EcoAction

Let's transform the world through sustainable actions

Access our Linktree

Religions for Peace UK

bit.ly/rfpuklinktree

UK Women of Faith Network

bit.ly/UKWFN_linktree

UK Interfaith Youth Network

bit.ly/UKIYN_linktree

If you're interested in learning more or exploring potential collaborations, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at

admin@rfpuk.org

Keeping Up-to-Date with RfPUK's Projects

Sign up to our mailing list

bit.ly/RfPUKMailingList

Religions *for* Peace
UNITED KINGDOM

EcoAction

Starting from Myself



Sustainable practices for daily life

A warm and grateful welcome to all agents of change!



Congratulations on your contribution to creating a more equitable and sustainable world!

Your interest and initiative to take action for a better future are truly commendable. It's important to know that everyone finds it hard to take on what seems like a daunting challenge. The following lists of actions were born from a collective will to foster positive cultural and behavioural changes, safeguarding our planet and improving the quality of our lives. From the content you will see that the choices and goals are manageable and together, we can make a difference and shape a more sustainable and healthier world for all. Let's embark on this transformative path with enthusiasm and shared purpose!

Manresa 2022,
Religions for Peace
International



EcoAction Pact: How it's all began

We all know climate change is a serious threat to societal stability. When we speak of peace we may not immediately think of the environment right away, yet individual actions put together form global trends, there is scarcely the chance for us to think what we do as individuals does not matter, or we as individuals are powerless to alter the destructive path we are on.

Religions for Peace International signed the multireligious and multisectoral Manresa Pact 2022 for the development of resilient, sustainable, safe and inclusive cities. It was the culmination of extraordinary collaboration between the religious leaders, the people and the City Council of Manresa. The pact demonstrated that multilateral cooperation is possible, and can bring positive impact through education, civic engagement, spiritual conviction and the one will for peaceful society.

National chapters of Religions for Peace all over the world had been so inspired by the example of Manresa that environmental projects and programmes are popping up across our global network. The UK is rallying to this cause and our EcoAction series is dedicated to empowering individuals, households, communities, and society to take meaningful action, that can bring about change on levels we may not feel we are capable of reaching.

EcoAction programme aims to explain and show peacebuilders and changemakers that individuals matter, they can steer their families, influence their communities and gather strength to demand actions and solutions from the people we elect. We are all answerable because wittingly or unwittingly, we are contributors. We deeply believe we can gather momentum to forge cooperation between the people, the community and the government to achieve.

Throughout our programme, we will present the challenges we face and through the use of living checklists, we can spur on action at every level, from individuals to households, communities and the broader society. We hope these actionable checklists can empower participants with suggestions spanning from waste reduction to water conservation and more, aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals*. It is of course not just about making commitments, it is about igniting real change through advocacy for local initiatives and policies driven by consumer choices, promoting sustainability as a pathway to peace.

EcoAction amplifies consumer awareness and encourages conscious decisions to drive impactful change. Let's empower individuals through their choices!

Cinde Lee
Chair, Religions for Peace UK

*The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Sustainable Development established the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2016 with the aim of "peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future." The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States, aims to end poverty, improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth while tackling climate change and preserving oceans and forests. It comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and calls for global partnership.
Source: https://sdgs.un.org/goals

EcoAction

is a comprehensive initiative aimed at raising awareness and inspiring action starting from the individual level, bringing impact to your home, community and society by sustainable practices in our daily choices.

The initiative provides guidance via an actionable checklist that contributes to a more environmentally friendly, equitable, and healthier world.



What is this **action list?**

This list of actions represents a set of efforts to promote sustainable living and drive positive change. It begins at the individual level, recognising that change starts with ourselves as individuals. It's a roadmap for personal efforts that, when each of us take actions with shared goals, the power to create a more equitable, healthier, and environmentally friendly world is in our hands.

Every action on this list is directly related to one or more Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), globally recognised goals addressing critical challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental protection.

By taking part, you make a positive impact on the environment, society, and global peace efforts. Together, these actions drive progress towards a more equitable and sustainable world where peace can thrive.



Why more than one list?

Sustainability is multifaceted, requiring tailored strategies at each stage of our journey.

At the individual level, daily choices shape our environmental impact. Therefore, we provide a checklist focused on personal actions, empowering individuals to make conscious decisions. Recognising that some decisions involve input from those around us, such as within a household, we offer another list tailored to these levels of decision-making.

As our efforts expand, we'll explore community-level initiatives, engaging schools, places of worship, businesses, and neighbourhoods in sustainable practices. Ultimately, our journey extends to societal transformation. Through advocacy, partnerships, and collective action, we'll work towards creating a more ethical and sustainable society.

The Sustainable Development Goals and Peace

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a set of 17 global objectives established by the United Nations to address a wide range of social, economic, and environmental challenges. These goals use clear targets aiming to improve the well-being of people and the planet by 2030.





Image credits: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/

The SDGs are interconnected, meaning they often overlap and support one another. Collaboration between the goals is essential because the issues they address are interrelated.

For instance, **SDG 13** focuses on **"Climate Action,"** addressing the urgent need to combat climate change and its impacts. This goal collaborates with various other SDGs, for example, with **SDG 1 (No Poverty)** by addressing the disproportional effects of climate change on vulnerable communities, helping reduce poverty. Climate change also compromises food security through extreme weather events and shifting agricultural patterns with direct effects on **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)**. Air pollution and extreme heat events linked to climate change can impact public health, connecting **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being)** to Climate Action. Similarly, with compromised water availability and quality, **SDG 13** has a direct impact on **SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)**. **SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy)** has a strong connection to Climate Action due to the crucial need to reduce carbon emissions. Equally, **SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure)**, **SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)** and **SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production)** play a key role in building resilient and sustainable cities and shifting to informed and responsible consumption, while **SDG 14 (Life Below Water)** and **SDG 15 (Life on Land)** are greatly benefitted from Climate Action and crucial for securing natural resources and the health of our planet.

By addressing social, environmental and economic aspects using a holistic approach the SDGs substantially reduce conflicts and contribute to Peace.

While **SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions)** is dedicated to building peaceful, just, and inclusive societies, it also relies on collaboration from various other SDGs, for example, related to reducing inequalities **(SDG 5, SDG 10)**, and guaranteeing quality education and decent jobs **(SDG 4, SDG 8)**. Specifically, **SDG 13 (Climate Action)** plays a role in promoting peace since climate change can exacerbate resource scarcity, which can lead to conflicts over essential resources such as water and arable land. By addressing climate change and reducing its negative impacts, we can contribute to peace and stability by mitigating potential conflict drivers.



Find out more about climate actions at the SDGs climate action

EcoAction

Religions for Peace UNITED KINGDOM

Individual Checklist

As part of the EcoAction project, we recognise the crucial role individuals play in shaping their lifestyles and impacting the environment through their daily choices and habits. This individual checklist serves as a guide to encourage awareness of the environmental impact of our decisions.

Designed to empower each person, it fosters consciousness about the consequences of every choice we make. Reflecting on the environmental impact is central to this process, offering opportunities for self-improvement and contributing to a more sustainable future. While some aspects may be influenced by household dynamics, the items on this list are within our direct control, allowing us to make informed decisions that prioritise environmental stewardship.

While some actions may be easier to implement than others, the primary goal remains empowering individuals to make informed choices without judgement, offering a pathway towards a more sustainable lifestyle.

	Actions	By taking this action you tackle	Related SDG	Check
1	Mindful water usage	Water wastage, energy costs, air pollution, resource wastage, terrestrial and marine ecosystem depletion	6, 7, 12, 13	☐
2	Turn off lights and appliances and unplug chargers and devices when not in use	Energy costs, air pollution, resource wastage, terrestrial and marine ecosystem depletion	7, 13, 14, 15	☐
3	Use public transportation, carpool, or bike *when possible*	Traffic congestion, air pollution, and over-reliance on fossil fuels	3, 13	☐
4	Combine errands to reduce trips	Energy costs, air pollution, resource wastage, terrestrial and marine ecosystem depletion	13	☐
5	Mindful flying	Excessive carbon emissions from air travel and its environmental impact	12, 13	☐
6	Informed diet	High carbon emissions associated with livestock farming, deforestation for pastureland, overfishing of marine ecosystems, excessive water usage, pollution, biodiversity loss, child labour, human conflict.	2, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15	☐
7	Cease food waste	Increased landfill waste, methane emissions, and resource depletion	2, 3, 12, 13	☐
8	Avoid single-use plastics	Plastic pollution, harm to marine life, resource wastage, and environmental degradation	12, 13, 14, 15	☐
9	Reduce paper usage	Natural resources extraction causes environmental pollution	11, 12, 13, 14, 15	☐
10	Do not upgrade your mobile phone without reasonable requirements	Environmental pollution through ocean mining, biodiversity loss, excessive water usage and carbon emissions	12, 13, 14	☐
11	Mindful fashion	Plastic pollution, harm to marine life, resource wastage, and environmental degradation	12, 13, 14	☐
12	Mindful online content consumption	Encourages critical thinking, reduces support for influencers promoting overconsumption, ostentation, and unsustainable lifestyles. Raises awareness about illegal activities like the pet trade and animal abuse often glamorised on social media	9, 12, 13, 14	☐
13	Stay informed about environmental issues	Ignorance, apathy, and lack of informed decision-making about ecological challenges	4, 13	☐
14	Participate in local environmental initiatives	Neglect of local ecosystems, reduced community resilience, and lack of environmental education	13, 17	☐
15	Encourage friends and family to join a more sustainable living	Disconnection from environmental concerns, perpetuation of harmful habits, and reduced collective impact in the fight against climate change	12, 13, 17	☐
16	Raise awareness in your community about the impacts of our daily living choices	Lack of awareness, uninformed choices, and a limited understanding of the environmental consequences of individual actions	12, 13, 17	☐
17	Discuss with your leaders on how to make your community more sustainable	Lack of eco-conscious policies, uninformed decision-making, and slow progress toward sustainable community development	12, 13, 17	☐

EcoAction

Religions for Peace UNITED KINGDOM

Household Checklist

As part of the EcoAction project, we present this household checklist as a gentle suggestion for making environmentally conscious decisions collectively. While these actions are more challenging and require collective alignment, it's important to remember that these choices often start with individuals' willingness to become more conscious and minimise their negative impacts.

The primary goal of this checklist is to foster awareness of the environmental consequences of our decisions and encourage households to work together towards a more sustainable future. We understand that some items may not be applicable for various reasons, and in such cases, they can simply be ignored. This checklist aims to empower households to make informed choices providing a flexible pathway towards a more environmentally friendly lifestyle.

	Actions	By taking this action you tackle	Related SDG	Check
1	Fix dripping faucets and install low-flow showerheads	Water wastage, increased bill	6	☐
2	Collect rainwater for outdoor use	Water wastage, increased bill	6, 11, 12	☐
3	Reduce heating and cooling *(if possible)*	Energy costs, air pollution, resource wastage, terrestrial and marine ecosystem depletion	7, 13, 14, 15	☐
4	Switch to renewable energy sources and opt to energy-efficient electric appliances *(if possible)*	Energy costs, air pollution, resource wastage, terrestrial and marine ecosystem depletion	7, 12, 13, 14, 15	☐
5	Insulate your home to reduce heating and cooling costs *(if possible)*	Energy costs, air pollution, resource wastage, terrestrial and marine ecosystem depletion	7, 13, 14, 15	☐
6	Smart Thermostats	Energy costs, air pollution, resource wastage, terrestrial and marine ecosystem depletion	7, 13, 14, 15	☐
7	Upgrade to energy-efficient and water-saving appliances *(if possible)*	Energy and water costs, resources usage, air pollution, resource wastage, terrestrial and marine ecosystem depletion	6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15	☐
8	Natural lighting	Energy costs, indoor air quality, resource wastage	7, 8, 14	☐
9	Mindful flying	Excessive carbon emissions from air travel and its environmental impact.	12, 13	☐
10	Buy locally produced and seasonal foods	Terrestrial and water pollution, excessive carbon emissions from transportation, biodiversity loss	12, 13, 14, 15	☐
11	Cease food waste	Increased landfill waste, methane emissions, and resource depletion	2, 3, 12, 13	☐
12	Grow your own vegetables	Water pollution and soil degradation from chemical runoff, carbon footprint from food transportation, supports biodiversity by providing habitat for pollinators and beneficial insects	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 14	☐
13	Avoid pesticides and synthetic fertilisers in your garden	Water and soil pollution from chemical runoff, biodiversity loss	3, 6, 12	☐
14	Reserve a wild area in your garden	Habitat destruction, loss of biodiversity, and fragmentation of ecosystems	5, 6, 8, 11, 14	☐
15	Compost	Air and soil pollution, habitat degradation	12, 13, 15	☐
16	Avoid products with excessive plastic packaging	Plastic pollution, harm to marine life, resource wastage, and environmental degradation	12, 13	☐
17	Recycle paper, cardboard, glass, plastic	Natural resources extraction causes environmental pollution	11, 12, 13, 14, 15	☐
18	Choose products from companies committed to sustainability when possible	Reinforcing corporate irresponsibility and business practices which are harmful to the environment and society	12, 13	☐
19	Opt for green cleaning products	Water and soil, biodiversity loss, marine pollution	3, 6, 12, 14, 15	☐
20	Participate in local environmental initiatives	Neglect of local ecosystems, reduced community resilience, and lack of environmental education	13, 17	☐

Individual checklist
Why are these important?

1 Mindful water usage

Right to clean water and sanitation is a basic human right. However, rapid degradation of the environment has resulted in conflict over existing clean water sources. As water and energy resources become scarcer, efficient water use is essential to address resource depletion and environmental harm.

While it is true that a significant portion of water usage is attributed to agricultural practices and industrial activities, individual efforts in mindful water usage are also important in our move towards responsible consumption. This involves practices such as turning off taps when not in use and reducing shower time. For example,

Such practices lower water and energy consumption, reduce utility bills, and decrease environmental harm. Promoting efficient water use fosters responsible resource management.

2 Turn off lights and appliances and unplug chargers and devices when not in use

The energy supply sector is the largest contributor to the global greenhouse emissions (35% of global emissions), due to the reliance most countries have on fossil fuel for energy, heating, and cooling. Energy conservation is crucial to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and lower electricity bills *(UN: Your guide to climate)*.

Unplugging chargers and devices prevent "phantom power" consumption, conserving electricity. A study by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory found that turning off lights and electronics when not in use could reduce residential electricity use by 10% to 15%*. The urgency arises from the need to mitigate climate change. Excessive energy consumption accelerates global warming and environmental degradation. As energy demands grow, preventing unnecessary energy waste becomes increasingly important to reduce the environmental impact of power generation.

*https://eta-publications.lbl.gov/sites/default/files/lbnl-45967.pdf

3 Use public transportation, carpool, or bike *when possible*

According to the last updated information from the European Parliament (2013), passenger cars account for 61% of total CO2 emissions from EU road transport, being the major polluter. The urgent need to combat climate change and air pollution requires a shift toward greener transportation methods. Shifting from cars to public transportation can reduce up to 2.2 tons of carbon emissions annually per individual** *(Climate Action: transport)*.

Choosing to walk or cycle is a powerful eco-friendly decision. If your destination is close, try walking or cycling more often each week. If it's too far, consider using public transport instead. When possible, these options reduce carbon emissions, alleviates traffic congestion, and improves air quality, health and wellbeing***. It also promotes eco-friendly mobility and sustainable urban living.

**https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20190313STO31218/co2-emissions-from-cars-facts-and-figures-infographics

***https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/214235/ditching-walking-biking-just-week-cuts/

4 Combine errands to reduce trips

This practice helps to minimise the use of personal vehicles, which in turn reduces air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Fewer trips mean less fuel consumption and less traffic congestion, contributing to cleaner air and lower carbon emissions.

Beyond the environmental benefits, combining errands can be a time-saving strategy that enhances personal efficiency. It also offers financial advantages by reducing fuel expenses and wear and tear on your vehicle.

5 Mindful flying

Flying has a significant impact on our planet because planes require a lot of fuel to power, burning very high amounts of fossil fuels that result in astronomical amounts of greenhouse gas emissions. Even medium- and short- flights can have a large cumulative impact to the tune of 0.2 to 1.5 tons per trip. Opting for trains and buses is a much more environmentally friendly decision. Planning can help choosing single longer flights and reduce your carbon impact as well as choosing destinations which are accessible via train, bus, or a shorter car drive for your personal vacation.

We acknowledge, however, that holiday plans and work trips are often made collectively, and the decision might not solely lie with you. But if you have the power of choice, consider the impact of flying and explore alternative transportation options whenever feasible.****

****https://www.un.org/en/actnow/transport

6 Informed diet

Your dietary decisions have far-reaching consequences, and making conscious choices about what you put on your table is a very powerful way to support both the environment and your health. Learn more Our World in Data.

To exemplify the social and environmental impact of food and support you making informed choices, we are highlighting some foods which are most associated with environmental degradation, human exploitation and conflict:

Avocado

Avocado farming can have significant ecological and social consequences, ranging from deforestation, excessive water usage, and harm to biodiversity to human conflict and violence. In some regions, the soaring demand for avocados has driven illegal deforestation, causing habitat loss and sparking conflicts. For example, in areas like Mexico and the USA, the avocado industry has been linked to disputes and violence related to land and resource allocation (Watch this short video on Mexico's Avocado Militia). Nevertheless, long distance transportation of certain fruits like avocado are directly linked to high CO_2 emission. To make more responsible choices, support brands and products that prioritise sustainable avocado farming and strive to avoid contributing to deforestation, ecological harm, or social conflict.

Learn more: Is Avocado Bad For The Environment? Statistics, Trends & Facts, Is it possible to eat sustainable avocados?, and The global avocado crisis and resilience in the UK's fresh fruit and vegetable supply system.

Chocolate

Unsustainable cocoa farming may contribute to deforestation, habitat loss, and biodiversity loss. Additionally, the chocolate industry has faced scrutiny for unethical labour practices, including child labour. To make more responsible choices, support brands and products that prioritise sustainable cocoa farming and fair labour practices. By doing so, you can help protect both the environment and the welfare of cocoa farmers.

Learn more about the environmental and human impacts of cocoa:
Bittersweet: chocolate's impact on the environment.

Meat/Fish/imported foodstuff

Animal-based diets have a significant environmental impact, irresponsible husbandry and aggressive market tactics contribute to deforestation, biodiversity loss, resource strain, and methane emissions, not to mention the transportation footprint of the products. Livestock farming, especially ruminant animals like cows and sheep demands extensive land, often leading to deforestation and loss of biodiversity (also associated with crops destined to their feed). These animals produce methane, a potent greenhouse gas that exacerbates climate change and demands high amounts of water for meat and dairy production. It is important to understand that there are differences between meat products. Chicken, eggs, and pork nearly always have a lower footprint than beef and lamb. The seafood industry also faces challenges like unethical farming, overfishing and ocean degradation.

Learn more: Is it true that soy products cause deforestation?

Adopting a more plant-based diet as well as consuming local produce would be powerful ways to reduce negative environmental impact. Remember: you don't have to become a vegetarian to eat less red or processed meats. Being aware of what we put on our tables, including a balanced diet as well as responsible consumption of imported foodstuffs are major contributing factors to reducing the need for irresponsible large-scale animal farming and overfishing, thus giving space for more ethical and sustainable methods to take root and establish healthier production systems. While being mindful of cultural backgrounds and a healthy balanced diet, it is advisable to start incorporating more seasonal and local vegetables into meals or introducing specific days to plant-based eating, as such practices have brought about notable health advantages in many long-term studies. Aside from the issue of reduction of environmental footprint, we need to understand other elements of the diet such as saturated fat, free sugars and salt, as well as matching energy intake to energy needs impact on health. That is something we ought to pay equal attention to.

Learn more: Intersection of human health and the health of the environment,

Given the substantial economic influence of the various global conglomerates in the food industry over governments, consumers cannot rely on government regulations to right the wrongs of production and supply. We need to be aware that imported foodstuff leaves substantial carbon trails. Globalisation has brought economic advances to many places, but the flow of goods also means we all share a heavier environmental footprint than when overseas foods were more scarce not so long ago.

By advocating for mindful consumption, the Pact empowers consumers to catalyse change. Addressing our consumption habits sends a powerful message, signalling the need for a shift towards sustainable practices. This consumer-driven approach is crucial in encouraging industries to adapt while also advocating for supportive regulations, ultimately steering us towards a more sustainable and ethical food system.

Olives

Intensive olive farming practices, notably in regions like Spain, can result in over-extraction of underground water resources, leading to water scarcity and other environmental damage related to soil and biodiversity. This has left some communities without access to vital water resources for their own use. To make more responsible choices, support brands and products that prioritise ethical water use, and fair labour practices. By doing so, you can help protect both the environment and the welfare of olive growers while ensuring that local communities have access to water for their essential needs.

Read more: Intensive Olive Farms Contribute to Desertification in Spain.

Palm oil

Be aware of products containing palm oil, as its production contributes to deforestation and habitat destruction. Unsustainable palm oil farming not only devastates natural ecosystems but also threatens endangered species. The extensive land use for palm oil plantations often leads to habitat loss and carbon emissions. Moreover, the use of palm oil in food is associated with ultra processed food, which is linked to the development of noncommunicable disease *(The palm oil industry and noncommunicable diseases)*.

Seek alternatives or support brands that adhere to sustainable palm oil practices certified by organisations like the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil *(RSPO)*.

Informed food choices are not only about nourishing your body but also about nourishing the planet and the communities that depend on it. Every bite you take and every purchase you make can have far-reaching consequences, from ecological impacts to social well-being. By staying informed and selecting products and practices that align with sustainability, ethical sourcing, and fair labour, you become an advocate for a healthier world.

It's not just about what's on your plate; it's about the world you want to create with every conscious choice you make. Your informed decisions can inspire change and drive a more sustainable, equitable, and harmonious future for all.

Find out more about climate actions and recommendations by the United Nations about food in this guide to climate action: food.

7 Cease food waste

The United Nations estimates that nearly one-third of all food produced for human consumption (about 1.3 billion tons) is lost or wasted each year including food in perfect condition, contributing to hunger and resource depletion such as land, water, and energy, while resulting in unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions from production and landfill. Food waste extends not only to the food that we don't eat or throw away, but also encompasses eating more than is necessary, making it a pressing issue with serious environmental and social ramifications. Reducing food waste ensures that valuable resources are used efficiently, addressing global food security.

By mindful consumption and minimising food waste, individuals can significantly reduce their carbon footprint, contributing to emissions reductions of up to 1.3 tons annually. This not only lessens environmental impact but also promotes better health, saves money, and safeguards valuable resources for the well-being of future generations.

Read more:

The World Counts

Food waste makes up 'half' of global food system emissions.

8 Avoid single-use plastics

Embracing reusable alternatives and ceasing the use of single-use plastics are crucial steps towards a more sustainable future. Single-use plastics, including overpacked items and microplastics in clothing, contribute to pollution, waste, and environmental harm, particularly in marine ecosystems.

By switching to reusable shopping bags, water bottles, and coffee cups, individuals can significantly reduce their environmental footprint and minimise the negative impacts of plastic pollution. Reusable items, made from materials like cloth or sturdy plastics, eliminate the need for countless disposable plastic bags and drink containers. This not only reduces plastic waste but also showcases a commitment to protecting our planet. Encouraging the use of reusables among family and friends can help make this sustainable choice a social norm. Beyond environmental benefits, these actions align with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change, while also supporting cleaner oceans and ecosystems. Use reusable shopping bags, water bottles, coffee cups.

Read more:

European Commission: Single use plastic

Fact Sheet: single use plastic

Planet vs. Plastics Global Theme for Earth Day 2024

9 Reduce paper usage

Reducing paper usage is an essential step in minimising environmental impact and promoting sustainability. Paper production consumes significant amounts of water, energy, and wood pulp, leading to deforestation and habitat loss. By using less paper in daily activities such as printing, note-taking, and packaging, individuals can conserve natural resources and reduce carbon emissions associated with paper manufacturing and transportation

It also supports wildlife by reducing land demand for wood production. Embracing digital alternatives like electronic documents, online communication, and digital note-taking not only reduces paper consumption but also offers convenience and efficiency. Additionally, practising mindful paper usage by printing on both sides, reusing scrap paper, and opting for recycled paper products further reduces environmental impact. By embracing a paperless approach whenever possible, individuals contribute to conservation efforts and support a more sustainable future.

10 Do not upgrade your mobile phone without reasonable requirements

Refraining from upgrading your mobile phone without a valid requirement is a responsible choice that aligns with sustainable consumption and environmental awareness. In the era of rapid technological advancements, it's essential to consider the impacts on both resources and the environment, particularly as they relate to materials sourced from ocean exploration.

Mobile phones contain components and materials that are extracted from various sources, including rare minerals and metals from deep-sea mining. These practices can have detrimental effects on ocean ecosystems, including potential damage to sensitive habitats and marine life. By extending the lifespan of your mobile device and reducing the frequency of upgrades, you can help lower the demand for these materials.

Understanding that not all individuals may have the luxury of keeping their current phone for extended periods, this choice is about encouraging thoughtful consideration. It involves assessing whether an upgrade is truly necessary based on functionality, rather than simply following trends or marketing.

11 Mindful fashion

Instead of constantly buying new clothing to follow trends, consider repurposing or upcycling your existing items. This reduces the environmental impact of the fashion industry, which is known for excessive waste and pollution. When you decide to part with clothing, recycle or donate it instead of discarding it in a landfill. Recycling textiles reduces waste, conserves resources, and minimises the environmental footprint of clothing.

Stay informed about the materials in your clothing. Avoid fabrics that shed microplastics during washing, as these end up in the ocean. Opting for sustainable and eco-friendly materials and supporting brands that promote sustainability, fair labour practices and ethical sourcing is a powerful decision that not only reduces environmental degradation but also encourages cultural change towards more ethical and responsible consumption.

Read more:

The impact of textile production and waste on the environment

12 Mindful online content consumption

Mindful online content consumption involves critically evaluating the digital content we engage with to ensure it aligns with values of sustainability, environmental consciousness, and ethical behaviour. By avoiding content that promotes overconsumption, wasteful lifestyles, and harmful practices such as illegal wildlife trade or animal exploitation, individuals can make conscious choices to support content creators and platforms that prioritise ethical and sustainable values.

Additionally, actively seeking out and supporting content that educates and inspires positive environmental action can empower individuals to make informed decisions and contribute to a more environmentally conscious online community. Through mindful online content consumption, individuals can leverage the power of digital platforms to promote sustainability, raise awareness, and drive positive change for the planet.

13 Stay informed about environmental issues

Knowledge is a powerful tool for change. Staying informed allows individuals to comprehend the pressing environmental challenges we face, from climate change and habitat destruction to pollution and resource depletion. This awareness fosters a sense of responsibility and empowers informed decision-making.

Understanding environmental issues also provides a strong foundation for advocacy and engagement. It enables individuals to take a stand on matters of concern and support initiatives, policies, and practices that promote a cleaner, healthier planet.
By staying informed about environmental issues, individuals become part of a broader movement working to create a more sustainable and ecologically responsible world. It's a commitment to knowledge, awareness, and action that transcends geographical, income, and societal boundaries.

14 Participate in local environmental initiatives

Local initiatives often address a variety of issues, such as waste reduction, habitat restoration, and urban sustainability. By taking part, individuals align with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 14 (Life Below Water), as they work towards creating cleaner and more vibrant living environments.

Participation in these initiatives is inclusive and accessible to people from diverse backgrounds, income levels, and housing situations, making it a highly adaptable means of fostering sustainability.

Ultimately, getting involved in local environmental initiatives promotes community cohesion, strengthens local ecosystems, and contributes to a more sustainable and resilient future. It's a testament to the power of collective action in effecting positive change.

15 Encourage friends and family to join a more sustainable living

By initiating conversations, sharing knowledge, and leading by example, individuals can influence their close network to adopt eco-friendly habits. Whether it's reducing waste, conserving energy, supporting local sustainability initiatives, or choosing environmentally responsible products, these actions ripple through your social circles and create a ripple effect of positive change.

This approach is highly inclusive and adaptable to different social dynamics and backgrounds. It recognizes that sustainability is a collective effort, and through collective action, individuals can make a substantial difference in reducing their carbon footprint and environmental impact.

16 Raise awareness in your community about the impacts of our daily living choices

By initiating conversations and sharing knowledge about the environmental consequences of our actions, individuals can empower their communities to make informed and responsible choices.

Raising awareness fosters a sense of shared responsibility. It prompts community members to reflect on their habits and consider how small changes can collectively create a significant positive impact. Through workshops, presentations, and community events, individuals can educate others about topics like reducing waste, conserving energy, and supporting local eco-friendly initiatives.

This effort is inclusive, welcoming participation from diverse community members, and can be tailored to different age groups, faiths and cultural backgrounds. By encouraging dialogue and knowledge-sharing, communities can transform awareness into action, creating a more environmentally conscious society.

17 Discuss with your leaders on how to make your community more sustainable

By dialoguing with community leaders, individuals can advocate for eco-friendly policies, renewable energy initiatives, waste reduction strategies, and other sustainable practices that benefit the community. This action encourages transparency and open communication, empowering community leaders to make informed decisions and prioritise sustainability.

Participation in these discussions is open to everyone, regardless of income or housing status, making it a highly inclusive approach to community engagement. It enables individuals to express their concerns, share ideas, and contribute to the collective effort to create a more sustainable and environmentally conscious community.

Household checklist
Why are these important?

1 Fix dripping faucets and install low-flow shower heads

Dripping faucets are a common source of water waste, with even a slow drip adding up to gallons of water over time. Repairing these issues ensures that water resources are used efficiently and minimises unnecessary consumption.

Low-flow showerheads are designed to restrict water flow while maintaining a comfortable and efficient shower experience. By replacing standard showerheads with low-flow alternatives, individuals can conserve water without sacrificing their daily routines. Addressing these minor household fixes is both an environmental and economic win. It's a conscious choice that showcases a commitment to sustainable living and resource efficiency.

2 Collect rainwater for outdoor use

Water scarcity and droughts in various regions make it vital to utilise rainwater as a valuable alternative source, particularly in times of water stress. It reduces the demand on municipal water supplies, conserving freshwater resources and promoting self-sufficiency. It's an eco-friendly approach to meet outdoor water needs.

3 Reduce heating and cooling

Heating and cooling our homes significantly contribute to global carbon emissions. We can set the thermostat to a lower temperature in the winter and to a higher temperature in the summer as a way of reducing the energy burden. Wearing an extra layer of clothing instead of exclusively relying on heating can also help you endure the colder days while decreasing your utility bills.

4 Switch to renewable energy sources

When fossil fuels are burned carbon dioxide is released, leading to accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and climate change. It is possible to reduce our carbon footprint by up to 2.5 tons per year by switching to renewable energy. You can choose your energy provider to incorporate renewable energy for your household. If you live in a house or have access to a roof and you have the means of installing solar panels, you could not only reduce carbon emissions but also reduce energy bill costs in the long-term.

Appliances and lighting consume a lot of energy. By switching to LED light bulbs and energy-efficient electric appliances, washing your laundry with cold water, or hanging the laundry to dry instead of using a dryer, it is possible to reduce the energy consumption in your household. Also, better insulation can improve your home's energy efficiency, through better insulation and reduce your carbon footprint by almost 1 ton per year.It also promotes eco-friendly mobility and sustainable urban living.

5 Insulate your home to reduce heating and cooling costs

By improving the efficiency of your home's insulation, you can maintain comfortable indoor temperatures while reducing the need for excessive heating and cooling. This not only saves money on utility bills but also lowers carbon emissions. However, it's important to note that not everyone owns a home or has the means to invest in insulation improvements. Nonetheless, for those who can, insulating their homes represents a tangible step towards energy conservation and cost reduction.

6 Smart Thermostats

Smart thermostats offer an efficient way to control indoor temperatures, benefiting both households and the environment. By optimising heating and cooling systems, they reduce energy usage and carbon emissions, leading to lower bills and increased sustainability. Additionally, features like remote monitoring and learning capabilities enhance convenience. While not accessible to everyone, investing in smart thermostats can significantly contribute to energy conservation and cost savings.

7 Upgrade to energy-efficient and water-saving appliances *(if possible)*

For those who can make these improvements, upgrading to energy-efficient appliances leads to reduced energy consumption, which benefits the environment by lowering greenhouse gas emissions. It also offers potential cost savings over time through reduced utility bills. Such upgrades can include energy-efficient light bulbs, heating and cooling systems, and home appliances.

For those who can insulate, it results in more effective temperature regulation, reduced energy consumption, and lower utility bills. Proper insulation helps maintain comfortable indoor temperatures, minimising the need for excessive heating or cooling. It also reduces greenhouse gas emissions and supports environmental conservation.

8 Natural lighting

Maximising natural sunlight reduces reliance on artificial lighting, cutting energy consumption and carbon emissions. Exposure to natural light enhances mood, productivity, and well-being.
If you have the privilege of designing your home, spaces that optimise natural lighting, like skylights and large windows, reduces the need for artificial heating. While designing a home may not be feasible for everyone, awareness of maximising available light can still have a significant impact.

9 Mindful flying

By opting for train, bus, or car travel for family vacations when possible, households can significantly reduce their carbon footprint and endorse more sustainable transportation choices. While such decisions are typically made collectively within households, individuals can actively weigh the environmental impact of flying and seek alternative modes of transportation whenever possible. This collaborative approach empowers households to make eco-conscious travel decisions that align with efforts to combat climate change and foster responsible travel habits.

10 Buy locally produced and seasonal foods

Choosing seasonal and locally produced food items is an effective way to reduce your environmental impact. By opting for food that hasn't travelled long distances, you cut down on greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation. Eating locally can save you up to 1.1 tons of carbon emissions annually. Additionally, selecting in-season produce is a sustainable choice since out-of-season foods are often transported from distant locations, increasing food miles.

By embracing organic options, you further lessen your carbon footprint by up to 0.9 tons annually. Organic farming practices reduce the need for fertilisers and promote regenerative agriculture, benefiting both the environment and your health. An informed and mindful consumption can reduce the carbon footprint of food transportation and support local farmers, which is crucial in the face of climate change and globalisation.

Read more: Your guide to climate action: Food

11 Avoid products with excessive plastic packaging

Opting for products with minimal or eco-friendly packaging is an effective way to minimise plastic waste and promote sustainable consumption. Excessive plastic packaging often adds unnecessary weight and bulk to products, increasing transportation-related emissions and resource usage. By selecting items with responsible packaging, individuals not only reduce plastic waste but also encourage businesses to adopt more sustainable packaging practices. It sends a clear message that there's a demand for environmentally friendly alternatives.

Ultimately, choosing products with minimal plastic packaging empowers consumers to make an eco-conscious choice and work toward a more sustainable future.

12 Cease food waste

This action was also mentioned as an individual action we can take for a more sustainable lifestyle. As a household, we have the power to address this issue by making conscious decisions in meal planning and consumption habits.

By adopting practices such as planning meals effectively, utilising all edible portions of food, and avoiding overconsumption, households can significantly reduce their carbon footprint. This reduction can amount to emissions reductions, contributing not only to environmental sustainability but also promoting better health, saving money, and conserving valuable resources for the well-being of future generations. Through collective efforts to minimise food waste, households play a crucial role in addressing global food security and fostering a more sustainable future.

13 Grow your own vegetables

Growing your own vegetables at home offers numerous benefits for families and the environment. It provides fresh, nutritious produce while reducing carbon emissions associated with transportation and processing. Homegrown vegetables promote food security, self-sufficiency, and organic gardening practices. Besides, gardening fosters outdoor activity and family bonding. It also promotes connection with food production and broader ecosystem and nature, sparkling conservation interest.

14 Avoid pesticides and synthetic fertilisers in your garden

Opting out of pesticides and synthetic fertilisers in your garden is a proactive choice that promotes environmental health and biodiversity. By embracing organic gardening practices, you create safe havens for pollinators and protect beneficial insects, soil organisms, and wildlife.
IThis approach also reduces the risk of chemical runoff into waterways, preventing water pollution and safeguarding aquatic ecosystems. Organic gardening enhances soil health and fertility while minimising reliance on external inputs. By prioritising pesticide-free and synthetic fertiliser-free practices, families can cultivate thriving gardens that contribute to a more sustainable and biodiverse planet.

15 Reserve a wild area in your garden

Setting aside a portion of your outdoor space to let nature thrive without human interference is a simple action which provides habitat for native plant and animal species. This promotes biodiversity and supports natural pest control. Additionally, preserving a wild area in your garden helps mitigate the urban heat island effect and contributes to overall ecosystem health. While not everyone has the space or resources to dedicate to a wild garden, those who can make this commitment play a valuable role in fostering biodiversity and conservation efforts, especially for bees and other threatened pollinators.

16 Compost

Composting food scraps is a simple yet impactful action individuals can take to reduce waste and promote soil health. By collecting organic waste such as fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, and eggshells, and composting them instead of sending them to landfills or participating in food waste collection programs available in many regions of the UK, households can divert valuable nutrients back into the soil. Composting not only reduces methane emissions from decomposing organic matter but also enriches soil fertility, supporting healthier plant growth and biodiversity. This is a way to contribute to the circular economy, closing the loop on organic waste.

17 Recycle paper, cardboard, glass, plastic

Recycling is a vital step in reducing our environmental footprint. It conserves valuable resources, reduces waste in landfills, and minimises the need for new raw materials. By recycling items like paper, glass, plastics, and metals, we contribute to energy savings and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Recycling is not only an eco-conscious choice but also a way to promote sustainability, conserve natural resources, and support a circular economy.

18 Choose products from companies committed to sustainability when possible

The urgent need to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable business practices demands a shift toward supporting responsible companies. The Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) regularly assesses the sustainability efforts of major corporations. Companies that commit to sustainability practices tend to receive higher CDP scores, indicating their positive environmental impact. Supporting companies committed to sustainability encourages eco-friendly business practices, responsible innovation, and conscientious consumption. It contributes to ethical and environmentally responsible commerce.

19 Opt for green cleaning products

Opting for green cleaning products not only benefits the immediate indoor environment but also plays a crucial role in mitigating broader environmental issues such as marine pollution and biodiversity harm. Traditional cleaning products often contain harmful chemicals that can find their way into waterways, contributing to marine pollution and endangering aquatic ecosystems. By choosing green alternatives, families help reduce the introduction of these toxins into the environment, safeguarding marine life and preserving biodiversity.

Moreover, opting for genuinely eco-friendly cleaning products helps combat greenwashing, a deceptive marketing practice where products are labelled as environmentally friendly despite containing harmful ingredients. By scrutinising product labels and choosing certified green cleaning options, families can avoid falling victim to greenwashing tactics and ensure that their cleaning choices truly align with sustainability goals.

20 Participate in local environmental initiatives

Participating in local environmental initiatives provides families with a fulfilling opportunity to contribute to sustainability efforts. By actively engaging, families not only foster community cohesion but also bolster local ecosystems, contributing to a more sustainable and resilient future. This collective involvement showcases the power of families in instigating positive change within their communities, signalling a cultural shift towards more conscious and responsible living.
Household values and norms play a pivotal role in influencing communities and inspiring others to embrace sustainable practices, thus amplifying the impact of familial involvement in environmental initiatives.



Thank you!

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all those who chooses to embark on this journey towards a more conscious and sustainable lifestyle.

Your commitment to positive change is not taken for granted, and we understand that every step you take, no matter how small, requires effort and dedication. While we respect your time and individual circumstances, we want to emphasise that your actions matter immensely. Each sustainable choice you make, every piece of knowledge you share, and every example you set ripples outward, creating a wave of change that our world urgently needs. Your efforts, combined with countless others, have the power to shape a more equitable, vibrant, and sustainable future for all. Thank you for being a part of this vital transformation.