

What can I do to help at home?

Cutting emissions at home is based on two different strategies. Firstly, making lots of small choices that are sustainable and add up and secondly, making the best investments you can when it comes to the bigger choices.

For example, there are lots of everyday choices around what we eat, whether we put a jumper on instead of turning the heating on, whether we use what we have instead of buying something, whether we go on foot, repair something or don't stream hours of video. All of these add up and are easy to cut back on.

On the other side, when it comes to bigger decisions, such as buying a fridge or the boiler needs replacing, these are choices that determine emissions for a long time. Here, it is a single decision where it matters a lot to choose the option with fewer emissions. The answers to those choices are sometimes obvious: buy the smallest, most energy-efficient fridge. With a heating system, it requires more research to figure out what's the best solution (heat pumps) and what to do if that doesn't work for your home.

Below you can find a number of areas, where changing your habits will make a difference. They are not exhaustive, but a good start.

Transport:

ECDC is a rural county and we need to get around, but transport causes a lot of emissions.

- Walk or cycle whenever you can, especially on short local journeys. How much of our transport emissions come from short journeys?
- Use public transport more and cars less. There are plenty of fantastic holiday destinations available by train, and it's less daunting than it might seem. The website [Man in seat 61](#) has excellent advice on how to travel by train.
- Don't fly.
- Consider whether you could use an electric car. They are expensive, but EastCambsCAN is thinking about community car hiring schemes. You could ask your employer about a salary sacrifice leasing scheme for EVs. They are free for the employer and considering the depreciation of a car, service, insurance, tax and petrol, it might be financially viable. More information can be found in the info section.

Food:

- Eat more plants; meat and dairy require a lot of land, water and energy to produce. Substitute meat with foods that make less impact. This is a good thing to alter gradually so it becomes a permanent change.
- Make the most of your food: There are lots of easy steps that help minimise food waste.
- Choose food that is locally and seasonally grown.

Belongings:

Live by the three Rs principle of reduce, reuse and recycle.

- A lot of us really have all we need: If the temptation strikes to buy something, have a critical think about whether you really need it. Wait for a few days before buying, often that solves the question.
- Repair things or use local repair cafes.
- You can rent tools instead of buying them, or share them with your neighbours.
- Don't upgrade your gadgets - most of them should last about seven years.
- Support and buy from companies that are sustainable and environmentally responsible.
- Avoid items with excess and unnecessary packaging. Ely has two zero-packaging shops!
- Check out local antique and charity shops.
- Enjoy all the great things in life; sometimes it's easy to forget that the best things in life have no carbon footprint at all.

Fashion:

- Clothes are meant to be worn and re-worn. Buy less, but quality pieces that last.
- Learn how to mend your clothes.
- Exchange children's clothing with other parents from your antenatal group or local Facebook marketplace ads.
- Don't buy fast fashion as it causes not only excessive carbon emissions in production but is mostly produced under inhumane conditions. When it ends up in landfill, it causes large environmental problems.
- Take reusable bags with you when you shop.

Save water:

East Anglia has historically been a dry region and over the last year, rainfall has been about half of what we'd expect. Saving water preserves not only a critical resource but also saves energy for water purification.

- Take shorter showers.
- Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth.
- Only boil the water you need.
- Wash clothes at lower temperatures and in cold water.
- Use your waste water in the garden.

Save electricity:

- Switch to renewable energy.
- Replace light bulbs with LEDs.
- When you need to replace an appliance, buy the most energy-efficient one.
- Look at the most efficient settings for your appliances. Wash at the lowest possible temperature. Fill your dishwasher completely before running it.
- Hang out the washing where possible instead of using the tumble dryer.
- Turn off electrical items when they're not being used and don't leave them on standby.

Heating:

Heating together with transport is a major emitter of warming gases:

- Heat the person not the home.
- Turn the thermostat down by a degree. Consider keeping it at 18 degrees for healthy adults.

Garden:

- Urban gardens have a huge potential to support biodiversity.

[Find more tips here](#)