

# ACTION PLAN

This document contains a variety of ideas to help you make sustainable changes at home, work and in the community. These changes are good for the earth and good for you. We have provided a time line to help you track your progress.

Section 1, Food. What we eat has a huge impact on the environment. If we take into consideration where our food was grown, how it was processed and transported, what it is packaged in, and what we do with any waste we can lower our footprint and help us live more sustainably. Here are some ideas for change.

	I do this!	I will start next week	I will start next year
Read the label: (Has it been grown within 200km of where you live? Does it contain additives, preservatives, artificial colours?)			
Buy Fair Trade (at home and at work!)			
Buy organic			
Avoid food with a lot of packaging			
Unplug unused fridges and deep freezers			
Compost (food scraps, coffee grounds, newspaper, animal fur. Avoid oils, fat, diseased plants)			
Recycle food packaging			
Eat less meat and dairy (meat production takes 55 times more fossils fuels, more water & more land)			
Carry a mug and water bottle			
Bring reusable dishes and cutlery to events that may use Styrofoam or paper.			
Bring reusable bags to the grocery store			
Walk to the grocery store			
Buy in bulk (single? Join with a group of neighbours or friends)			
Start a garden			
Others...?			

Section 2, Energy. Greenhouse gas emissions produced through burning fossil fuels is a major environmental issue. How we use electricity, heat our homes and how we travel all effect the environment. Consuming less energy is a major way we can try and mitigate climate change. Here are some ways how!

	I do this!	I will start next week	I will start next year
Bike or walk,			
Take the bus or carpool			
Never idle your vehicle. Turning off the engine for more than 11 seconds saves energy.			
Turn off lights and other electronics. Consciously consume less energy.			
Purchase Energy Star approved appliances or electronics (some appliances can reduce the consumption of electricity by 70%)			
Use LCD or CFL light bulbs			
Keep thermostat low. Program it to stay cooler when not at home.			
Lobby government for renewable alternatives.			
Unplug devices when not in use that are using phantom power (ex. cell phone chargers)			
Take the train or bus. Avoid flying.			
Take the stairs.			
Repair heating ducts (can lose 60% of heated air)			
Use blinds, shades, shutters, drapes to keep heat in and/or out			
Cover windows with plastic during the winter			
Insulate hot water storage tanks			
Install solar and/ or wind in your home			
Others...?			

Section 3, Water. Canada is one of the highest water users per capita. Around the globe access to safe, clean water is a major issues. Since Canadians are stewards to an enormous amount of water we need take care of this precious resource. Saving water at home and considering how much water is used in the products we buy is a great first step.

	I do this!	I will start next week	I will start next year
Always use tap water instead of bottled water			
Install low flow toilets			
Turn down water heater by a few degrees			
Use cold water whenever possible			
Repair leaks in pipes, drips from taps and toilets from running.			
Collect and reuse "Greywater" (water that is used once but is clean enough to be used twice. Ex. water used to rinse dishes can be used to water plants)			
Drain a quart of water from your water tank ever 3 months (removes impediment sediments)			
Install a faucet aerator (gives the sensation of more water by adding air and reducing flow)			
Avoid watering your lawn (plant clover or xeriscape)			
Have staggered showers (turn off the tap between rinses)			
Use half as much water when doing dishes.			
Encourage your municipality to invest in water and sanitation infrastructure.			
Do not pouring anything toxic down the drain.			
Be water conscious if buying products that have been grown in drought prone areas (oranges from Israel, cotton from Malawi)			
Others...?			

Section 4, Consumption. Using less is the obvious best way to help the environment. Our culture is pushed to buy more, buy new and well just buy! Fighting these urges and making eco-minded decisions when shopping can have lasting impacts. Always remember that **everything** you buy has come from somewhere and has to end up somewhere else. Consuming less means using less raw materials and leaving less in landfills

	I do this!	I will start next week	I will start next year
Avoid anything disposable (cutlery, mops, take out containers, etc)			
Avoid printing documents out unnecessarily			
Purchase higher quality products			
Purchase refillable toner cartridges and return depleted cartridges to the manufacturer			
Create notepads out of paper that has been used on one side			
Fix and refurbish appliances and electronics instead of buying new.			
Have recycling picked up at home and work.			
Lobby to have recycling pick up provided by the city.			
Chose batteries containing nickel-cadmium and zero mercury. Recycle all used batteries.			
Purchase products that use solar power or have ac/dc adaptors.			
E-waste contains many reusable parts, find out where to return your cell phone, lap top, computer, etc.			
Always recycle paper			
Place trays beside photocopiers and printers as containers to collect single-sided paper for reuse			
Shredded paper is difficult to recycle (avoid shredding paper unless its confidential information) However shredded paper is useful for compositing.			
Others...?			

Section 5, Activism. The movement is growing and it is easier than ever to become more Green! Getting involved in your community and taking your environmental values to the street can have a ripple effect. Individual actions are the basis of the environmental movement, but challenging business, industry and government to take action on issues like climate change, waste management, resource extraction, and pollution amplifies your impact!

	I do this!	I will start next week	I will start next year
Join an environmental organization.			
Financially support environmental organizations			
Vote for candidates and parties who have strong pro-environment policies.			
Endorse the Earth Charter.			
Contact your elected officials and challenge them to oppose anti-environmental initiatives (nuclear power, tar sands, mining, etc)			
Participate in eco-events (forums, demonstrations, festivals, etc).			
Get to know your neighbours. Community is a cornerstone to sustainability.			
Subscribe to publications that have an environmental and justice focus.			
Educate yourself!			
Set goals in lower consumption, waste reduction and efficiency. Make a plan and stick with it!			
Push for the adoption of a “Green Policy” in your workplace.			
Tell people what you are doing! Spread the word and set an example.			
Others...?			