Simple Tips to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint (A.K.A. Energy Consumption)

Thanks to everyone who came to the first Summer Discussion on Sunday! Energy is a complex subject and sometimes the topic can be overwhelming. Several folks after the discussion asked me, “What can I do to make a difference?” I thought about pulling together some ideas that most people can accomplish without too much difficulty.

If you think about it, these suggestions are common sense, we all just need to be reminded every once and awhile.

- Turn off lights when natural light is sufficient and when you leave the room.
- Keep your temperature system on a moderate (lower in winter and higher in summer) setting while you’re in the room.
- Use your windows wisely! If your climate control system is on, shut the windows…if you need a little fresh air, turn off the heat or AC.
- During the summer if you have shades or curtains on your windows keep them closed during the daytime. Conversely, in the winter keep the shades open to let in the warm sunlight.
- Cut down the number of appliances you are running.
- Many electronics continue using energy even when powered down. This is true of any charger, television, printer, etc. Use a power strip to easily unplug these electronics when not in use.
- Power your computer down when you’re away. A computer turned off uses at least 65% less energy than a computer left on or idle on a screen saver.
- If you are able, use the stairs as often as possible. Elevators consume electricity.
- Only do full loads of laundry and use the bright colors cycle whenever possible.
- Try to take shorter showers. The less hot water you use, the less energy is needed to heat the water.
- Switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) use 75% less energy than incandescent and last up to 10 times longer.

Each one of these suggestions helps you reduce your energy consumption and removes unnecessary load off of the power grid.

