

Reducing Your Carbon Footprint

Each year, every person in the United States adds about 40,000 pounds of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.

Suppose you wish to reduce your carbon footprint by 10%—you need to make changes to eliminate 4,000 pounds of carbon dioxide.

What changes do you make?

The following activities or products each contribute about 1 pound of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. So, think: What changes would you make?

One pound of carbon dioxide corresponds to:

Electricity: One pound of carbon dioxide corresponds to approximately 1 kW-hr of electricity, enough for:

- 100 hours of laptop use (low power MacBook air)
- 10 hours of TV use (HDTV)
- 15 minutes of electric clothes dryer use

Travel: One pound of carbon dioxide will get you:

- 1 mile on an airplane
- 2 miles in a car

Heating and cooling: One pound of carbon dioxide buys you:

- 15 minutes of air conditioning
- 6 minutes of heating with a gas forced air furnace
- 2 minutes of a hot shower

Food and beverages: It takes one pound of carbon dioxide to produce and deliver to you:

- 1/2 oz. of beef
- 1 pound of dry beans
- 1 pint of milk
- 100 local apples or 10 domestic apples or 1 imported apple

Consumer goods: Producing and delivering clothing and other goods costs energy, which means carbon in the atmosphere. One pound of carbon dioxide gets you:

- 1/100 of a pair of boots
- 1/50 of a lightweight jacket or shirt
- 1/25 of a pair of flip-flops