [What are the main man-made greenhouse gases?](#)
- [Eight tips for eating for the planet](#)
- [CO2 Everything.| Tofu](#)
- [CO2 Everything.| Beef](#)



## 2.3. Avoid plastic packaging when grocery shopping!

**Issue:**

Worldwide plastic usage is an alarming issue as it is a major pollutant of the natural environment. Each year, 500 million tons of this material are manufactured on a global scale, keeping in mind that single-use plastics can take up to 500 hundred years to decompose. It has been estimated that if the current trends remain by the year 2050 our oceans will contain more plastics than fish.

**Solution:**

When going shopping, try to stick to carrying a reusable cloth bag, using your own containers and jars for buying loose products where possible or carrying a reusable water bottle instead of buying plastic ones (an app called Refill can help you to find places where to refill your water for free). Buying food in bulk is a valid option as well, especially when this food can be easily distributed over your neighbours or community.

**Did you know that...**

A single-use plastic bag is responsible for 1.58 kg of GHG emissions, which is equivalent to driving an average petrol car for 8 km.

### Sources:

- [Reduce your plastic consumption and lessen its impact on the environment](#)
- [9 ways to reduce your plastic use](#)
- [Plastic leakage and greenhouse gas emissions are increasing](#)
- [CO2 Everything. | Plastic Bag \(Single Use\)](#)

## 2.4. Search for organic products!

### Issue:

The food industry nowadays relies on the usage of manufactured chemical fertilizers that are predominantly imported from abroad. Moreover, nitrogen fertilizers, the most commonly used in agriculture, come from burning fossil fuels. Both result in a higher carbon footprint of the food coming from non-organic farms.

### Solution:

While shopping, look for organically labelled food products. Organic farms are required to fertilize the soil with natural products such as compost and manure, commit to keeping the soil healthy by using natural methods like crop rotation and feed the animals with products that are not genetically modified. Farms following these standards also have lower emissions and require less energy. Also looking for fair-trade products come here into consideration as they follow similar principles.

### Did you know that...

A football field size area of soil that is farmed organically can store almost 2 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> more than a non-organic one. The Soil Association estimated that if all of Europe's farmland committed to organic standards, agricultural emissions could go down by 40-50% by the year 2050.

### Sources:

- [10 ways to cut your food carbon footprint](#)
- [Why is organic better for the planet?](#)
- [Fertilizer and Climate Change](#)
- [Adapt your shopping and eating habits](#)
- [Fairtrade system](#)



## 2.5. Opt in buying local and seasonal products!

### Issue:

We are used to having all the fruits and vegetables typical for different regions of the world available in our local supermarkets all year round. However, the longer distance the food has travelled, the higher its carbon emission is. Moreover, the products cultivated locally, but out of season require the help of heated greenhouses, which also leaves their carbon footprint much higher.

### Solution:

Consider buying food from local producers that offer products available in a given season. Look for a local farmer's market as a place for your regular shopping. Additional benefits to that will be giving a boost to the local economy and becoming more familiar with the food native to your region.

### Did you know that...

A poll in the UK revealed that more than 9 people out of 10 didn't know when some of the UK's best-known produce is in season. Therefore, supermarkets should help us to shop seasonally by providing more info.

### Sources:

- [5 Reasons to Eat Local, Seasonal Food](#)
- [Are seasonal fruit and vegetables better for the environment?](#)
- [Seasonality and dietary requirements: will eating seasonal food contribute to health and environmental sustainability?](#)
- [British public 'ignorant about seasonal fruit and veg'](#)



## 2.6. Watch out for palm oil!



### Issue:

Palm oil is one of the most popular vegetable oils in the world, however, the expansive cultivation of oil palm trees in Southeast Asia results in the deforestation of some of the most biodiverse forests in the world, leaving endangered animal species without a place to live. Moreover, to make way for those plantations, peatlands storing a lot of CO<sub>2</sub> are usually burned, which leads to very high GHG emissions.

### Solution:

While shopping, search for products containing RSPO-certified palm oil. The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil requires producers to commit to a range of practices limiting the negative environmental impact of this product.

### Did you know that...

Converting a single hectare of peatland rainforest into a palm oil plantation can result in releasing approximately 6 000 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

### Sources:

- [8 things to know about palm oil](#)
- [Palm Oil's Environmental Impact: Can It Be Grown Sustainably?](#)
- [How did palm oil become such a problem - and what can we do about it?](#)

## 2.7. Don't leave any bit of fruit or vegetable!

### Issue:

While cooking, we are leaving a lot of leftovers and scraps coming from fruit and vegetables such as skin, seeds, ends or stems. Since the majority of the population lives in urban areas where not everybody has the access to compost to throw these leftovers into, there are still ways to make some benefit out of them and avoid food waste!

### Solution:

Learn a bit about the nutritional values of various fruit and vegetable scraps, store them and use them in smoothies (kale and chard stem or tops of carrots can be used), homemade stock or broth (from vegetable tops, stalks or peels), chips (from potato peels), to flavour a glass of water (with peels of citrus fruit or apple) or to simply dry them (pumpkin seeds, apple) and



### Did you know that...

In the EU there are 89 million tonnes of food wasted every year, representing 179 kg of wasted food per capita which means 0.5 kg of food wasted by a single person every day.

#### Sources:

- [Urban Development](#)
- [How developed countries can reduce their food waste](#)
- [13 Things To Do With Vegetable and Fruit Scraps](#)
- [Prevention and reduction of food waste](#)



## 3. CLOTHES AND WASHING

### 3.1. Buy less!

#### Issue:

We have been buying 400% more clothes since the 1980s and nearly 85% of our garments end up in landfills, with only 1% of clothes being recycled. According to the World Bank, in some countries, 40% of purchased clothing is never even used.

#### Solution:

If you cannot commit yourself to wearing something for a minimum of 30 times, don't buy it. Try to use those clothes which you already own. In addition, there are many easy ways of repairing or upcycling a piece of the garment if you're already bored of them and YouTube is a great guideline for that too.

### Did you know that...

Research in the UK says that continuing to actively wear a garment for just nine months longer could diminish its environmental impacts by 20–30%.

#### Sources:

- [Can fashion ever be sustainable?](#)
- [The high cost of cheap clothing. | Trisha Striker | TEDxTownsville](#)
- [How Much Do Our Wardrobes Cost to the Environment?](#)
- [How fast fashion adds to the world's clothing waste problem \(Marketplace\).](#)

## 3.2. Swap clothes and buy second-hand!

### Issue:

To prevent buying new clothes representing an environmentally very unfriendly solution, a good way of extending the lifetime of a piece of cloth is swapping them or shopping in second-hand shops.

### Solution:

Search for local second-hand shops or use their online siblings (such as Vinted, Poshmark, ThredUp, Depop or Tradesy). In addition, you can look for swap markets that are usually organized locally. Here, people bring their gently worn, unwanted clothes and exchange them for new items, brought by others. If you don't have any in your town, the floor is yours to organize one and spread this amazing budget and environmentally friendly initiative!

### Did you know that...

Research in the US shows that each person that buys second-hand clothing can prevent more than 230 kg of carbon emissions every year, which reduces one's water, waste, and carbon footprint by more than 80%.

### Sources:

- [Buy second-hand clothes](#)
- [Sustainability Tip: 7 reasons to buy clothing second-hand rather than new](#)
- [Environmental Benefits Of Buying Second-Hand Clothing](#)



## 3.3. Avoid fast fashion brands!

### Issue:

Fast fashion is an approach to producing and selling quickly and cheaply available garments to consumers while using cheap labour and being extremely harmful to the environment when even organic fabrics are processed with bleach and other toxins. New items are being displayed every third day in fast fashion stores, and most of these “disposable” unsold products end up in landfills being burnt.

### Solution:

Buying a maximum of 8 new items a year could already reduce fashion emissions by 37% in the world's major cities. However, it is important to do research on the companies you are buying from (websites like Good On You can help you with that) as the support of ethical, slow fashion and sustainable brands by customers is essential these days.

### Did you know that...

According to the World Bank, 20% of water pollution globally is caused by textile processing, making it the second biggest polluter of freshwater resources on the planet. Another alarming number is that around 25% of the chemicals produced in the world are used just in textiles!

#### Sources:

- [The high cost of cheap clothing | Trisha Striker | TEDxTownsville](#)
- [How pollution in the global textiles supply chain is making viscose toxic](#)
- [The unCover Handbook, a guide to Sustainable Fashion](#)
- [How fast fashion adds to the world's clothing waste problem \(Marketplace\)](#)
- [Fast fashion: How clothes are linked to climate change](#)



### 3.4. Look for fair trade brands!

#### Issue:

Fairtrade-certified products and brands, in contradiction to many fast fashion brands, combat poverty in developing countries, ensuring that workers are being paid fairly, working under humane conditions, and having sufficient labour rights, as well as encouraging sustainable methods of production.

#### Solution:

Look for Fair Trade-certified brands. Websites like Good On You or Fairtrade Foundation can help you with decision-making as they collect information about Fair Trade brands. Furthermore, buying clothes from companies which treat their workers and the environment well, will encourage more companies to take similar actions.

### Did you know that...

According to the estimates of the Fairtrade Foundation, the number of farmers and workers who have benefited from Fair Trade has quadrupled over the last 25 years.

#### Sources:

- [The Ultimate Guide to Fair Trade Clothing Brands](#)
- [25 Years of Fairtrade Impact](#)

### 3.5. Donate old clothes!

#### Issue:

By donating clothes, we extend the garment's lifetime as well as save them from ending up in landfills and being burnt (at least) for a while.

#### Solution:

When donating clothes, here are some guidelines to follow: well-worn underwear and bras are considered unhygienic, so don't give them for donation. Worn-out clothes shouldn't be donated as well as they cannot be used anymore. Last, but not least, donate to places where your garment is truly needed – do research and be considerate of whom to give your clothes to.

#### Did you know that...

A study made in the UK says that the majority of fashion purchases are being used 7 times on average before being discarded. Give your clothes a longer life, donate smart!

#### Sources:

- [How to donate clothes in the most ethical ways possible](#)
- [The unCover Handbook, a guide to Sustainable Fashion](#)



### 3.6. Learn about the concept of a Capsule wardrobe!

#### Issue:

The garment industry belongs to one of the most polluting industries in the world. Taking this into consideration, we should really focus on minimizing the negative impact of our shopping behaviour in fashion stores and consider what we already have in our closets, while searching for new pieces of clothes.

#### Solution:

You can get inspired by a concept called Capsule wardrobe, whose principle is to stay minimalistic with the number of clothes (you maybe heard of rule 33 – the maximum number of items you should have), to possess higher quality pieces, so they will last longer and to keep only the ones that barely go out of style and are neutral in tone, style, and colour, so they are easy to combine with each other. All unnecessary items can be either donated, swapped, or put into second-hand stores.

#### Did you know that...

The fashion industry is responsible for 10 % of annual global CO2 emissions, which makes more than the emissions from all international flights and maritime shipping combined. That's why applying a minimalistic approach to our wardrobes is necessary to decrease our carbon footprint!

#### Sources:

- [How Much Do Our Wardrobes Cost to the Environment?](#)
- [How To Create Your First Capsule Wardrobe](#)



### 3.7. What to do with jeans?

#### Issue:

There are over 2 billion pairs of jeans produced worldwide each year, while one pair lasts no longer than a year on average. Plenty of water is needed for its production, not to mention all the herbicides and pesticides contaminating groundwater and kilograms of GHG emissions released during its lifecycle.

#### Solution:

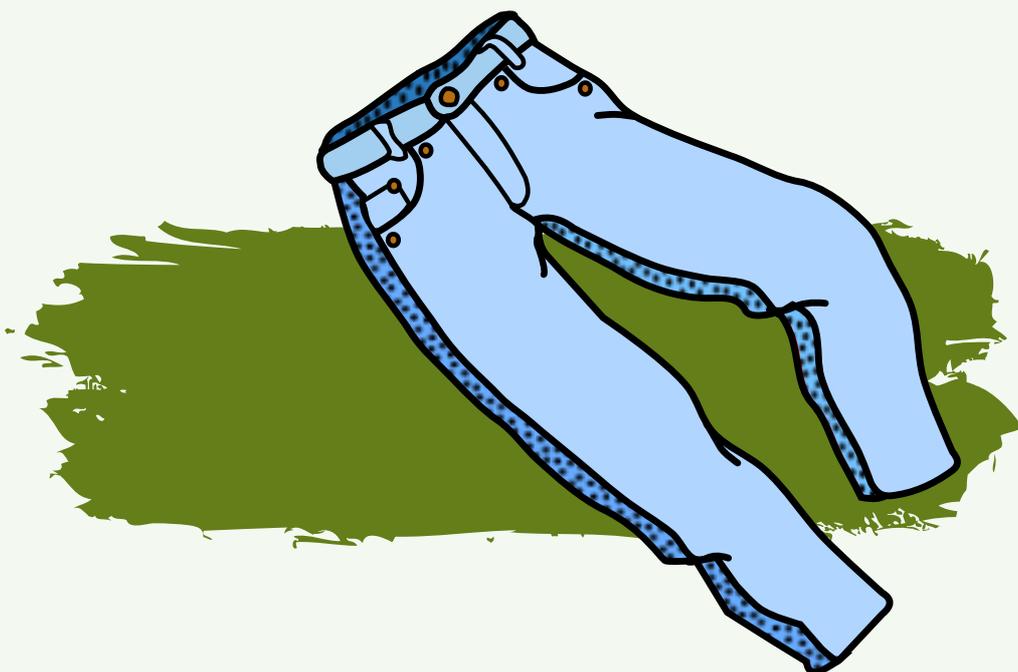
If you're a jeans lover, try to look for second-hand jeans or jeans made from better materials like recycled or organic cotton or hemp, which are designed for longevity. Furthermore, go for the ones made from 98% cellulosic fibres such as cotton, hemp, viscose or lyocell to increase the chance of recyclability. Denim manufacturers also recommend washing them once every ten wearing, using cold water and avoiding drying machines.

#### Did you know that...

In order to produce one single pair of jeans, up to 10 000 litres of water would be needed to grow the required amount of cotton. That equals 10 years of drinking water consumed by one person!

#### Sources:

- [The life cycle of a pair of jeans](#)
- [Material Guide: How Ethical and Sustainable Is Denim?](#)
- [Can fashion ever be sustainable?](#)
- [25 Years of Fairtrade Impact](#)



## 4. HOUSEHOLD



### 4.1. Less (hot) water in the shower!

#### Issue:

Long showers lead to wasting water just for the sake of our own comfort. In combination with using hot water, such showers unnecessarily leave a high carbon footprint due to heating the high amount of water requiring plenty of energy.

#### Solution:

Give up on a bit of your comfort and try to reduce the amount of the (hot) water as much as possible. Your skin will say thank you as well for not getting dried out and itchy by having long and/or hot showers too often.

#### Did you know that...

An average person uses around 90 litres of water per shower lasting 8 minutes. By reducing the daily showers to 5 minutes during one month you could save around 1 000 litres of water which equals the amount of water one person would drink in one year!

#### Sources:

- [Have you tried the five-minute shower challenge?](#)
- [How Long Should You Shower?](#)



### 4.2. Wash your hands in cold water!

#### Brief intro:

Heating the waterfalls under activities requires a considerable amount of household energy, leaving a notable carbon footprint. Therefore, frequent (and unnecessary) use of hot water for washing your hands contributes to this footprint as well.

#### Solution:

As hands are unable to cope with high water temperatures that can kill bacteria, there is no reason to use hot water for it at all. Instead, use lukewarm or ideally cold water along with soap.

#### Did you know that...

Around 15 % of GHG emissions from residential housing in the US are produced just by heating the water.

**Sources:**

- [How to cut carbon out of your heating](#)
- [The hidden impact of your daily water use](#)

### 4.3. Avoid using AC as much as you can!

**Brief intro:**

The global temperature is on the rise, and so is the need to cool ourselves down. However, cooling the temperature down with an air conditioner (AC) is subject to a huge amount of energy to be consumed. By being more specific, the emissions from room ACs can contribute to as much as 0.5 °C increase by 2100 and that's a big one.

**Solution:**

Consider using low-cost but still efficient enough solutions such as air fans or ceiling fans instead. Another option is to use a dehumidifier reducing the room's humidity (hence the room's temperature) at a fraction of the energy consumption of an AC.

**Did you know that...**

A recent study has found that using an air fan with an air speed of 1 to 2 m/s with occasional use of AC instead of using AC alone would result in a 76% of annual energy reduction and a decrease of released GHG emissions by 4 000 kilotons. These reductions would be even higher by using purely air fans.

**Sources:**

- [How India is solving its cooling challenge](#)
- [Dehumidifier vs Air Conditioner: Which Is Better?](#)
- [Want to be sustainable and cool? Choose fans more and aircon less](#)



#### S4.4. Reduce heating if possible!



##### Issue:

The energy we use for heating the spaces we live and work in is one of the highest contributors to our individual carbon footprints. To put it in a global overview, heat accounts for nearly half of all energy consumption and 40% of energy-related carbon dioxide emissions.

##### Solution:

Make sure to keep the heaters turned off in places where nobody is around. Also, thanks to installed thermostatic radiator valves in the households you can easily keep control over the room temperature, however, it is recommended to stick between levels 2 and 3 (out of 5) during the cold season.

##### Did you know that...

According to the International Energy Agency, if the EU citizens decreased the heater temperature by 2°C, they would save up as much gas as is flowing through the European natural gas pipeline Nord Stream.

##### Sources:

- [How to cut carbon out of your heating](#)
- [Green newsfilter: Danish invention can help defeat Putin and reduce gas bills. The best thing is that you may have it at home](#)

#### 4.5. Plug off the chargers when no longer needed!

##### Issue:

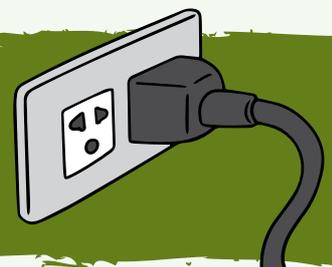
Despite not having your device connected to the charger that is plugged in, there is still a small energy consumption ongoing that unnecessarily contributes to both your bill and the carbon footprint. The same is occurring for fully charged devices being still connected to the charger. These redundant energy leaks are called phantom energy.

##### Solution:

After charging your device, along with unplugging it from the charger make sure you unplug the charger from the socket as well. This will reduce electric consumption as well as energy costs.

##### Did you know that...

Phantom energy costs US households an average of 100 dollars a year. Phantom energy can be responsible for up to 10% of the monthly utility bill.



**Sources:**

- [101 Ways to Save Energy for an Energy-Efficient Home](#)

## 4.6. Turn off the lights when nobody is around!

**Issue:**

When your mum is constantly telling you to turn off the light when you are not in the room, she is most probably worried about the amount to pay in the monthly utility bill. This redundant energy use is also an issue when we talk about possibilities on how to reduce GHG emissions generated by households.

**Solution:**

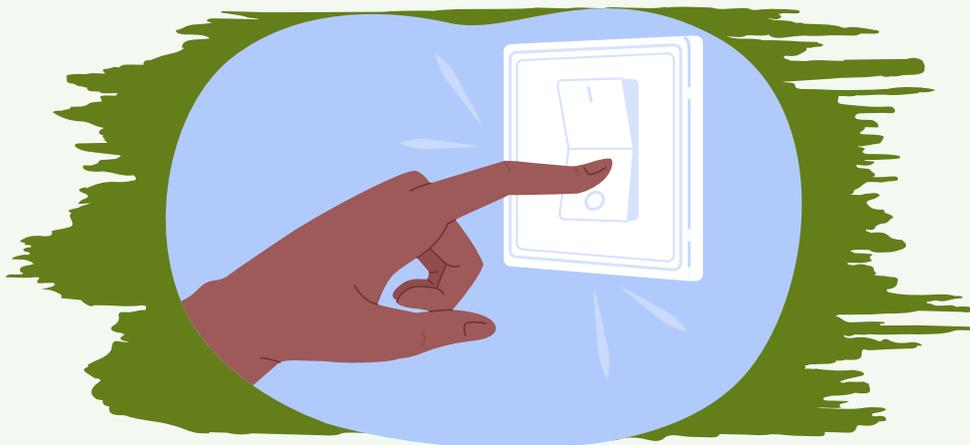
Listen to your mum and turn off the light whenever nobody is in the room.

**Did you know that...**

Lighting currently accounts for nearly 10% of the average residential electricity use in the US. That means there is a potential to decrease the carbon footprint with this simple solution.

**Sources:**

- Easy but not effective: Why “turning off the lights” remains a salient energy-conserving behaviour in the United States: [Easy but not effective: Why “turning off the lights” remains a salient energy conserving behaviour in the United States](#)



## 5. DIGITAL



### 5.1. Green online research with Ecosia!

#### Issue:

Surfing the internet produces a lot of CO2 emissions through the servers that service providers are using. For example, it is estimated that every Google research could result in between 1 to 10 g of CO2 emissions. Furthermore, Google is mostly an advertising company to make a profit.

#### Solution:

Download the extension called Ecosia and set it as your primary research toolbar. Ecosia is a non-profit search engine that contributes to reforestation, offering around 80% of its revenue made out of the advertisement service available for tree planting.

#### Did you know that...

By using Ecosia, the average user can contribute to planting 30 new trees in the global south. Ecosia estimates that it takes around 50 research to have the budget to plant a tree and since every day an internet user does 3-4 research online on average, mostly using Google, one can easily contribute to this initiative as well.

#### Sources:

- [Every Google search results in CO2 emissions. This real-time calculator shows how much](#)
- [A better planet with every search | Ecosia](#)
- [Want to Plant More Trees? Just Use a Different Search Engine](#)



### 5.2. Using dark and battery saver modes!

#### Issue:

Depending on the task operated by our devices, we consume different amounts of energy. Playing a game consumes more battery than making a phone call, and texting consumes less battery than watching a video. This means we can save relevant percentages of the charge of our iPad, laptops and smartphones by influencing the battery drain of our online activities.

**Solution:**

Choose the dark mode of your apps and websites as dark pixels use less energy than bright ones. The battery saver mode, changing some of your device settings so your battery's life can be prolonged by 1-2 hours, is also a legitimate option. Apart from that, it is also recommended to keep the brightness down, use ad-blockers or avoid watching videos to keep the device alive longer during the day.

**Did you know that...**

Using dark mode can save up to one-third of the battery, and even more can be saved using battery saver modes in combination with other tools like ad-blocker. It's estimated that alone, the use of dark mode on a million iPhone Xs could save up the same CO2 emission as 31 cars!

**Sources:**

- [What You Should \(and Shouldn't\) Do to Extend Your Phone's Battery Life](#)
- [Can dark mode save battery life and human civilisation?](#)
- [What is the impact of Dark Mode on battery drain?](#)
- [What is Battery Saver \(Power Saving\)? Turn it on or off on Android devices](#)



### 5.3. Minimal Web Design!

**Issue:**

When designing the homepage of your website, it is relevant to avoid animations, videos or images that would require a lot of energy to be broadcasted.

**Solution:**

The Low Impact website (<https://lowimpact.organicbasics.com/eur>) does a great job explaining what should be avoided. The most relevant is a decrease in the usage of videos, the compression of data, loading only the most crucial programming scripts, frameworks and cookies and not loading the images until requested by a user.

**Did you know that...**

Just opening the homepage of the mentioned Low Impact website, compared to its own standard version, saves around 14 g of CO2.

**Sources:**

- [A Low Impact website:](#)

## 5.4. Save on Cloud Storage!



### Issue:

When we save our files through cloud services, they are stored in energy-consuming servers somewhere in the world. These servers need the energy to work and therefore produce CO<sub>2</sub>. Cloud storage could account for up to 3% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

### Solution:

Use cloud storage as a temporary solution for your files and prefer a physical hard disk. Or try to store a low amount of data when using cloud services by removing unnecessary items. You can also do some research to find the cloud providers powering their data centres with 100% renewable energy.

### Did you know that...

A study concluded that the energy cost of data transfer to the cloud and its storage there is about 7 kWh per gigabyte, while a personal hard disk requires about 0.000005 kWh per gigabyte to save your data.

### Sources:

- [Measuring greenhouse gas emissions in data centres: the environmental impact of cloud computing](#)
- [Carbon and the Cloud](#)

## 5.5. Save on Email Storage!



### Issue:

Like the issues connected with storing data on cloud services, the emails received in your Gmail or Yahoo account requires some physical server to be stored, hence the energy the server needs to consume in order to run. And the demand for this energy equals the rise of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

### Solution:

Unsubscribe from newsletters that you do not follow, block spam accounts and delete unimportant emails from your inbox. Don't forget to regularly check your email box for the mentioned reasons.

Did you know that...

Does a single text-based email emit about 4 grams of CO<sub>2</sub>? To put it into some context, this 4 g represents almost 2 % of CO<sub>2</sub> that would be emitted by sending a paper letter.

### Sources:

- The Carbon Cost of an Email: Update!
- Deleting Emails Might Help Lower Your Carbon Footprint
- Behaviour change | Climate outreach
- The thought experiment: What is the carbon footprint of an email?



## 5.6. Block ads to generate less traffic!

### Issue:

Most websites are full of advertisements to maximize capitalization. These ads, other than being annoying and invasive, also generate a lot of online traffic, hence they play an important role in emitting carbon dioxide, as most advertisements are published as videos or animated images which require a lot of energy from our devices and servers to be shared and played.

### Solution:

Install an ad-blocker to generate less traffic. Adblock is the most popular.

### Did you know that...

Using an ad-blocker can save up to 40% of your traffic data.

### Sources:

- [An ad blocker will reduce your carbon footprint](#)
- [Adblock Plus Efficacy Study](#)

## 5.7. Disable Push Notifications!

### Issue:

Most applications send notifications that wake up our mobile phones or trigger a reaction. Avoiding useless notifications can help to use your device less and to be more energy efficient.

### Solution:

Do yourself a little favour by turning off unimportant notifications — this will reduce your carbon footprint, prolong phone battery life and reduce the likelihood that your phone will distract you.

### Did you know that...

The population in the Philippines represents the biggest mobile screen consumers in the world, spending 5h and 31 mins a day using their phones. In comparison to major European countries like Germany, France or Spain, it is twice more.



### Sources:

- [What You Should \(and Shouldn't\) Do to Extend Your Phone's Battery Life](#)
- [How to reduce your Carbon Fingerprint](#)
- [Screen Time Statistics: Average Screen Time in US vs. the rest of the world](#)

## 5.8. Clean up your devices!



### Issue:

Devices are full of data from caches, temporary internet files or leftovers of uninstalled applications that are not required anymore for your online activities.

### Solution:

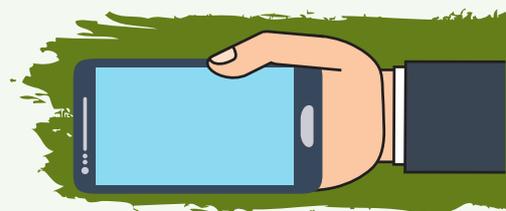
Install a cleaner to remove all the unnecessary data occupying space and memory on your device so you don't have to demand more (physical or online) space. CCleaner is one of the most popular ones.

### Did you know that...

If you save and store 100 GB of data in the cloud during a year, the amount of electricity required to accomplish this would result in the emission of about 0.2 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. Moving these files to a physical drive would reduce the emission drastically, but firstly don't forget to clean up your device!

### Sources:

- [Get a cleaner, faster, and smoother-running PC with CCleaner](#)
- [Carbon and the Cloud](#)



## 5.9. Stop changing your smartphone every 2-3 years!

### Issue:

It is not a surprise that most of the carbon footprint by either smartphones or laptops is released during their production. In the case of smartphones, production is responsible for around 85-95% of CO<sub>2</sub> released during their lifecycle, while on laptops this share is about 70-80%.

### Solution:

Considering the environmental impact of the act of buying a new device, always try to find a solution of repairing it and purchase a new one only when your device is really in a state it cannot be even repaired. You would even do a bigger favour by getting a second-hand or refurbished device.

### Did you know that...

The GHG emissions caused by smartphones increased by 730% between the years 2010 and 2020.

### Sources:

- [How smartphones are heating up the planet](#)
- [Is There Any Way to Measure Whether a Laptop Is Truly 'Sustainable'?](#)

## 5.10. Help yourself with green apps!

### Issue:

A large study learned over 50% of respondents felt powerless or helpless when it comes to the fight against climate change. Some might feel there are too few options for an attack in this fight and the results wouldn't be visible now anyway. But if we are not sure how else we, individuals and consumers at the same time, can contribute in this fight, we can always help ourselves with the perks of the 21st century – mobile apps, that can guide us through our life to be greener.

### Solution:

There are plenty of helpful mobile apps that can help in different areas, like food and restaurants (HappyCow, Karma, Olio), beauty (Think Dirty, Beat the Microbead), fashion (ThreadUp, Good On You), everyday life (Ethy, JouleBug) and many many more. Google can help with that.

### Did you know that...

The latest data says that we spent almost 7 hours per day looking at an internet-connected screen. So, despite doing a good deed by using mentioned green apps, don't forget about your digital carbon footprint!

### Sources:

- [Why People Struggle to Stay Motivated in the Fight Against Climate Change](#)
- [Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey](#)
- [Alarming Average Screen Time Statistics \(2023\)](#)



## 6. Beauty Care and personal hygiene



### 6.1. Switch to solid shampoo and conditioner!

#### Issue:

80 billion plastic shampoo and conditioner bottles get thrown out globally each year.

#### Solution:

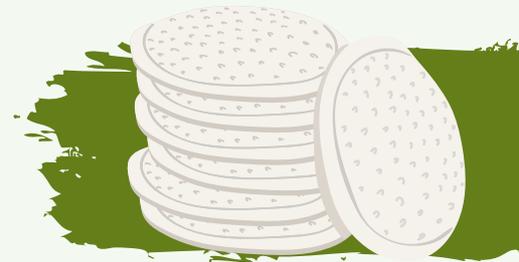
An eco-friendlier hair care alternative is the solid version of shampoos and conditioners. These bars cut out the need for plastic bottles, and most come wrapped in recycled paper or in paper boxes.

#### Did you know that...

Most shampoos are 80 % water and conditioners can be even more—up to 95% water. In contrast, shampoo bars are mega-concentrated, which means that on average, a shampoo bar will outlast two to three bottles of liquid shampoo.

#### Sources:

- [5 simple sustainable swaps to make your beauty routine more earth-friendly.](#)
- [5 Reasons to Ditch Your Shampoo Bottle for a Shampoo Bar](#)



### 6.2. Switch to Reusable makeup remover cloths!

#### Issue:

We are flushing away or binning about 11 billion wet wipes every year as they are the easiest and cheapest way of removing makeup, although causing a very bad environmental impact. Besides cotton, they contain polyester and polypropylene which breaks down into microplastic, polluting the environment.

#### Solution:

The first step in cutting down makeup remover products is simply using less makeup. But if we are really in need of removers, a better option is to invest in reusable makeup remover cloths. Their usage is simple: rinsing them in water after every use and washing them only once a week in the washing machine.

### Did you know that...

Reusable makeup remover cloths can last 1000 washes or more than five years, depending on the product and brand.

#### Sources:

- [Why Choose Reusable Makeup Remover Pads](#)
- [Millions of makeup wipes piled as high as the Eiffel Tower going to landfills every day](#)
- [Reusable Facial Rounds: Everything You Need To Know About It](#)

## 6.3. Changing tooth brushing habits!

#### Issue:

According to National Geographic, most people will replace around 300 toothbrushes during their lifetime. In line with the general recommendation of replacing them every 3-4 months, it means that around 23 billion toothbrushes are trashed annually as most of them still have nylon bristles, therefore using a 100% zero-waste toothbrush is hardly possible, yet.

#### Solution:

Nowadays, available alternatives are bamboo toothbrushes (if disposed of correctly) or brushes with reusable handles. Consequently, the fewer plastic toothbrushes we use, the less non-biodegradable waste we produce. Besides that, try to use toothpaste packed in jars instead of plastic tubes.

### Did you know that...

If we laid out the toothbrushes thrown away only in the US in a year, they would wrap around the Earth 4 times, since they are not biodegradable, and many are unrecyclable.

#### Sources:

- [How your toothbrush became a part of the plastic crisis](#)



## 6.4. About menstrual cups and period underwear!



### Issue:

The average person uses between 192 and 240 single-use pads and tampons a year. The study made in the UK shows that the estimated menstrual waste accounts for around 28 000 tonnes per year, the pads and then tampons making up the biggest portion.

### Solution:

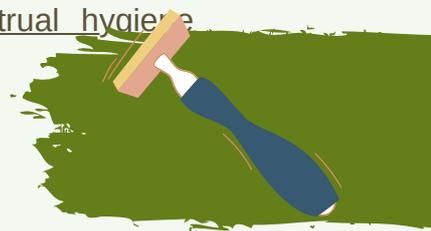
An alternative for single-use products is period underwear, which lasts around 2-3 years. An even eco-friendlier option is the menstrual cup because it can be used for up to 10 years, requires less water to be produced and produces a lesser amount of waste overall. For further research of brands and products, the website Good On You collected a big variety of eco-friendly menstrual products with well-detailed descriptions and ratings.

### Did you know that...

If all women using pads changed to period underwear, the waste would be reduced by around 17 000 tonnes? And if shifted from tampons to cups, the waste would be reduced by almost 6 000 tonnes annually?

### Sources:

- [An exploratory study of the impact and potential of menstrual hygiene management waste in the UK](#)



## 6.5. Eco-friendly razors!

### Issue:

Disposable, plastic, single-use razors have a very short life cycle since they are recommended to be changed around every 7th shave. Hence, they represent a source of a huge amount of waste.

### Solution:

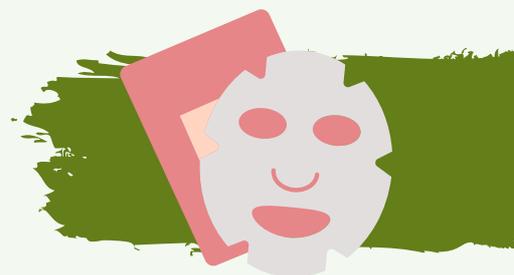
There are several eco-friendly alternatives for disposable razors like a safety razor, which is metal and lasts 'forever' if treated well. Another option is an electric razor or epilator since they are rechargeable and have a long lifespan. Finally, bamboo razors are also on market with swappable blades.

### Did you know that...

According to Statista, almost 160 million people in the U.S. used disposable razors in 2020. That makes up almost half of their population!

### Sources:

- [8 Ways to Green Your Personal Hygiene Routine](#)
- [Planet Positive Beauty Guide](#)
- [U.S. population: Usage of disposable razor blades / shavers from 2011 to 2024](#)



## 6.6. About sheet masks!

### Issue:

Sheet masks are typically made of petroleum-based fibres, packaged in a non-recyclable foil packet or non-recyclable coated cardboard, sandwiched between two sheets of non-recyclable plastic, covered in cosmetic chemicals, to be used for 20 minutes. Simply, a lot of waste.

### Solution:

The first step in transforming to greener beauty care habits is reducing, and refusing, asking ourselves, if we really need that product, especially when it comes to disposable one. In case the answer is a strong yes, it's better to replace it with its eco-friendly alternative, in the case of sheet masks, buying biodegradable and compostable ones with organic ingredients for example.

### Did you know that...

Only one company's act of stopping selling sheet masks and other single-use skincare products would keep 1,36 tonnes of trash out of landfills. This amount of waste was saved by Credo, a clean beauty retailer company that decided to stop selling single-use skincare products in 2021.

### Sources:

- [Is This The End Of The Sheet Mask?](#)
- [Are Sheet Masks the New Plastic Straws?](#)



## 6.7. Avoid plastic packaging when buying cosmetic products!

### Issue:

In 2018 more than 120 billion units of cosmetics packaging were produced globally. Most of the footprint of almost all cosmetic products is emitted in the post-consumer era. For example, 5% of the impact of a bottle of shampoo comes from raw materials, manufacturing, distribution, and packaging. The plastic that's either downcycled, burnt, or sent to landfills to break down over 450 years, accounts for the remaining 95%.

**Solution:**

Being aware of such facts, one should reduce the purchase of unnecessary beauty products first. When not possible, then try to switch to cosmetic products packaged in reusable containers (like glass jars) or the ones that use post-consumer recycled material (look for FSC label). It is also recommended to use a refillable deodorant as spray deodorants not only create plenty of packaging waste but also use hydrocarbons and/or compressed gasses notorious for their contribution to global warming.

**Did you know that...**

If refillable containers were used for cosmetics, as much as 70% of carbon emissions associated with the beauty industry could be eliminated.

**Sources:**

- [The Environmental Impact of Cosmetics Is Tremendous—Here's How They're Harmful](#)
- [A guide to creating your zero-waste bathroom, wardrobe, kitchen + office](#)
- [New Ways The Beauty Industry Is Testing Sustainable Practices](#)

**6.8. Look for certificates from independent organizations!****Issue:**

Most of us, customers, can be victims of companies' greenwashing practices, not having clear information about ingredients, sourcing, manufacturing, etc. Definitions such as 'natural' are not regulated. Those products can still contain ingredients which are very irritating or harmful.

**Solution:**

Independent certifying bodies can help to cope with the information chaos. Therefore, look for products with labels e.g., FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) or PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) to know that responsibly sourced materials were utilized for the product. Also, certifications from organizations NATRUE or COSMOS ensure a certain minimum percentage of the product ingredients come from certified organic agriculture.

**Did you know that...**

Research published by the European Commission found that 42% of green claims in Europe were exaggerated, false, or deceptive. Therefore, be careful when choosing products that have been promoted as eco-friendly and sustainable!

**Sources:**

- [Planet Positive Beauty Guide](#)
- [Let's Talk Paperboard: What are Sustainability Certifications?](#)
- [Screening of websites for 'greenwashing': half of green claims lack evidence](#)



## 6.9. About microplastics!



### Issue:

Microplastics are tiny plastic particles, less than 5 mm in diameter, used in cosmetics, clothing, etc. They have already been detected in marine organisms from plankton to whales, in commercial seafood, and even in drinking water. There is currently no law banning the use of microplastics in the EU, but there are some beauty brands which have already stopped using them.

### Solution:

Try to avoid products containing polyethene (PE), polypropylene (PP), polyethene terephthalate (PET), polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA), polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) and nylon. Applications, like Beat the Microbead or INCI Beauty, may help you in detecting microplastics in cosmetic products by simply scanning the ingredients on the labels.

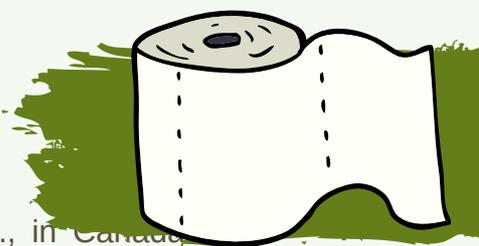
### Did you know that...

The average person eats, drinks and breathes between 78 000 and 211 000 microplastic particles every year when most of them are consumed by drinking bottled water.

### Sources:

- [Microplastics](#)
- [Microplastics: which beauty brands are safe to use?](#)
- [How We Eat, Drink and Breathe Microplastics](#)

## 6.10. The issues with toilet tissues!



### Issue:

The main source of toilet paper is boreal forests (growing e.g., in Canada, Sweden), which are the most carbon-dense and intact forests left on the planet. Besides deforestation, another problem is their production, requiring around 140 litres of water per roll.

### Solution:

Instead of classic toilet paper rolls, use the bamboo ones (it takes only 2,23 litres to produce one roll) or the ones from recycled paper (these toilet paper rolls should contain at least 20% to 60% of post-consumer recycled content). If possible, install and use a bidet as the volume of water used is far less than the amount of water used during the production of toilet paper rolls.

### Did you know that...

We chop down 27 000 trees every day just on paper tissues. Buying eco-friendly alternatives is a small act from the consumers' side, but a huge help to the environment.

## Sources:

- [18 Toilet Paper Alternatives for Sustainability and Backup Use](#)
- [How Toilet Paper Waste Hurts the Environment](#)
- [Eco-Friendly Toilet Paper: Bamboo vs. Recycled](#)
- [27,000 trees are cut down every day just for tissues - but there is an alternative](#)

## 6.11. Liquid soap vs. bar soap!

### Issue:

Washing the hands takes 6-7 times more liquid soap than solid soap. When it comes to packaging, transportation and disposal bar soaps make significantly less carbon footprint. However, we tend to use 30% more warm water when we wash with solid soap compared to liquid.

### Solution:

Overall, solid soaps are more beneficial for the environment than liquid ones. If we stick to the use of liquid soap anyway, an eco-friendlier choice is buying soap that comes in a recyclable glass bottle and is refillable.

### Did you know that...

Apart from the double (or even triple) longevity of the bar soap in comparison with the liquid one, also the carbon footprint is in 'double' favour of the bar soap? 1.85 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> is emitted in the production of 1 kg of liquid soap while it makes only half when producing 1 kg of bar soap.

## Sources:

- [Solid soap vs liquid soap: which is more eco-friendly?](#)
- [Comparing the Environmental Footprints of Home-Care and Personal-Hygiene Products: The Relevance of Different Life-Cycle Phases](#)



## 7. ASK YOUR PARENTS OR GUARDIANS TO DO



### 7.1. Clothes and Washing – Avoid using a dryer!

#### Issue:

Dryers can use 5 to 10 times more energy than washing machines which are already treated as big energy consumers when it comes to household equipment. Hence, using dryers is pure evil from an ecological perspective, especially when there is a simple and eco-friendly alternative for that.

#### Solution:

Instead of using a dryer, just dry the clothes in the sun, which will not only save energy and money and leave zero carbon footprint, but it also helps the clothes last longer.

#### Impact Analysis:

One drying-machine cycle produces around 1.8 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>. Therefore, by decreasing its usage only by one time per month for one year you could already save up to the same amount of CO<sub>2</sub> as 1 tree can absorb during that year!

#### Sources:

- [Tread lightly: Switch off your tumble dryer](#)
- [How much CO<sub>2</sub> does a tree absorb?](#)



### 7.2. Clothes and Washing – Say NO to fabric softeners!

#### Issue:

In the long run, fabric softeners are just as damaging for our clothes (hence, shortening their lifespan) as for the environment, since they form a thin coating on the fabric, making it less absorbent and locking in bad odours. They are typically petroleum-based, which doesn't biodegrade easily. Furthermore, certain chemicals in softeners, like fragrances, are harmful to human health.

**Solution:**

Alternatives for fabric softeners are adding vinegar to the wash cycle which can help soften the clothes or filling a spray bottle with lavender or rose water or essential oil mixed with water and giving the laundry a quick spritz before tossing it into the wash. However, the best solution is not to use softeners at all. A good quality detergent should do the job of softening and preventing wrinkles.

**Did you know that...**

75% of respondents in a survey in The Guardian agreed with the statement that 'clean laundry smells like the laundry products used in the wash', in other words, many people relate clean clothes with the smell of the softener they use.

**Sources:**

- [Fabric Softener: Why You Shouldn't Use It](#)
- [Eco-laundry habits are about more than sustainable washing machines](#)
- [You're creating most of the carbon footprint of your clothes \(without even realising it\)](#)



### 7.3. Clothes and Washing – Wash less and use eco-friendly detergent!

**Issue:**

39% of a garment's environmental impact comes from washing, drying, and consumer care. Due to the synthetic fibres in garments, microfibers are shed with each wash, contaminating the oceans and our tap water.

**Solution:**

When it comes to choosing detergent, avoid the ones containing phosphate, formaldehyde, artificial fragrances, or ammonium sulphate – the most harmful chemicals. These ingredients can cause allergic reactions, skin toxins or high die-off of marine animals. Or simply look for eco-labelled detergents and wash the clothes only when they are dirty.

**Did you know that...**

Washing clothes on shorter, cooler cycles reduces microfiber shedding by up to 30%. That translates to nearly 4 000 tonnes of microfibers no longer entering Europe's marine ecosystems every year!

**Sources:**

- [Laundry Detergent: The 10 BEST All-Natural, and Eco-Friendly Options](#)
- [The unCover Handbook, a guide to Sustainable Fashion](#)
- [Laundry: lightening the load](#)

## 7.4. Clothes and Washing – Consider low-temperature programs in the washing machine!

**Issue:**

Water heating in the washing machine is responsible for 90 % of the energy consumed. Putting this into a bigger picture, up to 60 % of GHG emissions from laundry in Europe come from heating the water in the washing machines.

**Solution:**

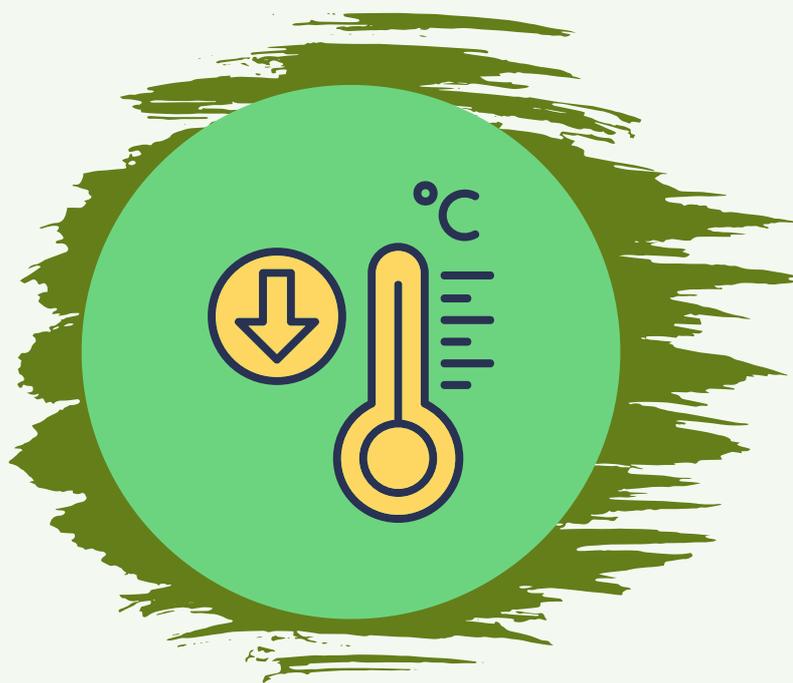
Choose a lower temperature program when using the washing machine. Unless you need to clean oily stains, colder water will still manage to properly clean the clothes. Some of the modern detergents are adapted to be used for low-temperature programs as well.

**Did you know that...**

Dialling down the temperature could lead to a decrease in GHG emissions by up to 35 %.

**Sources:**

- [Laundry: lightening the load](#)
- [One Thing You Can Do: Smarter Laundry](#)
- [Laundry Best Practices](#)



## 7.5. Household – Full loads in the washing machine!

### Issue:

Using washing machines can be inefficient as people have the tendency to not fully load them. Although modern washing machines allow us to reduce the amount of water to be used for smaller amounts of clothes, there is still a need for the water to be heated and this activity accounts for 90 % of all the energy used by washing machines while working!

### Solution:

Wash full loads in the washing machine instead of smaller loads to be more energy efficient.

### Did you know that...

A typical US household does around 300 laundries per year (or 6 times per week) resulting in 179mil. metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. Hence, reducing the usage of washing machines would have a significant impact.

### Sources:

- [What's the carbon footprint of ... a load of laundry?](#)
- [Energy and carbon impact from residential laundry in the United States](#)
- [Washing and Drying Machines are Polluting the Air](#)
- [One Thing You Can Do: Smarter Laundry](#)
- [Laundry Best Practices](#)





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