

20 THINGS THAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP THE EARTH

Sources: Environmental Protection Agency Climate Change - epa.gov/climatechange/wyacd/home.html
Life of the Land – www.lifeofthelandhawaii.org

1. **Change 5 lights**

Change a light, and you help change the world. Replace the conventional bulbs in your 5 most frequently used [light fixtures](#) with [bulbs](#) that have the ENERGY STAR and you will help the environment while saving money on energy bills. **If every household in the U.S. took this one simple action we would prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions from nearly 10 million cars.**

2. **Look for [ENERGY STAR qualified products](#)**

When buying new products, such as appliances for your home, get the features and performance you want AND help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. Look for ENERGY STAR qualified products in more than 50 product categories, including [lighting](#), [home electronics](#), [heating and cooling equipment](#) and [appliances](#).

3. **Heat and cool smartly**

Simple steps like cleaning air filters regularly and having your heating and cooling equipment tuned annually by a licensed contractor can save energy and increase comfort at home, and at the same time reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When it's time to replace your old equipment, choose a [high efficiency model](#), and make sure it is [properly sized and installed](#).

4. **Seal and insulate your home**

Sealing air leaks and adding more insulation to your home is a great [do-it-yourself project](#). The biggest leaks are usually found in the attic and basement. If you are planning to replace windows, choose [ENERGY STAR qualified windows](#) for better performance. Forced air [ducts](#) that run through unconditioned spaces are often big energy wasters. Seal and insulate any ducts in attics and crawlspaces to improve the efficiency of your home. Not sure where to begin? Go to the Energy Star [HOME ENERGY YARDSTICK](#).

Finally, a [home energy auditor](#) can also help you find air leaks, areas with poor insulation, and evaluate the overall energy efficiency of your home. By taking these steps, you can eliminate drafts, keep your home more comfortable year round, save energy that would otherwise be wasted, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

5. **Plant a Garden, if can**

Growing your own fruits and vegetables is not only rewarding, it's nutritious and delicious! Gardening is a great workout, and it's the ultimate in "local" produce, reducing the distance your food travels to your backyard or lanai.

6. **Join the Movement to Push Hawai'i's utilities to use green power**

[Green power](#) is environmentally friendly electricity that is generated from renewable energy sources such as wind and the sun. Green power offers a number of environmental and economic benefits over conventional electricity, including lower greenhouse gas emissions, and it helps increase clean energy supply.

7. **Plant trees**

Trees absorb carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas. Create family and community projects, by planting trees in your yard, your neighborhood, and community. Trees beautify places, provide shade, and help the earth.

8. **Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle**

The stuff we throw away every year as solid waste [contributes to global warming](#). The EPA also has great advice on how to [reduce the amount of municipal solid waste](#) we produce each year. Recycling is of course a popular way to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfills. You can probably find a [community recycling center](#) near you in Honolulu and elsewhere in Hawaii. Use products in containers that can be recycled and items that can be repaired or reused. In addition, support recycling markets by [buying products](#) made from recycled materials. Finally, once around is not enough! Consider buying used items: clothing, cars, appliances, etc instead of newly manufactured items, and donating usable items if you no longer have a need for them.

9. **Be green in your yard**

Greenscaping is the easy way to a greener, healthier yard. Use a push mower, which, unlike a gas or electric mower, consumes no fossil fuels and emits no greenhouse gases. If you do use a power mower, make sure it is a mulching mower to reduce grass clippings. Composting your food and yard waste reduces the amount of garbage that you send to landfills and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. See EPA's [GreenScapes](#) program for tips on how to improve your lawn or garden while also benefiting the environment. Smart landscaping can save energy, save you money and reduce your household's greenhouse gas emissions.

10. **Use water efficiently**

Saving water around the home is simple. Municipal water systems require a lot of energy to purify and distribute water to households, and saving water, especially hot water, can lower greenhouse gas emissions. Look for

products with EPA's [WaterSense](#) label; these products save water and perform as well or better than their less efficient counterparts. There are also simple actions you can take to save water: Be smart when irrigating your lawn or landscape; only water when needed and do it during the coolest part of the day, early morning is best. Turn the water off while shaving or brushing teeth. Do not use your toilet as a waste basket - water is wasted with each flush. And did you know a leaky toilet can waste 200 gallons of water per day? Repair all toilet and faucet leaks right away. See EPA's [WaterSense](#) site for more water saving tips.

11. Reduce your own energy use

Be mindful of your personal electricity use. Turn off lights when you leave a room; don't leave the coffee pot on after the coffee is brewed – use a thermos to keep the coffee warm; use power strips that you can turn off to reduce 'phantom power' waste.

12. Spread the Word

Tell family and friends that energy efficiency is good for their homes and good for the environment because it lowers greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. Tell 5 people and together we can help our homes help us all.

13. Buying a new car?

Consider a fuel smart car, hybrid or other high efficiency vehicle. Did you know there is a federal tax credit for certain qualifying fuel-efficient vehicles? Go to www.fueleconomy.gov for more information.

14. Ride a bike

Better yet, give your car a rest and give your body a workout! Cycling is great exercise; you can see your neighborhood from a different perspective; and meet other great cyclists.

15. Walk more

Or take stroll through neighborhood. Meet your neighbors, walk to work, get your daily fitness workout by walking to keep your heart healthy, your body trim, and your mind active!

16. Consolidate your errands

Plan your day's errands and appointments ahead of time. Map out a route so that you accomplish all that you need to do in one trip instead of many short hops that waste gas, energy, and time.

17. Give your car a day off – take the bus!

Start by giving your car a day off once a week. You may find that the bus is more convenient and you meet some great folks on the ride!

18. Calculate your own individual emissions

Individuals can produce greenhouse gas emissions directly by burning oil or gas for home heating or indirectly by using electricity generated from fossil fuel burning. Calculate your [individual emissions](#) and see where you can cut back.

19. Practice the 100-mile rule – BUY LOCAL!

Make a commitment to get your food and other commodities from local growers and dealers who live within 100 miles of you.

20. Encourage your employers to use Energy Star products, efficient lighting and lower the air conditioning

Students at Saunders Hall at UH Manoa, led by a dynamic young student named Shanah Trevenna, have taken this issue to heart and have created a group called [Sustainable Saunders](#). Their first action was to do an energy audit of the entire building. They empowered students on each floor to take responsibility for their own floors.

Their findings:

- The lighting was too bright, which negatively impacted the students' study habits
- The rooms were too cold, which also negatively impacted the students' studies

What they did:

- They removed lights from the fixtures. RESULT: Students had fewer headaches.
- They increased the thermostat temperature. RESULT: lower energy bills and more comfortable rooms.
- They installed a micro wind-turbine – with a horizontally spinning blade – atop Saunders Hall.