

75 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice



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Note 1: This article is continually updated to ensure each item is accurate and needed today.

Note 2: Achieving racial justice is a marathon, not a sprint. Our work to fix what we broke and left broken isn't done until Black folks tell us it's done.

1. Google whether your local police department currently outfits all on-duty police officers with a body-worn camera and requires that the body-worn camera be turned on immediately when officers respond to a police call. If they don't, write to your city or town government representative and police chief to advocate for it. The racial make-up of your town doesn't matter — This needs to be standard everywhere. Multiply your voice by soliciting others to advocate as well, writing on social media about it, writing op-eds, etc.
2. Google whether your city or town currently employs evidence-based police de-escalation trainings. The racial make-up of your town doesn't matter — This needs to be standard everywhere. Write to your city or town government representative

and police chief and advocate for it. Multiply your voice by soliciting others to advocate as well, writing on social media about it, writing op-eds, etc.

3. More and more stories of black folks encountering racism are being documented and shared through social media — whether it's at a hotel, with the police, in a coffee shop, at a school, etc. When you see such a post, call the organization, company, or institution involved to tell them how upset you are. Then share the post along with the institution's contact information, spreading the word about what happened and encouraging others to contact the institution as well. Whether the company initiated the event or failed to protect a POC during an onslaught by a third party, they need to hear from us.
4. If you or a friend is an educator, buy said friend books that feature POC as protagonists and heroes, no matter the racial make-up of the class. A few good lists are [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). And/or purchase educational toys that feature POC, such as [finger puppets](#), [Black History Flashcards](#), etc for their classroom. Use these items year-round, not just in February. The racial make-up of students doesn't matter — kids of every race need to know American history and be exposed to people from different races, religions, and countries. If the friend is interested, buy them for your pal's classroom. Don't be shy to ask Facebook friends that you haven't actually talked to in ten years.
5. If you or a friend or family member is an educator, watch or share this [video](#) of Neil deGrasse Tyson speaking about his experience as a black student telling people he wanted to be a scientist and astrophysicist. Tyson's experience reminds me of a black friend whose high school teachers tried to dissuade her from taking AP classes, because, with the best of intentions, they thought the AP classes would be "too much" for her. Be an educator who supports and encourages, not one who dissuades. Talk to educators you know about being educators who support and encourage, not educators who dissuade.
6. Work on ensuring that black educators are hired where black children are being taught. If you want to know more about why and how this makes a difference for black children, check out [this episode of Malcolm Gladwell's podcast](#). There are some really good nuggets in there about how schools can support the achievement of black students — from ensuring black students aren't closed out of gifted programs by using test results instead of white teachers' recommendations to the influence that having a black teacher has on a black student's education to the importance to fostering a school ethos wherein black students think, "This school is here for me."
7. Many companies have recruiting channels that are predominantly white. Work with your HR department to recruit Americans who are descendants of enslaved Africans. Recruiting from HBCUs is a good start. Work to put descendants of enslaved Africans already hired under supportive managers.
8. Donate to anti-white supremacy work such as your local Black Lives Matter Chapter, the [National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls](#), the [NAACP](#), [Southern Poverty Law Center](#), [United Negro College Fund](#), [Black Youth Project 100](#), [Color of Change](#), [The Sentencing Project](#), [Families against Mandatory](#)

[Minimums](#), [A New Way of Life](#), [Equal Justice Initiative](#), and [Dream Defenders](#). Join some of these list-serves and take action as their emails dictate.

9. Support black businesses. Find them on [WeBuyBlack](#), [The Black Wallet](#), and [Official Black Wall Street](#). Another great list is [here](#).
10. Bank black. It doesn't have to be all of your checking or savings. Opening up an account with some money is better than no account at all. You can use the link from #9 (type "banking" in the Category field) or [this site](#) to find a bank. At the very least, move some or all of your checking, savings, mortgage, etc out of Wells Fargo as a part of the [divestment movement to protect Standing Rock](#).
11. Don't buy from companies that use prison labor. Find a good list [here](#). Stand outside of these stores with a sign that reads "[Company] uses prison labor" even if for 30 mins a few times a month. Others will take a shift.
12. Read up about mandatory minimum sentences and watch videos about this on Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM's) [website](#). FAMM's website includes work being done at the federal level and state level. Call or write to your state legislators and governor about reducing mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent drug crimes.
13. To reduce mandatory minimum sentences on a federal level, call or write to your federal legislators in support of the bipartisan (sponsored by Sen Lee (R-UT)) Smarter Sentencing Act (S. 2850) which reduces the length of federal mandatory minimum drug sentences by half, makes the Fair Sentencing Act's crack sentencing reforms retroactive, and expands the "safety valve" exception to mandatory drug sentences.
14. To reduce mandatory minimum sentences on a federal level, call or write to your federal legislators in support of the bipartisan (sponsored by Sen Rand (R-KY)) Justice Safety Valve Act (S. 399, H.R. 1097), which would allow judges to give sentences other than the mandatory minimum sentence for any federal crime.
15. To reduce mandatory minimum sentences on a federal level, call or write your federal legislators in support of another great criminal justice reform bill, the Second Look Act, which would make reduced sentences for crack convictions from the previously passed Fair Sentencing Act retroactive, reduce mandatory minimums for people convicted more than three times for drug crimes from life without parole after the third offense to 25 years, reduce mandatory sentences for drug crimes from 15 to 10 years, limit the use of solitary confinement on juvenile prisoners, etc.
16. Call or write to your state legislators and governor to support state-wide criminal justice reform including reducing mandatory minimum sentences, reducing sentences for non-violent drug crimes, passing "safety valve" law to allow judges to depart below a mandatory minimum sentence under certain conditions, passing alternatives to incarceration, etc. [Study](#) after [study](#) shows that racism fuels racial disparities in imprisonment, and most [of the US prison population are at the state and local level](#).
17. Call or write to state legislators, federal legislators, and your governor to decriminalize weed. No, not because black folks use weed more frequently than

white folks. Because [black Americans are arrested for marijuana possession far more frequently than whites](#).

18. Call or write to state legislators to require [racial impact statements](#) be required for all criminal justice bills. Most states already require fiscal and environmental impact statements for certain legislation. Racial impact statements evaluate if a bill may create or exacerbate racial disparities should the bill become law. Check out the status of your state's legislation surrounding these statements [here](#).
19. Find and join a local "[white space](#)" to learn more about and talk out the conscious and unconscious biases us white folks have. If there's not a group in your area, start one.
20. Join or start a [Daughters of Abraham](#) book club in your Church, mosque, or synagogue.
21. Join your local Showing up for Racial Justice (SURJ) group. There is a lot of awesome work going on locally — Get involved in the projects that speak to you.
22. Do [deep canvassing](#) about race and racial justice. Many SURJ groups are organizing them, so many people can do it through your local SURJ group. If they're not already doing it, start it.
23. Research your local prosecutors. Prosecutors have a lot of power to give fair sentences or Draconian ones, influence a judge's decision to set bail or not, etc. In the past election, a slew of fair-minded prosecutors were elected. We need more.
24. Call or write to state legislators, federal legislators, and your governor to end solitary confinement in excess of 15 days. It is [considered torture by the UN](#), and it is [used more frequently on black and Hispanic prisoners](#). For more information on solitary, two good overviews can be found [here](#) and [here](#).
25. Watch 13th. Better yet, get a group of friends together and watch 13th.
26. Watch The House I Live In. Or get a group of friends together and watch it.
27. Read Ta-Nehisi Coates' article, [The Case for Reparations](#). The US has already participated in reparations [four times](#). Thank you to [Clyanna Blyanna](#) for suggesting this addition.
28. Participate in reparations. One way is through this [Facebook group](#). Remember reparations isn't just monetary — share your time, skills, knowledge, connections, etc. Thank you to [Clyanna Blyanna](#) for suggesting this addition.
29. Read The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander. Better yet, get a group of friends together to read it like a book club would — read, then discuss.
30. Read Caught by Marie Gottschalk. Better yet, get a group of friends together to read it like a book club would — read, then discuss.
31. Read Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates. Yep, get a group of friends together to read it like a book club would — read, then discuss.
32. Read A People's History of the United States by Howard Zinn. Thank you to [Steve Senatori](#) for suggesting this addition.
33. Read Orange is the New Black. The information the author shares about the ease with which one can be charged with "conspiracy" to sell drugs, the damage done from long sentences that don't fit the crime due to mandatory minimum sentencing, the ever-present threat of solitary confinement at a Correction Officer's whim, and

- other specific harmful practices in the prison system are well done. Get a group of friends together to read it like a book club would — read, then discuss.
34. Read *The Color of Law*. Get your friends on board reading it, too.
 35. Especially if you or a friend is an educator, read or share bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress*.
 36. Read Nikole Hannah-Jones' [The 1619 Project](#).
 37. Buy books, choose TV shows and movies, and opt for toys for your kids, nieces, nephews, etc that show people from different races, religions, countries and that teach real American history. A few ideas: the books, toys, and flashcards from #4.
 38. [Decolonize your bookshelf](#).
 39. Listen without ego and defensiveness to people of color. Truly listen. Don't scroll past articles written by people of color — Read them.
 40. Don't be silent about that racist joke. Silence is support.
 41. Follow [@OsopePatrisse](#), [@opalayo](#), [alicia garza](#), [@bellhooks](#), [Luvvie Ajayi Jones](#), [Melissa Harris-Perry](#), [@VanJones68](#), [@ava](#), [@thenewjimcrow](#), [@Lavernecox](#), [DeRay Mckesson](#), [The DiDi Delgado](#), [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#), [Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II](#), [@dribram](#), [@killermike](#), Ally Henny on Facebook, and Lace on Race on Facebook. Follow them with the intention of listening and learning only. Pay lesser known activists like [The DiDi Delgado here](#), Ally Henny [here](#), and Lace on Race [here](#) for their teaching, time, and work.
 42. Follow [Blavity](#), [Madame Noir](#), [The Root](#), and [The Griot](#) with a desire to learn and understand better the lives of black Americans.
 43. Find out how slavery, the Civil War, and the Jim Crow era are being taught in your local school. Advocate that history is taught correctly and certain parts are not skipped over or barely mentioned. Advocate that many voices be used in the study of history. Is the school teaching about post-Civil War convict leasing, the parent to our current mass incarceration system? Talking about slavery alone, is your school showing images such as [Gordon's scourged back](#), [a slave ship hold](#), and [an enslaved nurse holding her young master](#)? Are explorers, scientists, politicians, etc who are POC discussed? Are male and female authors who are POC on reading lists? Are Japanese internment camps being discussed? Is history explained correctly in history books? As an example of a severe failure to teach the reality of slavery and its ramifications, check out [image 1](#) and [image 2](#) . There are a lot of great resources out there with a little googling, like [PBS's resources for teaching slavery](#), [this POC Online Classroom blog](#), [Teaching for Change](#), and [The National Association for Multicultural Education](#).
 44. Arrange for cultural exchanges and cultural ambassadors in your local school's classrooms. The [International Classroom program at UPenn](#) and [People to People International](#) are options. The [Dept of Education](#) has a good list. Cultural exchanges via the interwebs are very valuable. Actual human interaction between people from different races, religions, and countries (ie: cultural ambassadors) and students in the physical classroom is ideal.
 45. Seek out a diverse group of friends for your kids.

46. Seek out a diverse group of friends for you. Practice real friendship and intimacy by listening when POC talk about their experiences and their perspectives. They're speaking about their pain.
47. Watch these [videos](#) to hear first hand accounts of what our black brothers and sisters live. Then read everyday people's experiences through the hashtag #realizediwasblack. Then watch the [rules](#) Tik Tok user [@skoodupcam](#)'s mother makes him follow just so he comes home each night. Share with others.
48. If there are black children/teens in your life, contribute to their college savings plans. You can also contribute to an HBCU or to the [UNCF](#). Credit for the idea to [@ABPollardIII](#).
49. Call or write to your national legislators, state legislators, and governor in favor of affirmative action. Encourage friends to do the same.
50. Write to your college/university about implementing all or some of these [diversity strategies](#) that effectively promote racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity on campus. Write to the public universities your tax payer dollars support about implementing these diversity strategies.
51. Recognize that in the same way saying "slavery is a necessary evil" (Thomas Jefferson's words) was acceptable by many in 1820, the same way saying "separate but equal" was acceptable by many in 1940, choosing to not condemn white nationalism, the fact that [black people are 2.7 times as likely to be killed by police than white people](#), the fact that [unarmed black Americans are roughly five times as likely as unarmed white Americans to be shot and killed by a police officer](#), that the fact [the black imprisonment rate for drug offenses is about 5.8 times higher than it is for whites](#), etc are acts of overt racism in 2020.
52. Write to the [US Sentencing Commission](#) (PubAffairs@ussc.gov) and ask them to:
 - reform the career offender guideline to lessen the length of sentences
 - change the guidelines so that more people get probation
 - change the criminal history guidelines so that a person's criminal record counts against them less
 - change guidelines to reduce mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent crimes
 - conduct a study to review the impact of parental incarceration on minor children. With more data, the Commission could modify the Sentencing Guidelines and allow judges to take this factor into account when sentencing individuals for non-violent crimes.
 - conduct a study to review whether the Bureau of Prisons is following the Commission's encouragement to file a motion for compassionate release whenever "extraordinary and compelling reasons" exist.
 - consider amending the guidelines to reduce sentences for first offenders.
53. Read Van Jones' short and to-the-point [article](#) about the racial biases of reporters. More examples are [here](#). Check out [this article](#) discussing how media coverage of the opioid epidemic — which largely affects suburban and rural whites — portrays it as an outside threat and focuses on treatment and recovery, while stories of heroin

- in the 1970s, crack-cocaine in the 1980s, and other drug problems that impact urban people of color today have focused on the drug user's morality. Keep an eye out for such biases, and use social media and direct communication to the media outlet to call them out when they occur.
54. [Donate to groups that are working to put women of color into elected office, to get out the vote, and to restore voting rights to disenfranchised voters.](#)
 55. Know our American history. Watch *Roots*, *12 Years a Slave*, and *Selma*, to name a few.
 56. Check out black movies, TV, and other media that show POC as lead characters and in their full humanity. *Queen Sugar*, *Insecure*, *Dear White People*, *The Carmichael Show*, *Blackish*, *Grownish*, *Atlanta*, *2 Dope Queens*, *Black Panther*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, *Get Out*, *Girls Trip*, *Mudbound*, *How to Get Away with Murder*, *Scandal*, *The Cloverfield Paradox*, *Sorry to Bother You*, *Blindspotting*, *BlackKkKlansman*, *Little*, *If Beale Street Could Talk*, *Queen and Slim*, *A Black Lady Sketch Show*, [PBS' Great Performance of Much Ado about Nothing](#), [youtube videos of Amber Says What](#), and *Pose* are a few. Share them with friends. In addition, if you can't watch the whole video, watch 13:12 to 15:17 of [this discussion](#) about working in Hollywood when you're not white.
 57. Know what indigenous land you're living on by looking at [this map](#) and research the groups that occupied that land before you did. Find out what local activism those groups are doing and give your money and time to those efforts.
 58. When people say that Black Lives Matter is a violent/terrorist group, explain to them that there are [fringe groups that are being misrepresented as part of BLM](#). If conservatives don't want to be lumped in with the KKK, they can't lump violent protesters in with BLM.
 59. When people ask, "Why aren't you talking about 'black-on-black crime'?" and other myths about BLM, let [Francesca Ramsey](#) help you with those talking points.
 60. Stop shopping at Amazon and Whole Foods. They [advertise on -that's to say fund-white supremacist media](#).
 61. Be honest about our history. One genocide, another genocide, then apartheid. It sucks, but it's true. We'll never be free from our history unless we're honest about it. Denial is our pathology, but the truth will set us free.
 62. If you have a close relationship with a young person of color, make sure he/she knows how much you love them. Love and affirm that child.
 63. Write to your city or town government representative to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous People's Day like [these cities](#) did.
 64. Donate to Standing Rock through the [Standing Rock Sioux Tribe](#).
 65. Write to your city or town government representative to divest from banks that are financing the Dakota Access Pipeline, private prisons, and detention centers. [Seattle and Davis, CA already did](#), as well as [Los Angeles](#), and there are [campaigns going on in many cities to divest](#). Start here: <http://howtodivest.org/>
 66. Personally divest your investments in private prisons and detention centers. Start [here](#). Many people are divesting from Wells Fargo for their [substantial role in](#)

- [Standing Rock](#) and from private prison companies Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), GEO Group, CoreCivic, and G4S.
67. Get your city/town, company, place or worship, etc to divest from private prisons and detention centers. Since the start of a national [prison divestment campaign](#), cities like [New York](#) and [Cincinnati](#), [higher ed institutions](#), [churches](#), and [corporations](#) have divested.
 68. Write to your state legislators to end cash bail. It means that a someone who is legally innocent is put in jail because they can't afford bail. It means that a defendant can be released pre-trial because of their wealth, not how much of a flight risk they are. It puts more people in detention (which tax payers pay for) and affects a defendants' ability to maintain employment, access mental and physical healthcare, and be in communication with their family and friends, etc. Housing the approximately 500,000 people in jail in the US awaiting trial who cannot afford bail [costs US taxpayers \\$9 billion a year](#). Thank you to [Elizabeth B.](#) and [Cynthia Astle](#) for suggesting this addition.
 69. Support organized efforts to end of cash bail by donating to [The Bail Project](#). Bail out a black mother through [The National Bail Out](#). Thank you to [Elizabeth B.](#) and [Cynthia Astle](#) for suggesting this addition.
 70. Attend town halls, candidate meet-and-greets, etc for political candidates and ask about ending mass incarceration, reducing mandatory minimum sentences, reducing or ending solitary confinement, decriminalizing weed, ending cash bail, divesting from private prisons, divesting from banks, divesting from banks that finance the Dakota Access Pipeline, etc.
 71. Read [this article](#) about an overt white supremacist's son's journey to relinquish white supremacy and watch [this video](#) about Daryl Davis, a black man who gets KKK members to disavow by befriending them. For those you know who are overtly racist (see #51), think about ways you can create exposure for them to people who don't look like them, share their religion, etc. Jane Elliott says, "People who are racist aren't stupid, they're ignorant. And the answer to ignorance is education." Frederick Douglass notes, "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." It may be best to focus on children, adolescents, and young adults currently being raised by overtly racist parents. Maybe it's tutoring them so they could get on a college track, encouraging them to study abroad, or turning them on to colleges where not everyone looks like them and shares their religion, etc. Maybe it's spending time with them on some regularity and showing them the achievements and beauty of non-white cultures. Be creative.
 72. Talk to the white people you know who aren't clearly upset by white supremacy. Use "I" statements and "I care" messages ("I feel [feeling] when you [behavior]"). They need to know you see a problem. Call them out, and call them in. As a start, ask them to watch the videos in #47. For people you know who've been radicalized by FOX News and other nationalist (not conservative) media, who've been so pummeled with fear and hatred of "the other" that they've become ISIS-like towards others, how can you and other family and friends guide them through conversation

to show them that their actions are now in direct contrast with the values they feign to purport?

73. A wise former teacher once said, "The question isn't: Was the act racist or not? The question is: How much racism was in play?" So maybe racism was 3% of the motivation or 30% or 95%. Interrogate the question "How much racism was in play?" as you think about an incident. Share this idea with the people in your life when they ask, "Was that racist?"
74. As a nod to #72, don't become the monster, as you try to kill the monster. As Gloria Steinem says, "The ends don't justify the means. The means are the ends."
75. Credit Black men and women. Kara Springer, a black woman artist, created the image/public art that begins this piece. It's called [A Small Matter of Engineering, Part II](#). [Christian Campbell](#) tweeted to ensure the art was attributed appropriately and correctly.