

# Ten Ways You Can Fight Climate Change

From Temple Beth Emeth's local chapter of  
*Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action*

## 1. Eliminate Food Waste

Food waste in the US occurs mostly in stores and at home—either because it spoils on the store shelf or before we can eat it. Americans throw away up to 40 percent of the food they buy. We can combat food waste by shopping for what you need, eating leftovers, composting scraps, and donating excess to food banks. Project Drawdown estimates that curbing food waste could avoid a whopping 70.5 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub>—that's a bigger impact than restoring 435 million acres of tropical forest.

## 2. Eat Plant-Based

Transitioning to a vegetarian diet can cut your carbon footprint in half, and going vegan, even lower. Even shifting from high to low meat consumption can shrink your footprint by a third, according to a University of Oxford study. If half of the world's population reduced meat consumption and avoided the associated deforestation caused by agriculture, we could reduce carbon emissions by 66 gigatons.

## 3. Use Energy Wisely

Consider making some or all of these small changes. Together, they can really add up.

- Swap your furnace for a heat pump, which works by extracting heat from one location and transferring it to another
- Install a programmable thermostat
- Swap your gas stove for an electric stove, which will also lower indoor air pollution
- Unplug computers, TVs and other electronics when you're not using them
- Wash clothes in cold water. Hang-dry your clothes when you can and use dryer balls when you can't
- Look for the Energy Star label when buying new appliances
- Winterize your home to prevent heat from escaping and try to keep it cool in the summer without an air conditioner
- Change to energy-efficient light bulbs
- Get a home or workplace energy audit to identify where you can make the most energy-saving gains

## 4. Participate in the Democratic Process

Climate change has implications on local, national, and global levels. While the average person isn't responsible for governing a nation, we are responsible for deciding who does. Vote for a

climate activist, support comprehensive climate policies, and use your citizen voice to contact legislators when you disagree.

## **5. Invest in Renewables and Divest from Fossil Fuels**

Speak to your financial adviser about clean energy/technology investments, and make sure that your investments do not include fossil fuels. And make sure your workplace, pension fund, university or bank doesn't invest in fossil fuels either. If they do, join or start a divestment campaign.

## **6. Improve Insulation**

One of the most cost-effective and accessible tactics to combating the climate crisis is better insulation. Older homes can lose up to 35 percent of heat through their walls. Modern insulation reduces the energy needed to heat a home, therefore reducing emissions and saving you money. If even half of existing buildings installed thicker insulation, 8.3 gigatons of emissions could be avoided—that's more than overhauling efficiency for the entire international shipping industry.

## **7. Use LED Lighting**

LEDs (light-emitting diodes) use 90 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs and half as much as compact fluorescents. Switching your home to LED lights will reduce cooling bills. They also last longer than other bulbs, so choosing them will bring long-term savings. According to Project Drawdown, universal adoption of LEDs could prevent 7.8 gigatons of carbon emissions.

## **8. Rethink Transportation**

While individuals can't revolutionize the shipping, flight, and automobile industries overnight, we can demand they change by voting with our dollars for public transit, using electric or hybrid vehicles, and reducing our total trips taken. We can also:

- Take public transit
- Ride a bike or advocate for bike lanes in your community
- Car-share
- If you have a large, inefficient vehicle, retire it and switch to an electric or plug-in hybrid vehicle
- Fly less (if you do fly, make sure you offset your emissions)

## **9. Recycle**

Acquiring virgin resources—from logging trees to mining minerals—exploits more resources than recycling existing materials. For example, recycled aluminum products use 95 percent less energy than creating new ones. About 50 percent of recycled materials come from households; if that number were to increase to 65 percent, at-home recycling could prevent 2.8 gigatons of carbon emissions. However, recycling wrong can slow the system and create more waste, so be sure to rinse out your recyclables and stay up to date on local regulations to make sure what you recycle isn't causing contamination.

## 10. Buy Less

Choosing to buy less or not at all is the original mantra for saving money. Add “refuse” to the three Rs you’ve already heard of: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Additionally, when you don’t buy, you cut down on the amount that you contribute to landfills. The carbon footprint of refusing is hard to calculate because it varies from person to person, but tools like [footprintcalculator.org](https://footprintcalculator.org) can help you determine your current ecological footprint and offer actionable solutions for change, including buying less.

(Adapted from <https://www.greenamerica.org/your-green-life/10-ways-you-can-fight-climate-change> and <https://davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/top-10-ways-can-stop-climate-change/> )



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