

# No Impact Experiment.

## A ONE-WEEK CARBON CLEANSE

Want to save money?  
Lose weight? Have more time?  
Live healthy and be happy?

Perhaps, this manual will show you how.

This guide is not riddled with facts and figures about how you're destroying the environment. Thousands of web sites already do that, and thousands more show you how to reduce your carbon footprint for the sake of the environment.

This is different.

The focus of our program is to help you live a happier life that will result in a happier earth. And so, this manual is about you. If you haven't already registered, [sign up here](#).

Think of this guide as your personal trainer for a week. It's organized by day. You will stop consuming new goods on a Sunday, then on Monday you will stop making trash, and on Tuesday you will switch to non-carbon producing transport, etc. Each day builds on the day before, so by Friday you are not shopping for new goods, not making trash, only traveling by sustainable transportation, eating locally, using less energy, and wasting less water. We recommend reading through this guide and preparing for the experiment one week before you begin. We've offered some general ideas and resources to help guide you through each day, but don't limit yourself to what we've written. If you have great ideas about how to live lower impact, click [here](#) and share them with your fellow No Impact men and women.

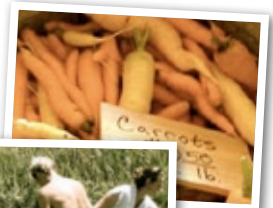
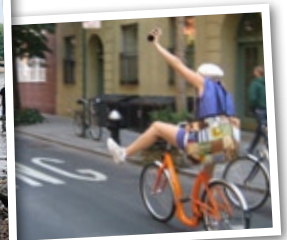
The Experiment is about impacting yourself, your community, and your country. In addition to changing your habits this week, we ask you to volunteer at least once for a local environmental organization and get involved in at least one of our non-partisan partners' national advocacy campaigns.

As you progress from day to day, you'll find tools we've created to connect you with other participants and help you stay motivated. You'll learn more about these inside. You can find answers to all of your questions about the week on our [website](#).

Good luck! (And please don't print this out.)

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# sunday: CONSUMPTION

## YOUR CHALLENGE

Live a fuller and happier life by buying less stuff.

### Welcome to Day 1 of your No Impact Experiment!

This first challenge is about doing more with less. People around the world are discovering that they'd rather spend time making social connections than buying new stuff. To learn why this is such an important part of living a lower impact life, watch one of our favorite videos, [The Story of Stuff](#). The No Impact Experiment is a truncated version of Colin Beavan's experience trying to live in New York City with no environmental impact. Three months into Colin's year-long experiment, he stopped consuming new goods (except food). As his wife Michelle discovered, when you kick your shopping habit, you'll save money, have more time to spend with your family and friends, discover more space in your house, and maybe — just maybe — you'll discover that less really IS more.

## FYI



Ninety-nine percent of the stuff we harvest, mine, process, transport — 99 percent of the stuff we run through this production system is trashed within six months.

Annie Leonard,  
"The Story of Stuff"

### It's a vicious circle.

*I worry a lot about this keeping-up-with-Jones's stuff because I believe that many of us compulsively work our butts off to get more stuff — which means more resources have to be dug out of the planet's guts and more pollutants have to be vomited into the air, earth and water. And what stings is the fact that we often find out that getting more isn't making us happier.*

—No Impact Man blog,  
[August 9, 2007](#)

## steps:

- 1 Type up a list of all the stuff you "need" to buy this week. Delete the items that you can live without for the week. For the rest of the items, figure out if you can purchase them second-hand, borrow them, or make them yourself.
- 2 Put an empty re-usable bag in a private place at home. Throughout the day, fill it up with all of your trash, recyclables, and food waste. If you're out of the house, carry your trash home with you. Make sure that nobody else's trash gets in there but your own. This will help you get ready for Monday's challenge.
- 3 Just for this week, try not to shop for new items. Will you find something better to do with your time and money? Could you use this time to spend with friends instead?
- 4 What is the hardest part of decreased purchasing? [Go to our site](#) and blog about your experience, thoughts, and overall consumption habits. If you're trying something new or unique, tell us about it.
- 5 Please take your brief end-of-day survey. We will e-mail it to you. You will be asked to do this everyday this week. It will help us evaluate your experience.

(Scroll down for ideas and resources to help you through the day.)

# Ideas for change

## Stop Shopping

- Get inspired to give it up. Go online and watch Reverend Billy's next "[Stop Shopping Hour of Power](#)."
- Instead of another few hours spent shopping, take a bike ride, go ice skating, clean out your closet, read a book. Replace shopping with an activity that you enjoy doing more.
- If you've never considered making your own [body](#) and [cleaning](#) products, you'll be surprised at the money you'll save and the fun you'll have.
- Let's face it — things break. Instead of heading straight for the mall, first try to fix it yourself. For tips on how to fix things or to post your own fix-it problem, click [here](#).

### COOL IDEA #1

Be lazy! According to Matt McDermott's [article](#) on Planet Green, "buying nothing, doing less, and being lazy can help the planet!"

## Hand-Me-Loves (aka Hand-Me-Downs)

- Try shopping in your own closet (you never know what you'll find that you forgot about!) Clear out your closet with [Freecycle](#)™, a free local network of people who give away their stuff. Other good ones are [SwapTree](#), [Craigslist](#), and, of course [eBay](#)®.
- Get a group of friends together and have a clothing swap. Trade your tired threads and get a new look without spending a penny. Click [here](#) for five strategies for throwing the perfect clothing swap.
- One person's trash is another person's...Take your pals [dumpster diving](#) for treasures untold. For the truly adventurous, give [freeganism](#) a go.

### COOL IDEA #2

Get crafty with these eight fabulous [green DIY fashion projects](#).

- Find an alternative to brand new in secondhand stores such as [Goodwill](#), [The Salvation Army](#), or [Buffalo Exchange](#).

## For Must-Have Purchases

- To learn how to keep more money in your pocket, support people and places you love, and find products that are good for all of us, download a local buying guide from the [Center for a New American Dream](#).
- Browse the [Green Guide](#) for a cornucopia of ideas to help you make better product choices for your health and the environment.
- Look for green products that are eco-friendly or made from recycled materials and shop from truly green companies. Search the [GreenPages](#) to find screened and approved green businesses.

### COOL IDEA #3

Send a text message to 66937 with GREEN[company or brand name] (ex: GREENnike, GREENdelta, GREENTarget) and you'll receive a message back from Climate Counts with that company's climate score and the company leading that industry sector. Or you can download the free Climate Counts pocket-sized [company scorecard](#).

This list is just the tip of the iceberg. Click [here](#) for more resources, and if you have new ideas, click [here](#) to share them with us.



TUESDAY YOU GREEN YOUR COMMUTE. START PREPARING TONIGHT!

# monday: TRASH

## YOUR CHALLENGE

Find out if wasting less improves your life.

It's Monday of your No Impact Week. Consider all trash bins off-limits.

When Colin began his experiment he stockpiled his family's trash for a week to figure out what disposable items they could stop consuming and throwing away without sacrificing their happiness or comfort. After giving up all disposable products, their level of happiness and satisfaction actually increased. Intrigued?

## FYI

In 2006, the U.S. produced more than 251 million tons of trash — 4.6 pounds per person per day.

EPA Municipal Solid Waste Data for 2006



## steps:

- 1 Empty your special trash bag from yesterday. Separate the items into two piles: stuff that you used for more than ten minutes, and stuff you used for less than ten minutes. How does this make you feel? (Now put everything back in the bag and put it aside for the week.)
- 2 Put together a no-trash travel kit for the week with a reusable drinking receptacle for hot and cold liquids, a handkerchief/old t-shirt, Tupperware®, utensils, and reusable produce bags.
- 3 Stop making trash. Reduce it. Reuse it. Recycle it. Just don't throw it away. Keep a special bag at home or the office to collect trash you make by mistake or necessity throughout the week.
- 4 At the end of the day, take time to reflect on your discoveries and post on our blog. Answer these questions: What did you put in your special trash bag? Why was it hard or easy not to make trash? Where was it impossible not to make trash? [Blog about it here.](#)
- 5 Be proud of your efforts and a great start to the week! Please take your brief end-of-day survey. We will send it to you tonight to the email account that you initially registered with.

### Environmentally-conscious packaging?

*Think ice cream cone. It contains the ice cream. It biodegrades. It provides calories. In other words, it has value all by itself. It is not wasted resources. If we must have packaging, why can't all of it be designed in such a way? In other words, let's make sure the resources we use deliver value instead of just being something we throw away.*

—No Impact Man blog, [March 12, 2009](#)

# Ideas for change

## Food Shopping

- At the grocery store (or farmers' market), use the bulk bins and bring your own old produce bags, pre-weighed containers, or cloth bags.
- Carry everything out in reusable bags from home and don't take a receipt (or use it over again for lists/scrap paper).
- Steer clear of goods that come in a box, wrapper, throw-away bag, plastic container, tin can...you get the idea!

### COOL IDEA #1

Repurpose your Nintendo® as a lunchbox. Host a clothing swap party. Use the Sunday comics to wrap gifts. Google "repurposing" for more fun ideas.



## Cleaning

- Rid your life of paper towels. Cut up and reuse old clothes for napkins, diapers, cleaning rags, dishtowels, and even for blowing your nose.
- Women: Instead of toxic and landfill-clogging tampons and pads, check out a [DivaCup](#) or [The Keeper®](#).
- Trade in your throw-away or refillable plastic razors for a [straight razor](#).
- To avoid packaging waste, try out one of the many alternatives for soap, deodorant, and laundry detergent such as [vinegar](#), baking soda, natural deodorant stones, shaving soap, and soapnuts.

### COOL IDEA #2

Load up this iPhone app to find out where you can [recycle ANYTHING in your area](#).

## Eating

- Travel with reusable cutlery, a handkerchief, and a resealable bag or Mason jar (all handy for eating on the run).
- Say goodbye to delivery and hello to potlucks with friends.
- Cereal lovers – buying in bulk reduces your waste. If you can't buy in bulk, then re-use the wax-lined bags in cereal boxes to wrap sandwiches, or as trash bags.

## Celebrating

- Consider gifts that don't come wrapped in lots of packaging that will end up in the trash. Give experiences, such as massages (who doesn't love a back rub?) and local "adventures" like museums, movies, and dance or rock-climbing lessons.
- [Re-gifting](#) is good for your wallet and the planet.

### COOL IDEA #3

Find fun [trash-free alternatives](#) to wrapping paper.

## Working

- Forget Post-Its®. Use scrap paper, junk mail, and dry-erase boards to take notes.
- If your office doesn't recycle, bring your recyclables home with you or start an [office recycling program](#).
- Stop printing or print double-sided.
- Lobby your office to replace disposable cups with reusable glass mugs.

### COOL IDEA #4

Windows users: download [GreenPrint](#) to save paper, ink, and money.

This list is just the tip of the iceberg. Click [here](#) for more resources, and if you have new ideas, click [here](#) to share them with us.

WEDNESDAY BEGINS YOUR WEEK OF ECO-FRIENDLY EATING. PRIME YOUR FRIDGE TODAY.

# tuesday: TRANSPORTATION

## YOUR CHALLENGE

### Burn calories, not fossil fuels.

#### Day 3. You're one-quarter of the way through.

Think fewer emissions and more fun, free time, and money. Let's hop to it and start brainstorming how you can change your mode of transportation to have the least impact possible. And remember — you're still attempting to buy nothing new and make no trash.

Two months into his No Impact year, Colin and his family began phasing out all forms of mechanized travel — no planes, subways, taxis, cars, not even elevators. They biked, walked, and scooted, and not only did better by the Earth, but discovered that "active transportation" is less stressful (no traffic jams!), cheaper, burns tons of calories, and is plain old FUN. Using active transportation lowers your stress — plus, you get to spend more time with your family. Now, who wants to honk at that?

## FYI

American car owners spend an average of 1,000 hours annually behind the wheel. What would you do with all that extra time?



### I pedaled into the BusinessWeek mothership this morning on my three-wheeled rickshaw...

*This is lifestyle redesign par excellence: taking what was once a wasted dead zone — a study in sedentary — and turning it into a meditative mini workout. Free transportation plus free calorie burn plus faster commute equals a net net net positive gain.*

—BusinessWeek "The Case for Optimism" blog, [June 3, 2009](#)



## steps:

- 1 Take stock of your habits: make a list of everywhere you're going today and how you usually get there. What alternative modes of transportation could you use instead? Map out your new routes. Log onto your local transit authority's website for an online trip planner. Pick up a bus schedule and your gym shoes, and plan ahead.
- 2 Throughout the day, keep a list of everything you eat, where you eat and where you purchase your food. *This will help you get ready for Wednesday's challenge.*
- 3 GO! Bike. Walk. Scoot. Glide. Hop on the bus. Carpool.
- 4 Take a moment to reflect on your day. Was it a nice change of pace or a difficult one? What benefits did you discover along your route? What could you improve in your experience? Share your experiences with us [here](#).
- 5 Please take your brief end-of-day survey. We will send it to you tonight to the email account that you initially registered with.

# Ideas for change

## With Your Own Steam

- An estimated 30% of workday traffic is from parents driving their kids to school. Lace up your sneaks and enjoy the time with your child on a walk to school. Click [here](#) to learn about starting a Safe Routes to School program.

### COOL IDEA #1

Bike commuting with kids is a win-win. [Check out how](#) Fritz transformed his one bike to transport his two kids.

- Roll. Grab your helmet, those nifty reflectors, and get rolling — bike, rollerblade, skateboard, scooter. Your lungs, your legs, and your lover will thank you.



- Fifty percent of trips are less than two miles away. Bike to the library and check out a copy of [How to Live Well Without Owning a Car](#).

## By Mass Transit

- Enjoy time by yourself by reading a good book, knitting, or even a little snooze as you let the conductor, bus driver, or captain [do the driving for you!](#)
- Be in the know — check [this](#) out to get updated information about how public transportation saves you money and protects the environment, as well as what the government is doing to pump up mass-transit infrastructure.



## Sharing is Caring

- Don't know anyone you can ride with? Google "ride-sharing" and the name of your town to find a local organization serving as matchmaker.
- Join a [car-sharing program](#). If you don't need a car for everyday commuting, car sharing is for you. You'll reduce the number of cold starts (when a car emits the most emissions), cut down on the number of cars in your town, and make your community safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. And you could save as much as \$4,000 annually by not paying for car maintenance, cleaning, and parking. Sweet!

### COOL IDEA #2

iPhoners check out [Car-ticipate](#), the first ride-sharing application on a location-aware mobile platform. And it's free!

## If You Must Drive

- Double-up on errands, take the shortcuts — you won't [miss all those red lights](#).
- Make sure to use your gasoline to the highest power: increase your mileage by pumping up your tires, moderating your acceleration, and turning off the A/C.
- Stop idling. Turn your engine off when the car is not moving. In New York you'll get a ticket if you don't!
- Learn more about joining the [hypermilers](#) (drivers who maximize their gas mileage by adjusting their driving behavior).

### COOL IDEA #3

Keep your pants from being pulled into your bike chain — a simple hair clip, rubber band, or your socks will do the trick. And don't forget to signal!

This list is just the tip of the iceberg. Click [here](#) for more resources, and if you have new ideas, click [here](#) to share them with us.

TOMORROW YOU START EATING LOCALLY. MAKE SURE YOU STOCK UP TODAY!

# take action

## steps:

- 1 To get your feet wet, choose just one issue — climate change, water or transportation. See below for your match.
- 2 At some point this week, choose from one of two actions that you can take from one of our partners below.
- 3 Do something.
- 4 Important: tell us how you felt about using your voice to make change. [Upload a blog post here.](#)

## Water

- Click to easily tell your elected officials that you are supporting the [Take Back the Tap](#) campaign and ask them to kick the bottled water habit with you.
- Stop the privatization of drinking water and support a clean-water trust fund. A trust fund establishes a dedicated source of public funding so communities across America can keep their water clean, safe, and affordable. Urge your congressperson to support The Water Protection and Reinvestment Trust Fund by [signing this online petition](#).



*[To] suggest that collective and individual action are mutually exclusive, or even different, is wrongheaded and dangerous. Collective action is nothing more than the aggregation of individual actions. And individual action does not preclude involvement in collective action. In fact, it absolutely demands it. The two work together.*

—No Impact Man, pg. 220

## YOUR CHALLENGE

The No Impact Experiment is about helping yourself, helping your community and helping your country.

At some point this week, we'd like you to participate in one of our national partners' non-partisan campaigns. Then tell us how it made you feel. If you are not inclined to do this in the beginning of the week, see if your perspective changes toward the weekend, after you've completed the challenges and have a better understanding of what it takes to live a lower-impact lifestyle. We think you'll learn that using your voice might make you happier.

## Climate Change

- [Click here](#) to automatically phone and ask your Senator to support legislation that stops climate change.
- Become a [1Sky Climate Precinct Captain](#) and help organize your friends and neighbors in the fight against climate change.



## Transportation

- Help America create walkable and bikeable neighborhoods that are more pleasant to live in. [Petition](#) congress to support the [Transportation Bill](#).
- Find out [how your congressperson voted](#) on the Coburn Amendment, intended to eliminate funding for trail projects, sidewalks, bicyclist education, bike racks on buses, and roadway improvements for bicyclists. Thank them for voting against it and question them if they voted for it.



# wednesday: FOOD

## YOUR CHALLENGE

Healthy eating can also lessen your foodprint.

### It's Wednesday! Are you hungry?

You probably will be if you haven't planned for this day in advance. We won't kid you, today is a toughie. You've tackled trash and transportation, no small feats. Now it's time to focus your efforts on food. The good news is that eaters the world over are reinventing themselves as locavores, vegetarians, organic foodies and gardeners — and feeling better for it. During their No Impact Year, the Beavan family examined and altered what they ate and found new, carbon-friendly ways to nourish themselves. They ate locally and seasonally. Packaged and processed food disappeared from their grocery list. The Beavans soon discovered that these changes not only lessened their environmental impact, but also enabled them to lose weight and improve their health. Best of all, they got to spend more time with friends and family at vibrant farmers' markets and while making and sharing meals. What will you discover?

## FYI

Distance your average item of food travels to your plate: 1,500 miles

*John Hendrickson, "Energy use in the U.S. Food System: A Summary of existing research and analysis"*



**A big part of the No Impact project was to eat only local, seasonal, unpackaged food.**

*That meant, basically, lots of fresh vegetables. Michelle and I both lost a lot of weight. None of the farmers I talk to at the farmers' market try to jam their food with salt, fat or sugar to get my little Isabella addicted.*

—No Impact Man blog, [May 7, 2009](#)

## steps:

- 1 Take your food list from yesterday and calculate your carbon "[foodprint](#)." Did you eat anything grown within 250 miles? Click [here](#) to find out what's in season locally. Chose five items from yesterday that were not produced locally and try swapping them out for items that are produced locally.
- 2 For this week define your own limits. Will you only buy food grown within 100 miles of your home, or food only grown in the U.S.? Will you give up beef or try veganism? Since you aren't consuming packaged products (which create trash), your choices may be easier than you think.
- 3 Dig in! Bicycle to a farmers' market. Learn some new recipes. Invite friends over for a potluck.
- 4 Keep track of your food choices. Ask yourself throughout the day: what are the most challenging aspects of adjusting your food habits? [Blog about your choices](#), experiments, menus, or other food adventures.
- 5 Please take your brief end-of-day survey. We will send it to you tonight to the email account that you initially registered with.

# Ideas for change

## Shopping

- Find your nearest local, sustainable, and organic bakery, butcher, and farmers' market in the [Eat Well Guide](#).
- If you can't give up coffee this week, switch to fair trade. Need sugar? Try locally harvested honey. Need olive oil? Try local butter. Wine? [Search here](#) for your nearest vineyard.
- Download Food and Water Watch's [Smart Seafood Guide](#) for buying ocean-friendly fish.
- There's no denying it — eating fewer animal products can be the single greenest move you can make. Try going vegetarian for your No Impact week, or having meat in just one of your meals. You can even just try it for a day! You'll find recipes and resources for delicious veggie-based meals perfect for any day of the week at [Meatless Monday](#).

### COOL IDEA #1

Do you know what's in your shopping cart? Find out what countries your produce comes from with [The Global Grocer](#).

- Can't give up meat? Take this [meat production glossary](#) with you to the store.

### COOL IDEA #2

Thanksgiving is coming up. Try the [100-mile Thanksgiving challenge](#).

## Cooking

- Practice "passive cooking" by using leftover boiling water to soften and even lightly cook (or steam) things. Instead of sautéing or braising greens, massage them with some oil and vinegar until soft and wilted.



- Find ways to use your oven for shorter periods. Put food in during the preheating stage and turn the oven off early to let the heated air finish cooking your food!
- Save money and eat healthier by preserving food. You can expand your local food options through the seasons by [canning](#) or freezing local produce year round. This is a great group activity.

### COOL IDEA #3

Make Colin's food-scrap vinegar! Combine in-season fruit scraps and chop up coarsely. Dissolve a quarter cup of honey in one quart water. Throw the scraps in and cover with a cloth. Let ferment for two or three weeks, stirring occasionally. For more recipes like this, read *Wild Fermentation* by Sandor Ellix Katz.

## Eating Out

- Pack school or office sandwiches and snacks in reusable or washable cloth bags. Use glass or stainless steel lunchboxes or [To-Go Ware](#).
- According to [WasteFreeLunches](#), a child who brings her own lunch to school will save about \$250 a year.
- Ask for tap water instead of bottled.
- Bring your own [doggy bag](#) from home when you're eating out.
- Whether you're driving cross-country or across town, find local, sustainable and organic restaurants [here](#).
- Put down the McNuggets and check out the anti-fast food movement, [Slow Food](#). Their 83,000 members have discovered a slower, cleaner, healthier way of eating. Sounds delicious!

### COOL IDEA #4

Eat the freshest food and take the worry out of buying locally. [Sign up for a local CSA](#).

This list is just the tip of the iceberg. Click [here](#) for more resources, and if you have new ideas, click [here](#) to share them with us.

# thursday: ENERGY

## YOUR CHALLENGE

Replace kilowatts with ingenuity—explore no-energy alternatives to accomplish your daily tasks.

Today we are going to focus on reducing energy use.

You've reached the fifth day of your No Impact Experiment, and you have made incredible changes: you are making less trash, getting around on your own steam, eating better, and cutting back on your consumption. If life without electricity sounds daunting, well, it can be. The laundry machine was one of the things Colin and Michelle missed the most during their No Impact year. But they also found their apartment was cluttered with electricity-sucking devices they didn't miss at all. Without TV, they had to rely on each other for entertainment. The family forged deeper relationships and had more meaningful conversations. They slept better following the natural rise and fall of the sun, and without refrigeration, they perfected a healthful culinary technique of preserving vegetables. Over the next four days, how far can you go to reduce your energy consumption?

## FYI

**Switching** to green energy is one of the easiest ways to make a big difference. In fact you can cut your carbon dioxide emissions by an average of 35 percent.



**Since we have no electricity as part of the No Impact experiment, we also have no TV.**

*Last week, someone asked me how we entertain Isabella without one. Coincidentally, that day, my friend Mayer, whose community garden plot I help with, called to say that fireflies were in season at the garden and that I should take Isabella there at dusk. So we went... when about six fireflies circled around us, Isabella suddenly looked at me and said, 'I'm so happy, Daddy.' She never said that while we were watching television.*

—No Impact Man Blog, [July 19, 2007](#)

## steps:

- 1 Assess current energy consumption habits. Walk from room to room in your home. List everything in each room that uses energy to operate (i.e., electricity, oil, gas, batteries). Put a star next to any item that you would ordinarily use in the remaining four days of your No Impact Experiment.
- 2 Next to each starred item, indicate if you are going to ELIMINATE or MITIGATE your usage of that item. Not sure how to live without your fill in the blank? Brainstorm and spark a conversation with others [online](#).
- 3 Unplug! Turn it off. Power down. Go off the grid. For the truly adventurous, turn off your electricity completely and see what happens.
- 4 Ask yourself throughout the day: What is the hardest part about reducing the amount of energy you use? [Blog or Vlog about your experience](#) conserving energy here.
- 5 Please take your brief end-of-day survey. We will send it to you tonight to the email account that you initially registered with.

# Ideas for change

## Temperature and Lighting

- Is it getting hot in here? Tie a damp bandanna around your neck or take a 30-second shower (catch the water in a bucket and use it to water your window-sill herbs — or save it to wet your bandanna later!)
- Turn off your A/C and leave your house to cool off. Go outside and enjoy an evening in a park or public swimming pool. Visit a public space (think: library, museum) that is air-conditioned and interact with your neighbors while cooling your body.
- If it's already cool in your corner of the world, cut back on heating by turning your thermostat as low as it can go. If a sweater, wool socks, and earmuffs keep you warm outside, they can do the same inside.
- Natural daylight is the best light, so time your day to make the most of it: wake up with the sun and go to sleep when it sets. Not only will this do away with the need for artificial illumination, it will also leave you well-rested.
- If you must be awake when it is dark, a beeswax candle is a good choice, especially if you can find one manufactured locally.
- Find out if you can [buy green power](#) in your state .

## Cooking and Cleaning

- Take advantage of the free solar and wind energy right outside your door — dry your clothing on a clothesline or drying rack. Don't have a place to hang your laundry outside? A drying rack also works well in the bathtub. Not only will your clothes smell great, they will last longer, delaying your need to buy replacements and thus reducing your consumption!

### COOL IDEA #1

New twists on some old faves. Check out Trevor's suggestion for [cooking pasta without pre-heating](#) or making your own [sun tea with a homemade solar water heater](#).

### COOL IDEA #2

The hot water you need to wash dishes can be generated by filling some old jars with water and sitting them against a dark background in the sun all day. You can make that water even hotter (and stay hotter longer) by putting those glass jars in a [solar oven](#), which can be built with things you probably have lying around the house.

- Instead of using your washing machine, wash your clothes grape-stomping style [like Colin did](#) during his No Impact year.
- Minimize your need for the oven and stovetop (and maximize the nutrient value of your food!) by planning meals that do not require cooking. Google "[raw food](#)" and be amazed by the tongue-tantalizing results!
- Pretend you're on a camping trip and store your food for the rest of the week in a cooler or try to make your own [Nigerian Zeer Pot](#). You can also keep greens submerged in water, like you keep flowers in a vase, and they'll last longer.

## Power Down

- Plug your computer and all of its accessories (printers, scanners, etc.) into a power strip. Shut the power strip off when you are done with the computer to avoid using "ghost power" — electricity that is used even when appliances and electronic equipment are not active.
- Unplug your TV and cover it with a blanket. Better yet, [Freecycle](#) it away!
- For one day, try to use your laptop only for work. Call friends to catch up or spend some time with a good book.

### COOL IDEA #3

Burn calories, not electricity. Skip the elevator and take the [stairs](#).



This list is just the tip of the iceberg. Click [here](#) for more resources, and if you have new ideas, click [here](#) to share them with us.

THIS WEEKEND YOU'LL GIVE BACK TO OUR COMMUNITY. FIND A VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY TODAY!

# friday: WATER

## YOUR CHALLENGE

Soak up the personal benefits of using less water!

You're now six days into the No Impact Experiment.

Having looked at your trash, transportation, food, consumption, and energy habits, there's one major daily lifestyle change left to tackle — water. A whopping 71% of Americans are trying to reduce their footprint. Of [those 71%](#), 60% are reducing their water consumption, and saving a lot of money on their water and electric bill. In this economy, every flush counts! Turn off the tap. Believe us, you'll feel better about yourself.

## FYI

The average American uses 1,189 gallons of water per day. By changing the way you brush your teeth, water your lawn or wash your dishes, in addition to using efficient plumbing fixtures and appliances, you can reduce your water footprint by 25%



## steps:

- 1 Assess your current water habits from the moment you hit the snooze button until bedtime. Calculate your approximate [water footprint](#) and figure out the [water footprint of your food here](#).
- 2 Create a list of the water you will likely consume today (not exact measurements, just general usage). Think about where you use water: at home, at work, church or school, on the go, and eating out. This will help you think about how you use water.
- 3 **BEGIN!** Turn off the faucet. Run the water gently when needed. Soak the dishes. Sponge-bathe.
- 4 Ask yourself throughout the day: What is the hardest part about reducing the amount of water you use? Are you doing something particularly novel or fun to reduce your water consumption? [Go to our site and blog](#) about it, share a short video of a unique technique you've invented or show us some photos of the tools you used to cut back.
- 5 Please take your brief end-of-day survey. We will send it to you tonight to the email account that you initially registered with.

*We brush our teeth [with] baking soda using a cup of water (rather than letting the faucet run). We may or may not take a bath — one at a time in the same water — depending on whether it is bath day [as] we're in the water conservation stage.*

—No Impact Man blog, [September 10, 2007](#)



# Ideas for change

## In The Kitchen

- If you don't own a dishwasher or just have a small load to wash, fill one side of the sink with hot, soapy water. Stack your dishes and let them soak so that you use less water and less effort. Then load into an in-sink rack, and rinse by pouring hot water over the top or using your sink's spray nozzle. If you're using a dishwasher, wait until you have a full load to run it, and use the energy-saving setting, of course.
- Reuse all cooking water for making soups, stocks, and other dishes, as well as rinsing produce, watering houseplants, and washing pets.
- Reuse the same glass throughout the day instead of dirtying up several.

### COOL IDEA #1

Gather spring water! Spring water is delicious, chemical- and hormone-free, and fun to collect! [Find a spring](#) in your area.

## In the Bathroom

- Take shorter showers. Set a timer.
- Take colder showers! It's good for your skin, circulation, and better than coffee in the morning!
- Sponge-bathe: Use a washcloth. You'll exfoliate at the same time. This is great as a refresher at the end of a sticky summer day too.
- If you don't have a low-flow toilet, set a plastic bottle filled with water in your toilet tank to reduce the amount of water used per flush.
- Turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth or shaving.
- Only flush if you must. "If it's yellow, let it mellow!" and then flush with water saved in a bucket during your shower.

### COOL IDEA #2

Calculate your water footprint.  
 1 lb plastic = 24 gallons of water  
 1 lb cotton > 100 gallons of water  
 Do you know how much water you really use?  
 Calculate your water footprint using [H2O Conserve's water footprint calculator](#).

## Wash It

- Wash clothes with full loads or set the water level to the appropriate amount of clothing.
- In a twin-tub washing machine, reuse rinse water for several loads.
- If your washing machine drains into a sink, use the drained water for plant-watering and toilet-flushing.

### COOL IDEA #3

During Colin's No Impact year, his family washed their clothes by filling up a bathtub with water, using a method very similar to grape-stomping in Italy. Check out his [blog post](#) for more about this experiment!



## Going Out

- In restaurants, only order water if you're going to drink it.
- On that note, drink water instead of other beverages! It's the least processed drink you can consume, and actually uses less water (and energy) to produce and transport than any other drink.
- Ask for tap rather than bottled water. Did you know that you're spending 1,000 times more for bottled? That's crazy.
- Carry around a reusable drink container. Fill, drink and repeat. Help others break their bottled water habits by downloading and sharing [Food and Water Watch's Smart Water Guide](#).

### COOL IDEA #4

[Pledge](#) to stop buying bottled water. Make a promise to yourself, the world, and future generations.

This list is just the tip of the iceberg. Click [here](#) for more resources, and if you have new ideas, click [here](#) to share them with us.

# saturday: GIVING BACK

## YOUR CHALLENGE

Pay it forward. Feel the benefits of service.

Welcome to day seven and the weekend, baby!

By now, you've probably slaughtered some of your carbon footprint — trading in some gas guzzling for sweat equity, phasing out prepackaged processed food for delicious local dishes, shopping less and saving more, turning down the lights, and quenching your thirst with tap water while lightening your planetary load. Pat yourself on the back for coming this far and do a little dance: it's time to share some of your exuberance with others!

By giving back, you slow down and appreciate what you have. The conversation and community that you will experience will give you that all-important, essential nutrient: happiness. Challenge yourself today to be charitable, to act in good faith, to become one with others. Ultimately, you will not only be giving back — you'll be getting back. **Today and tomorrow are interchangeable. If today is your regular day of rest, switch today's challenge "Giving Back" with tomorrow's "Eco-Sabbath."**

## FYI

More than 30 peer-reviewed, longitudinal studies have found a strong connection between volunteering and a decreased risk of heart disease, lower rates of depression, and greater longevity.



*But the final stage was to me the most important. In the giving back stage, I volunteered with environmental organizations. The final stage was not about conservation. It was about innovation. And it was in this stage that I met new people and made the most friends. It was here that the people were most excited. It was not about doing less harm. It was about doing more good. It was less about limits and more about possibility.*

—No Impact Man blog, [July 22, 2008](#)

## steps:

- 1 Make a list of all the ways you contribute to your community now. Do you watch your neighbor's kids for free? When's the last time you held open a door for a stranger? Do you write checks to charity or volunteer on occasion? How can you step up what you're already doing and do more? Where are you on this pyramid?



(Scroll down for ideas and resources to help you through the day.)

## steps continued:

- 2 Make a list with three columns: 1) all the charities you'd love to help out, 2) why you feel you can't, and 3) how you can address and remove those barriers. Do your barriers — as legitimate as they may seem to you — outweigh the importance of participating? Remember: you needn't become an "activist" or even a leader to be active in your community! Simply participating in an ongoing project is giving back and living your values.
- 3 Practice what you preach. Give. Do. Help. Change. In other words, sign up today to volunteer for a local environmental cause.
- 4 How do you feel? As you give back throughout the day, ask yourself what benefits arise from volunteering. Did you meet your neighbors? Find common ground with strangers? Evaluate the hardest obstacles you've faced today and share possible solutions with the No Impact Experiment community online. [Talk it out.](#)
- 5 Please take your brief end-of-day survey. We will send it to you tonight to the email account that you initially registered with.

## Ideas for change

### Pay it Forward

- Tithe your income. Dedicate a fixed percentage of your gross income toward charity. When you align your values with your actions — put your money where your mouth is — your life is enhanced.
- Practice random acts of kindness. Pick up litter around your school or church. Give up your seat for a person carrying groceries. Shovel someone's sidewalk. Install a low-flow shower head for an elderly friend. Little altruistic things add up and feel oh-so-good!
- Celebrate Earth Day every day. Show kids how to garden organically. Answer phones for a local eco-charity. [Plant a tree.](#) Live in New York? Find a volun-

#### COOL IDEA #1

Got a kid in school?  
Help them form a [Pay It Forward Club.](#)

teer opportunity through [IOBY](#). Outside of New York, go to [VolunteerMatch](#) or [Idealist](#) to find a way to improve your community. Discover new friends with shared interests and feel good about doing good while you're at it.

- Look on Twitter for a community group in your area that tweets about one-day volunteer projects. Some good examples are: San Diego, [volunteersd](#), Toronto, [volunteerTO](#), and Boston, [GlobeDoGood](#).
- If your employer doesn't have an organized volunteer program, try to [start one](#).

This list is just the tip of the iceberg. Click [here](#) for more resources, and if you have new ideas, click [here](#) to share them with us.



# sunday: ECO-SABBATH

## YOUR CHALLENGE

Take a break from everything. Ohm Shanti.

This week you have phased out trash, unsustainable transportation, and consumption.

You've behaved more eco-consciously about your energy usage, water usage, and food habits. You have contributed your time to a good cause. You have truly embarked on a special journey!

Today, Sunday, is about awareness and taking some time back for yourself. This is a chance to lay off the lights, televisions, computers, appliances, cell phones, flashing gadgets, and other stuff that seems to make the world go round. It's a special time to hang out (or in) by yourself or with friends and family. It is a time to reflect on the well-being of yourself and the planet. This first Eco-Sabbath you may wish to reflect on your No Impact week. Consider what worked well for you, what was particularly difficult, and what you'd like to permanently adopt. Consider how you can go even further. Think about how your week affected others in your life and what adjustments, if any, are in order. This is a time to discover and appreciate the bare necessities.

## FYI

Item #3 on No Impact Man's Top Ten Eco-Lifestyle Changes is "Observe an Eco-Sabbath."

**Ecology** – The interrelationship between organisms and their environment

**Sabbath** – A time of rest

**Eco-Sabbath** – Together, you and the environment take a break

### For one day or afternoon

*or even one hour a week, don't buy anything, don't use any machines, don't switch on anything electric, don't cook, don't answer your phone, and, in general, don't use any resources. In other words, for this regular period, give yourself and the planet a break. Keep your regular Eco-Sabbath for a month. You'll find that the enforced downtime represents an improvement to your life.*

—No Impact Man blog, [May 29, 2009](#)

## steps:

- 1 How do you usually spend your day off? Consider how different — if at all — this day will be.
- 2 Plan your day: how do you need to prepare for a day in which you don't use any of your appliances, electronics, motorized transport, or money? You may wish to make plans in advance to share your Eco-Sabbath with others. Click [here](#) for ideas of how you can celebrate your Eco-Sabbath.
- 3 Stop everything.
- 4 At the end of the day don't track your impact! Because this is your day to relax, reflect, and unplug, don't worry about sharing your experience with the rest of us. Keep this one for yourself.
- 5 Remember the bag of trash you collected last Sunday? At the end of the day, take that bag out and empty the contents. Now take the other bag of trash "mistakes" that you've been collecting throughout the week and empty the contents. By being conscientious this week about reducing your trash, did you create more or less trash since Monday than you did last Sunday?