

# Go Green CHALLENGE

## Alternative Transportation

Not all of us live in a large city that has great subway systems, bus networks, and bike paths. It can be hard to find ways to get to and fro without using a car, but transporting yourself not only reduces the amount of carbon released into our atmosphere, it can also improve your health! Take a look at a few ways you might be able to minimize your carbon footprint and move more.

### Make it a group activity

Whether you have a large family or hang out with a group of friends, build travel time into your activities. Pick a nearby attraction, restaurant, or park and instead of driving there, walk there together. You'll get more time to catch up and you'll be making a healthy choice. Even if you're not heading to a specific destination, taking a walk or bike ride with a friend can foster a great conversation and make you appreciate your surroundings.

### Do your research

Some alternative forms of transportation, such as the bus and rail systems, are well-advertised. But did you know that many cities have car and bike shares where you can rent a bicycle or car for a small period of time? For people with a long commute, there may be a local nonprofit or government organization that will subsidize the rate of renting a van for carpooling purposes. This not only gives you a chance to get to know your co-workers, but also reduces your emissions. Check out some ways you can save money and meet people going the same way as you through the ridesharing services highlighted in Stay Connected!

#### LEARN MORE!

Check out the new ridesharing programs offered in cities nation-wide:

- [Uber.com](https://www.uber.com)
- [Lyft.com](https://www.lyft.com)
- [2imride.com](https://www.2imride.com)

### It can benefit your health

If you switched out one round trip in a car for a walk or a bike ride, the calorie burning would build up. A 150-pound person would burn about 90 calories walking one mile or 136 calories biking for 30 minutes, even at a leisurely pace.

The next time you're headed to a meeting a few minutes away or getting together with friends at the restaurant down the street, consider transporting yourself instead of driving there. It's effort well spent.



# Go Green CHALLENGE

## Eating Local

When deciding what to make for dinner, what do you consider? Do you think about what's in season, what's in your backyard, or what sounds good from the grocery store? This week, challenge yourself to eat locally-grown foods. Whether you are buying from a farmer's market or picking the vegetables from your backyard, eating local has many health and wellness benefits.

### Local food has more nutrients

Local food has a shorter time between harvest and your table, which means the food retains more of its nutritional value. When you buy food that has been imported from other states or countries, it often spends more time in distribution centers. That means that it is picked well before it is fully-ripened, giving nutrients less time to develop.

### Local foods promote a safer food supply

The more steps between you and your food sources, the more chances there are for contamination. Food grown in distant locations has the potential for safety issues at harvesting, washing, shipping, and distribution.

### Growing your own food burns calories

Tilling soil, picking weeds, and harvesting your crops can be tough work. Gardening burns more calories than grabbing your food off the grocery store shelf and it gets you out into the fresh air and sunshine. On average, a 150-pound person burns 270 calories in one hour of gardening. Plus, buying a packet of tomato seeds costs far less than buying tomatoes from the grocery store.

Now that you're sold on the idea of eating local, how do you make it happen? Follow these simple steps to add more locally-grown food into your diet:

1. Find a local farmer's market by searching on the USDA website and plan to do your produce-shopping there  
[Search.AMS.USDA.gov/farmersmarkets](http://Search.AMS.USDA.gov/farmersmarkets)
2. Plant a garden! Visit [FarmFresh.org/learn/harvestcalendar.php](http://FarmFresh.org/learn/harvestcalendar.php) to see what crops grow well in your area.
3. Eat at restaurants that support local growers. Search [EatWellGuide.org](http://EatWellGuide.org) for restaurants in your area.

### LEARN MORE!

Interested in eating more locally-grown food? Check out [NRDC.org/health/food](http://NRDC.org/health/food) to find out what is in season in your area, how eating locally-sourced foods can impact our environment, and read some tips about reducing your waste.



# Go Green CHALLENGE

## Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Do you know the three R's of waste management? Reduce. Reuse. Recycle. Many people can recite them, but it helps to understand a bit more about each great way you can make a difference.

### Reduce

Lessen your consumption of goods or "stuff" by buying only what you need. You can save not only waste, but money too. Avoid purchasing single-serve containers like water bottles—instead, invest in a reusable bottle for all of your hydration needs and reuse it daily. Buy in bulk to eliminate unnecessary containers—items such as a larger tube of toothpaste or dishwasher detergent. Turn down grocery store bags—if you only buy a few items, carry them by hand or bring your own reusable cloth bag(s).

### Reuse

Clean out your closet, garage, or basement and donate gently used items to a local charity. Donating allows your goods to be reused and helps those in your community who are in need. There may be tax benefits available for your contribution. You could also organize a yard sale and ask your neighbors to join in.

Reuse items such as grocery bags, cups, plates, and other utensils. Purchasing a travel coffee mug for everyday use is an eco-friendly alternative to the daily Starbucks cup. You can use one cup all year long!

### Recycle

Don't automatically throw items in the trash—make a conscious effort to recycle every day. That includes things such as cans, bottles, glass, paper (newspaper/magazines), cardboard, plastics, and yard waste—all materials that can be used to create new products.

Don't forget about outdated electronics. Cellular devices, laptops, or old technology (including ink and toner) can be recycled responsibly. Many manufacturers and retailers offer options to properly dispose of them.

### The other R words

Another R-word that is commonly forgotten is repair. Why not fix an item when it breaks rather than quickly replacing it? There is value in keeping goods instead of discarding them. Don't forget to rethink or reinvent, too. There are many creative ways to repurpose your treasures instead of throwing them away.

### HELPFUL TIPS

Before you upgrade, be sure to remove any batteries, as they should be recycled separately at stores such as Home Depot and Radio Shack. The alkaline and other chemicals in car, watch, and household batteries should never be thrown in the trash, as the materials can leak acid, which contaminates soil and water. Consider buying rechargeable batteries rather than single-use.



# Go Green CHALLENGE

## Being Green at Work

A greener workplace can result in a lighter ecological footprint, and more importantly, it can create a healthier and more productive working environment! Whether you're the CEO or today is your first day, you can make a big impact on the bottom line. Here are some tips to get your journey to green started:

### 1. Power off

Enable energy savings on all equipment, especially your computer. It is estimated that people waste over \$1 billion in electricity every year just in computer use! Unplug anything that still uses energy even when it's turned off (cell phone chargers and laptops are two big ones).

### 2. Make the healthy choice

Choose foods that are local, organic, and sustainable for meetings, lunches, and catered events. Check out the flyer from week two to remember why eating locally-grown foods is better for your health. Bring your lunch in a reusable bag and you can save an estimated \$3,000 a year (and many calories, too) versus going out to eat. Take the stairs instead of the elevator or have a "walking meeting" to sneak activity into your busy day. This is proven to enhance energy and creativity. With more energy, you can be more productive and make up for any time you may have lost.

### 3. Improve airflow

Add plants to your workspace—they filter the air and reduce stress. Get rid of toxic cleaners and personal products in your office, kitchen, and bathroom. Finding natural cleaners is easier than ever at many local stores, such as Target, Walmart, and Kmart. Create a smoke-free environment and support the health of all employees. Open the windows for fresh air or take your break outdoors.

### 4. Stretch your resources

Set "double-sided" as the default setting on your printer and reuse documents as note paper when they are no longer needed. Open the blinds and use natural lighting when possible. Encourage your friends at work to go paperless—instead of printing out documents, email them to each other and conserve both electricity and paper. Use your legs and walk over to talk to colleagues instead of using email or phone to communicate simple messages. You'll get to know your colleagues a lot better too.

### 5. Go slow on the H2O

Use a water tank instead of bottled waters to reduce waste of plastic containers. Even better, install a water purifier or buy a reusable purifier for the fridge, such as a Britta water filter. Don't pour water down the drain—use it to water plants.

