

How You Can Help

Although climate change has greatly affected the polar bear's sea ice habitat, scientists emphasize that it's not too late to take action on this issue—and each of us can help: at home, work, school, and in our communities. Here are some tips for reducing your carbon footprint and helping the bears.

Tips for Reducing Your Energy Use

We've all heard of the 3 Rs and we always seem to see them listed in the same order: **reduce, reuse, recycle** – right? Well, there's a reason for that. While all three are important, the order is very significant. Lowering our ecological footprint, or the overall impact we have on Earth, is the first step towards a healthier planet. And of course, passing on the message is important, too. Don't forget to share your knowledge with the people in your lives.

Reduce

It's simple: the less we consume, the less resources we use. Things like buying less products or purchasing products with less packaging, using less energy, and driving less are all things that reduce our eco-footprint. Here are more ideas on how you can **reduce**:

- Use green power in your home or office - check with your local utility provider to see if there's a green energy option (adults)
- Do an energy audit on your house (adults, schools for kids)
- Draft-proof and insulate your home (adults)
- Use programmable thermostats (adults)
- Turn your thermostat up 2 degrees in summer and down 2 degrees in winter
- Change your heating and cooling filters every month (adults)
- Install ceiling fans (adults)
- Use CFL light bulbs (adults and kids)
- Use lights that work off solar energy (adults and kids)
- Turn off the lights, TV, video player, stereo, and computer when not in use (adults and kids)
- Unplug phone chargers when not in use
- Wash your clothes in cold or warm water (adults and kids)
- Hang-dry your clothes (adults and kids)
- When it's time to replace appliances, buy Energy Star (adults)
- Buy local and/or organic when possible (adults and kids)

- Grow your own vegetables in a pesticide-free garden (adults and kids)
- Compost (adults and kids)
- Eat less meat (adults and kids)
- Don't run the water unnecessarily (adults and kids)
- Only run your dishwasher with a full load (adults and kids)
- Use E-billing (adults)
- Contact companies who send you magazines or junk mail and ask for your name to be removed (adults)
- Live closer to work to cut down on your commute (adults)
- Drive less, carpool, take transit, walk, or bike (adults and kids)
- When you do drive, keep your car tuned and its tires properly inflated to help you save on fuel costs while reducing CO₂ emissions (adults)
- If your water heater is more than five years old, wrap it in an insulating jacket (adults)
- If it's time to replace your furnace, get a high efficiency replacement (adults)
- Install low-flow toilets and showerheads (adults)
- Buy a more fuel efficient or hybrid car (adults)

Reuse

In addition to reducing our consumption, we can save energy by **reusing** products. This not only helps keep goods out of landfills, but reduces the need to manufacture more (thus creating more CO₂). Our disposable society isn't good for the health of the planet, and an unhealthy planet affects us, too. Here are more ideas on how you can **reuse**:

- Instead of using plastic bags that end up in landfills or harming wildlife, get reusable bags –you'll quickly develop the habit of bringing them along when you shop (adults and kids)
- Repair things if possible before replacing them with something new (adults and kids)
- Buy used clothing – vintage is in! (adults and kids)
- Host a get together with your friends or co-workers and have a clothing or household goods swap; whatever doesn't get claimed can be donated to a shelter (adults)
- Use websites like Freecycle.org to find used goods—at no cost—or to find new homes for items you no longer need (adults and kids)



- Find new uses for old items: Build a greenhouse from old windows, garden paths from old bricks, furniture from scrap wood. Use your creativity to transform everyday items into something new (adults and kids)
- Collect water in a rain barrel and use it to water your plants and garden (adults and kids)
- Switch to reusable water bottles and coffee mugs

Recycle

So many things can be recycled these days and made into other things – it's amazing! Even things like batteries, paint and electronics can be disposed of in proper facilities where they will separate out what can be recycled. So once you have reduced what you use and have reused what you can, all that's left is to **recycle** the rest. Are you doing your part?

Lead the Way: If your school, workplace, or community doesn't already have a recycling program, step up to the plate and advocate for one!

Other Things You Can Do

- Join a local naturalist or environmental club to get out and explore nature in your area—and become involved with projects
- Plant trees or join community clean-up efforts
- Organize ride-your-bike to work or school days
- Let your elected officials know that green energy and action on climate change are important issues to you
- Join Polar Bears International's Facebook page and express your support for the bears
- Form a Roots & Shoots club with your class/school/church/zoo—or join an existing club
- Visit a zoo and learn more
- Participate in Earth Hour at home, in your office, and at school. (You can even make it a weekly occurrence!)
- Support the research and educational efforts of Polar Bears International by making a donation. Remember that every dollar donated helps the bears!

Websites You Can Visit

- www.polarbearsinternational.org



- www.350.org
- www.climatecounts.org
- www.earthhour.org
- <http://www.energysavers.gov/>
- www.rootsandshoots.org
- www.freecycle.org