

One Simple Act eco check up for the HOME



The One Simple Act Eco Checkup for the Home is a do-it-yourself checklist of a simple environmental assessment. It's easy to do. Points are attributed to the choices you make in your lifestyle. Simply write in the point value allotted for the actions you are taking. The total points will give you a picture of where you are and other actions you can choose that will reduce your environmental footprint. You may photocopy the checkup or complete online.



Follow the ABCs for your Eco checkup. Here are some ABCs that have environmental impacts in your home.

ENERGY

1. Transportation
2. Heating and Cooling
3. Appliances
4. Lighting
5. Electronics

WATER

1. Bathroom and Laundry
2. Kitchen
3. Yard and Garden

WASTE

1. Home
2. Shopping

Scoring

Fast and Free	1 point	These actions help to save energy, water or minimize waste without spending a dime. Every action earns one point.
Simple and Low Cost	2 points	These actions may cost some money to accomplish and require you to adopt a new habit. Every action earns two points.
Spend to Save	3 points	These actions require a larger investment but will result in the most significant savings in energy, waste and water. Every action earns three points.

Once you have completed the checkup, determine the size of your footprint. Visit the [One Simple Act website](http://www.onesimpleact.alberta.ca) and let us know how you did.



ENERGY

Transportation

Fast and Free	YES	NO
POINTS	1	0
I am an idle-free driver. Except in traffic, turn off your car when stopped for more than 10 seconds. In winter you only need to warm-up your vehicle for 30 seconds or until our windows are clear.		
I check the tire pressure on our vehicles at least once a month to maximize fuel efficiency. Each tire that is under-inflated by two pounds per square inch (PSI), or 13.8 kilo-Pascals (kPa) can cause a four per cent increase in fuel consumption.		
I drive the speed limit. Reducing your highway speed by one kilometre an hour, can reduce fuel consumption, fuel costs and greenhouse gas emissions by about one per cent.		
I lighten the load by removing bikes, luggage or ski racks from the top of my vehicle when not in use. I also keep my trunk/truck bed free of heavy objects. For every 50 pounds or 22.7 kg of extra weight in your vehicle about one per cent of fuel efficiency is lost.		
I minimize my use of vehicle air conditioning during city driving. Minimizing the use of air conditioning can reduce 5 to 15 percent of fuel consumption.		
Simple and Low Cost	YES	NO
POINTS	2	0
I walk or bike to work or school at least once each week. Health Canada recommends 20 to 30 minutes of vigorous activity per day. By walking or biking to work or school you can achieve this health benefit for yourself and for the environment.		
I take public transit or commute with a colleague at least once each week. Taking public transit and sharing rides regularly with someone else will cut your transportation costs and reduce CO ₂ emissions by 20 per cent.		
I take the bus, not a plane, when travelling less than 500 kilometres. It has been found that flying has up to ten times the impact on climate when compared to other forms of transportation going the same distance.		



Spend to Save	YES	NO
POINTS	3	0
In winter, I use a timer on my block heater and set it to turn on two to three hours before I need to drive. In winter you only need to use your block heater when it is colder than -15°C.		
I get regular vehicle tune-ups. A poorly tuned vehicle can emit up to 10 times as much pollution as a properly tuned vehicle.		
I own a hybrid or compact car. A fuel-efficient vehicle driven 20, 000 kilometres a year could save 200 litres of fuel and cut carbon dioxide emissions by 45 kilograms.		
Transportation Points	a	

Home Heating and Cooling

Fast and Free	YES	NO
POINTS	1	0
In winter, I set the daytime house temperature between 19° and 20°C. It is a myth that keeping your house at the same temperature will save you money. Turning down the thermostat will save you money.		
During the night and when I am not at home, I turn down the thermostat by 3°C. For every degree that you turn your thermostat down, you will save about three percent on your heating bill.		
I lowered the thermostat on my water heater to 55°C (or warm). This can save up to 10 per cent in water-heating costs.		
I use a ceiling fan in the summer to help with household cooling. In the winter, I reverse the direction of the blades to distribute hot air more evenly across the room. In the winter the direction of the blades should be going counter clockwise. Many fans have a reverse function.		



<p>I close the blinds or curtains in the summer and open them in the winter. This maximizes natural heating and cooling.</p>		
<p>Simple and Low Cost</p> <p>POINTS</p>	<p>YES 2</p>	<p>NO 0</p>
<p>Every two to three months I inspect and regularly replace my furnace and/or air conditioner filters. A clean filter allows air to easily pass through the furnace and/or air conditioner reducing the amount of energy needed to force air through it.</p>		
<p>I installed a programmable thermostat. You can save up to \$100 a year with a programmable thermostat because it helps provide heating or cooling only when you need it.</p>		
<p>I sealed openings and holes on exterior walls, ceilings or floors. I caulked window and door seals, replaced/checked/upgraded seals around plugs and cover plates. Drafts cost money.</p>		
<p>Spend to Save</p> <p>POINTS</p>	<p>YES 3</p>	<p>NO 0</p>
<p>I upgraded the insulation in my attic, basement, walls and/or garage. By just insulating the attic you can save 10-15 per cent of your home's total heat loss.</p>		
<p>I hire qualified service contractors to do a periodic inspection of my furnace and air conditioning unit. Proper maintenance is critical in ensuring that the central air conditioner will operate efficiently and have a long service life.</p>		
<p>I purchased an ENERGY STAR® high-efficiency furnace with an Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency (AFUE) of at least 90 per cent. These furnaces are 50 per cent more effective than most older units. Climate Change Central has a \$400–\$600 rebate program. www.climatechangecentral.ca</p>		
<p>Home Heating and Cooling Points</p>		



Appliance

Fast and Free	POINTS	YES	NO
	1	0	
I air dry dishes by selecting the no-heat drying cycle (air drying) or open the door and let the dishes air dry.			
I use cold water for the wash cycle instead of hot water. This will save you a whopping 85–90 per cent of the energy needed to heat water.			
When cooking, I avoid using the oven for small items. Instead I use a microwave, rice cooker or even electric grills.			
I use energy efficient cooking techniques. For example, using pot lids, using the smallest pot required for the job and placing them on same sized elements, keeping the oven door closed during cooking, and turning off the oven 10 minutes before the end of cooking time.			
I regularly check the seal on the refrigerator. Place a \$5 bill against the fridge’s seal and close the door. If the bill pulls out easily, replace the seal. The refrigerator uses more energy than any other appliance in the house.			
Simple and Low Cost	POINTS	YES	NO
	2	0	
I purchased an indoor clothes rack or outdoor clothesline. This will reduce energy required for machine drying.			
I donated our second refrigerator. One larger refrigerator that fits your needs is cheaper to run than two smaller refrigerators.			
I buy cold-water laundry detergent and pre-treat stains with eco-friendly cleaners. Cold water detergents are designed to wash your clothes using cold water; you will also conserve energy, and clothes will last longer.			
Spend to Save	POINTS	YES	NO
	3	0	
I bought a new, energy-efficient refrigerator or freezer. A 2007 ENERGY STAR® refrigerator uses one-third of the energy used by a refrigerator made in 1984.			



<p>I bought a front-loading clothes washing machine that uses 50 per cent less energy per load than the average conventional washing machine. Climate Change Central has a rebate program for ENERGY STAR® washing machines. www.climatechangecentral.ca</p>		
<p>I purchase green power from our local energy provider.</p>		
<p>Appliance Points</p>	<p>a</p>	

Lighting

Fast and Free POINTS	YES 1	NO 0
<p>I save money by turning off lights when I leave a room or when I don't require lighting.</p>		
<p>I use task lighting to concentrate light where it is need most.</p>		
<p>I take advantage of natural light by opening blinds and curtains during the day.</p>		
<p>I keep our light fixtures clean and dust-free to increase brightness and energy efficiency.</p>		
<p>For general lighting I place our lamps where their light can be reflected, such as a corner or near a wall.</p>		
Simple and Low Cost POINTS	YES 2	NO 0
<p>I use dimmer switches to conserve energy.</p>		



I use motion-sensor lighting for the yard or porch. The light goes on only when it is needed.		
When replacing light bulbs I buy compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) for our light fixtures. ENERGY STAR® labeled compact fluorescent light bulbs use 75 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs.		
Spend to Save	YES	NO
POINTS	3	0
I use indoor motion/occupancy sensors that turn on automatically when someone enters a room and turn off soon after the last person leaves.		
I buy ENERGY STAR® labeled light fixtures.		
I use solar powered lighting in the yard and garden. Take advantage of free energy sources to light your garden; solar lights can be purchased at any major home and garden store.		
Lightings Points	a	

Electronics

Fast and Free	YES	NO
POINTS	1	0
I unplug electronics such as TVs and stereos when not in use to reduce standby power.		
I turn off the computer, monitor and printer when not in use.		
I unplug hand-held electronics, such as cell phones and MP3 players, when they are finished charging.		



I donate old electronics to a school or charity instead of throwing them away.		
I minimize my use of electronics and spend more time reading, being active or enjoying the outdoors.		
Simple and Low Cost	YES	NO
POINTS	2	0
I put home electronics, entertainment system and computers on a power bar for greater energy efficiency. To stop drawing standby electricity, I turn off the power bar when they are not in use.		
I use an energy meter to test the amount of power our electrical and small appliances use. Energy meters can be purchased at major hardware stores for about \$25. Many libraries will loan them out for free.		
I use an inkjet, instead of a laser printer, because it uses less energy.		
Spend to Save	YES	NO
POINTS	3	0
I purchased an ENERGY STAR® television. It uses about 30 per cent less energy than standard units.		
I switched from a desktop to a laptop computer. It uses about 80 per cent less energy.		
I bought an ENERGY STAR® qualified multi-function device (print, fax, copy, scan) and made sure the power management features were enabled.		
Electronics Points	a	

ENERGY	A
Add up all 'a' subtotals to get your ENERGY Points Total	



WATER B

Bathroom and Laundry Room

Fast and Free	YES	NO
POINTS	1	0
I tighten taps and check pipes and toilets for leaks. Leaks can make up over 10 per cent of the average water used in a single family home.		
I turn off the tap while brushing my teeth. Running the tap while brushing your teeth can waste up to 19 litres of water a minute.		
I take shorter shower (about five minutes). By reducing shower time by five minutes, the saving would be ~\$173/year for a family of four.		
I run only full loads of laundry and use the shortest cycle necessary for getting my clothes clean.		
I turn off the water supply to the washing machine and other appliances when I am away. This prevents potential water damage if something breaks.		
Simple and Low Cost	YES	NO
POINTS	2	0
I installed water saving devices on faucets and toilets. Water flow can be reduced 25-50 per cent by installing a tap aerator.		
I used a dye tablet or food colouring to check for toilet leaks. When leaks were noticed, I repaired them. A toilet that continues to run after flushing can waste up to 200, 000 litres of water in a year!		
I installed a water saving showerhead or a showerhead with a stop cock/shut off valve. Look for a showerhead with a flow of 9.5 litres/minute or less.		



Spend to Save	POINTS	YES	NO
	3	3	0
I replaced my toilets with low-flow or dual-flush models. A 6L/flush toilet will result in a 70 per cent savings in water flushed in the home.			
I purchased a water efficient clothes washer. Front loading models use 40 per cent less water than top loading machines.			
Bathroom and Laundry Points		b	

Kitchen

Fast and Free	POINTS	YES	NO
	1	1	0
I turn off the water while washing dishes instead of letting it run continuously. Water use can be reduced by 25-35 per cent by using a basin to rinse the dishes.			
I only run the dishwasher when there are full loads. Use the water-savings or short cycle as much as possible. One load of dishes per day uses about 14,500 litres of water per year.			
I defrost food in the refrigerator instead of under running water.			
I wash fruits and vegetables in a pan of water instead of continuously running water from the tap.			
Simple and Low Cost	POINTS	YES	NO
	2	2	0
I installed low-flow faucet aerator. Water flow can be reduced 25-50 per cent by installing a tap aerator.			



I don't let the tap run to get cold water. Use a water jug and keep it in the fridge.		
I installed a new low-flow kitchen faucet. These are similar to an aerator and are designed to reduce water flow.		
Spend to Save POINTS	YES 3	NO 0
I bought a water-efficient dishwasher. Newer models can cut water use by 25 per cent.		
I learned about our local watershed, the source of our drinking water and how to minimize our impact.		
Kitchen Points	b	

Yard and Garden

Fast and Free POINTS	YES 1	NO 0
I water my lawn only two to three centimeters each week. Place a Frisbee on the lawn, when it is full, turn off the sprinkler.		
I wash my vehicle using a bucket, brushes and rags and use the hose only for rinsing. This can save up to 300 litres of water.		
I use a broom instead of a water hose to clean driveways and sidewalks.		
I mow the grass no more than 6-8 centimeters from ground. This helps to shade the roots and the soil to hold water.		
I use leaves, grass clippings or woodchips as mulch on flowerbeds or in the garden. Mulching can save up to 70 per cent on watering needs.		



Simple and Low Cost	POINTS	YES	NO
	2	0	
I use a commercial car wash that recycles its water. A self-serve washing bay uses less water than an automatic car wash.			
I bought downspout adaptors or hoses to direct rain water to plants located away from the house. Rainwater is free!			
Spend to Save	POINTS	YES	NO
	3	0	
I bought a soaker hose or drip hose to water around vegetables and flowers. Watering at the roots and not the leaves will reduce evaporation and save water.			
I bought a rain barrel or made one out of recycled materials. Place a rain barrel under your eaves trough downspout to catch rain water. Use the contents on your yard and indoor plants.			
Yard and Garden Points			b

WATER	B
add all the “b” subtotals to get your WATER Points Total	



WASTE

Home

Fast and Free	POINTS	YES	NO
	1	0	
I recycle all the materials I can within our community. Visit www.albertarecycling.ca to find a depot near you.			
I put a "No Junk Mail" sign on my mailbox to reduce paper waste. Visit www.reddotcampaign.ca for more information on how to reduce the amount of junk mail delivered to your home.			
I grass cycle by leaving grass clippings on the lawn. They decompose and return nutrients to the soil.			
I take gently-used items such as clothing, appliances and furniture to reuse stores or donate them to charities. On average seven kilograms of textile waste per person sits in landfills each year.			
Simple and Low Cost	POINTS	YES	NO
	2	0	
I carry a reusable water bottle and coffee mug so that I don't have to purchase disposable cups. Canadian use more than 1.6 billion paper and polystyrene cups each year.			
I invested in reusable food containers for lunch items, leftovers and freezer storage. Keep enough containers so they are available when you need them.			
I use rechargeable batteries for all our electronics, games and toys. Rechargeable batteries can be charged from 500-1000 times, saving you money in the long run.			



Spend to Save	YES	NO
POINTS	3	0
I bought or built a backyard composter or vermicomposter. One-third of household waste can be composted. Click here for more information.		
I make our own natural cleaning products out of castile soap, borax, and vinegar, and put in old cleaning bottles to reduce waste. Click here for the complete recipe.		
Home Points		

Shopping

Fast and Free	YES	NO
POINTS	1	0
I choose products with the least packaging whenever possible. Canadians send about 80 per cent of household waste to the landfill.		
I take reusable shopping bags to the grocery store, shops, and the mall. Each Canadian uses about 272 plastic bags a year.		
I look at catalogues online and opt out of paper catalogues.		
Simple and Low Cost	YES	NO
POINTS	2	0
I signed up for an Internet subscription to the local newspaper.		
I buy in bulk instead of selecting individually-packaged items. Reuse the plastic bags next time you go to the bulk bins.		
I check out websites where members advertise items to give away, such as Freecycle.org.		



Spend to Save	POINTS	YES 3	NO 0
I buy products that are EcoLogo certified. Products include cleaners, laundry detergent, paper and paper products, tissues and napkins, paint, fuels, flooring and other renovation and building materials, visit www.terrachoice-certified.com			
I buy "green gifts" for our friends such as refurbished or recycled items, and wrap items in newspaper or wrapping paper that is 100 per cent post-consumer content.			
Shopping Points			C

WASTE	C
add all the "C" subtotals to get your WASTE Points Total .	

Do the math...

ENERGY page 8 subtotal	A
WATER page 12 subtotal	B
WASTE page 15 subtotal	C
GRAND TOTAL (out of 179 points)	A+B+C

Check your point total to determine the size of your footprint



What's the size of your footprint?



Size 15

25-50 points

You are off to a good start. Changing lifestyle behaviours can be difficult. It only takes about 21 days to change a habit. You have completed most of the **Fast and Free** actions and maybe a few big **Spend to Save** actions. There may be many **Simple and Low Cost** actions available to you. You are ready to take the next step by adopting more actions.



Size 8

51-125 points

You have reduced your footprint by changing some behaviours and spending some money. You can save more by adding additional actions to your list of accomplishments. Try something new or consider adopting one of our **Spend to Save** actions. These actions are more affordable if you apply for rebates from Climate Change Central.



Size 4

126 – 179 points

Congratulations! You are a role model and have a small environmental footprint. You have invested significant time and money to get here and it has paid off. Be sure to give yourself a pat on the back and share your ideas with friends, family and co-workers.

There is always more you can do. Visit www.onesimpleact.alberta.ca and click on **Simple Solutions** for more **Fast and Free**, **Simple and Low Cost** and **Spend to Save** tips.

Please send us your results from this check up. What you will be doing differently? If you liked this check up then you should check out our ecoAction calculator at <http://www.onesimpleact.alberta.ca/get-involved/ecoaction.asp> For more tips on how to change your habits visit our website at <http://www.onesimpleact.alberta.ca/> where you can make your own pledge to do one simple act, or join our [newsletter](#).