

International  
Olympic  
Committee

Athlete  
365

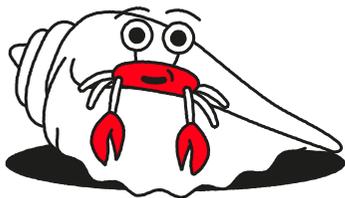
# HOW TO BE A SUSTAINABLE CHAMPION



Faster  
Higher  
Stronger  
Together



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The facts and figures in this guide have been taken from research studies and from information publicly shared by scientists, researchers, government agencies, multilateral and non-governmental organisations. In some cases data focuses on impacts from North America and Europe. This is due to availability and accessibility of research data. It also reflects the relatively higher average environmental footprint of individuals in these countries compared to those in some other regions.

This guide was published in 2022.

# INTRODUCTION

Today, every athlete and sports fan can see the impacts of climate change and other sustainability problems – from bleached coral in the ocean to plastic litter, air pollution, and less snow on our mountain ranges.



Many of the sports we love rely on a clean and healthy environment – whether it’s playing football, cricket or rugby at our local playing fields, hiking, cycling and skiing in the mountains, or enjoying sailing, windsurfing and kayaking on the ocean. So how can we protect these places for our future?

**If you want to make a difference but don’t know where to start, this Guide is for you.**

In the following pages, you’ll find tips and ideas to help you live a

planet-friendly, healthier life at home, in your local area, or when you’re on holiday and enjoying sport.

It can be easy to feel overwhelmed when we read about the problems facing our planet. Yet there are many things we can all do. As every athlete knows, small changes add up to have a big impact on performance. It’s the same with sustainability. Start with a small step and keep making changes. You’ll join people all over the world working to make a difference. In no time, you can be a champion!



The IOC and UNEP’s Clean Seas campaign are supporters of Olympic champion Hannah Mills’ Big Plastic Pledge.

## What’s this got to do with sport?

At the International Olympic Committee (IOC), we believe in the power of sport to help make a better world. The qualities that lead to success in sport – teamwork, determination, enthusiasm and commitment – can make all the difference when it comes to sustainability too.

With this Guide we want to help and inspire sports fans, athletes and others all over the world to get involved in the biggest challenge of our lives:

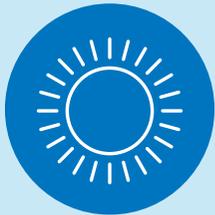
protecting our amazing planet. By standing together, we can go faster, aim higher, and become stronger.

## This Guide and the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs)

Governments, organisations and businesses all over the world are using the UN SDGs to help them contribute to a more sustainable future. In each section, this Guide will show you how the actions you take can support the SDGs.

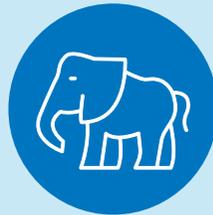
# WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Our planet is in trouble – but we still have time to act.



## Climate emergency

Our world has already warmed by one degree, and we need to get to zero emissions by 2050 to stop catastrophic climate change.<sup>1</sup>



## Biodiversity loss

A sixth mass extinction of wildlife on Earth is underway<sup>2</sup> and we're losing tropical rainforests the size of 10 football fields every minute.<sup>3</sup>



## Waste

Around one-third of food produced goes to waste, enough to feed three billion people.<sup>4</sup>



## Pollution

Up to seven million people die each year due to air pollution<sup>5</sup> and the amount of plastic entering our oceans is projected to reach 29 million tonnes a year by 2040.<sup>6</sup>

# WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

All of us! If we act now, we can turn these problems around and make a better planet for all of us.

With nearly eight billion of us sharing our planet, imagine what we can achieve when we all get involved.

Want to find out more about your own footprint? There are lots of websites and apps that can help you to calculate your personal impact on the environment. This will help you identify the actions you can take to make the most difference.

# SPEAK UP AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**T**his Guide is full of actions you can take in your everyday life, but sometimes you can make the biggest difference by speaking up and encouraging others to act.

So, before getting stuck into the rest of the Guide, make a start with these steps to help you use your voice to call for change.

Together, we can show sports clubs, brands and businesses how much we care.

**1. Use fan power.** Do you support a football team or sports club? Or are you involved in a local sports organisation? Many professional and amateur clubs are taking big steps to be more planet friendly. If yours isn't, encourage them to act.

**2. Talk to your favourite brands and sportswear labels.** Ask them about their policies for the environment and human rights. If they don't have any, ask them why not! Use social media to call for change.



**“Using sport as a tool for sustainability has become a passion for me. I helped the Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee plant 100 mangroves to mark 100 days before the Pacific Games. Not only did it become a great story, it really showed how responsible the sporting community could be.”**

**Milton Kisapai**

Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee

**3. Tell your friends!** Spend your money with companies and organisations doing good things for people and the planet, then spread the word to your friends and family too.



**4. Speak up at work.** Come together with colleagues to make changes in your office or workplace.

**5. Vote.** Your vote gives you a voice and a chance to select political candidates committed to climate action and human rights. Use it!

**6. Got a pension or a bank account?** Ask them how they invest your money. If your money is being used to invest in companies contributing to climate change or other environmental problems, choose a more sustainable and ethical option. Don't forget to tell them why you're switching.

Talk to us! At the IOC we're making sustainability a top priority. If you've got an idea for sport and sustainability, we'd love to hear about it!



**“Overconsumption and pollution is destroying the planet. Buy from brands that produce good-quality, responsibly made products that last a long time and that can be transformed or used again once you're finished with them.”**

**Lydia Lassila**

 Olympic Champion, Freestyle Skiing

# USE IT WISELY

## EASY WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY AND WATER

**A**lmost everything we do at home uses energy – from turning on the lights and watching the latest sports match on TV to washing our kit and cooking dinner.

Our energy use doesn't stop when we're sleeping either. Whether it's our fridge, air-conditioner, mobile phone charger or appliances on standby, energy use keeps going through the night.

When it comes to water, we use a lot in our homes too – for laundry, cooking, washing and watering gardens.

The good news? There are many quick and simple steps you can take to start saving energy and water. By doing so, you'll make a positive change for the environment and may even save yourself some money.



“As athletes, we think that everyone must do everything to help us win a medal. But we can't be selfish with natural resources. We have to think about future generations.”

**Aya Medany**

 Olympian, Modern Pentathlon

## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?



**Energy-hungry homes.** Around 27% of all energy used worldwide is used in our homes,<sup>7</sup> and we're using more than ever before. The average person today uses 45% more energy than in 1970.<sup>8</sup>



**A big climate footprint.** Most of the energy we use still comes from burning fossil fuels, which is bad news for climate change and air quality.



**Not so water-wise.** Huge amounts of energy are used to extract, purify and transport water to our homes, and we use a lot of energy heating it for baths, dishwashers and laundry. Extracting fresh water can harm wildlife in rivers and contribute to water scarcity.



"Save energy in your home to protect my home."

**Pita Taufatofua**

 Olympian, Taekwondo and Cross-country Skiing

SDGs

**6** CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



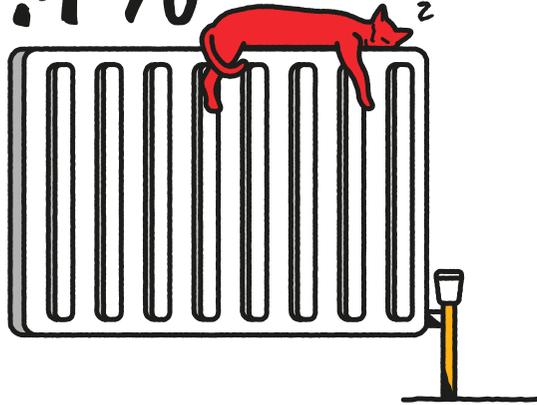
**7** AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



# ENERGY AT HOME

## WHAT'S OUR FOOTPRINT?

Space heating & cooling **64.4%**



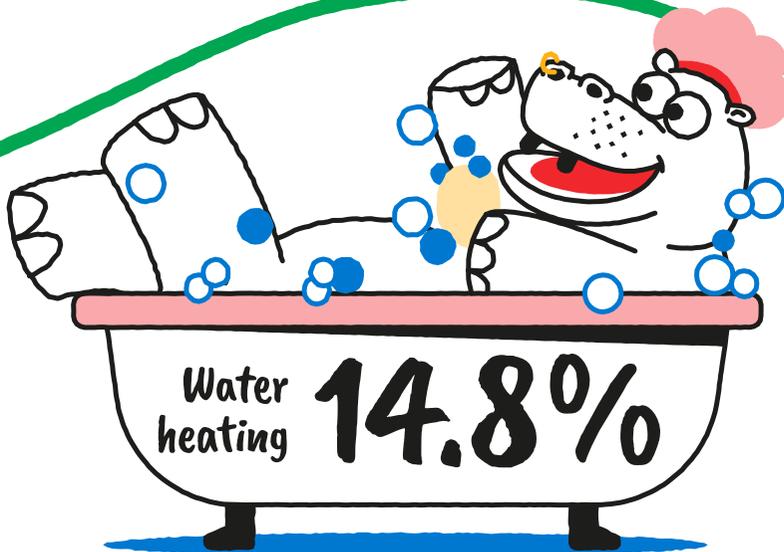
Lighting & appliances **14.4%**



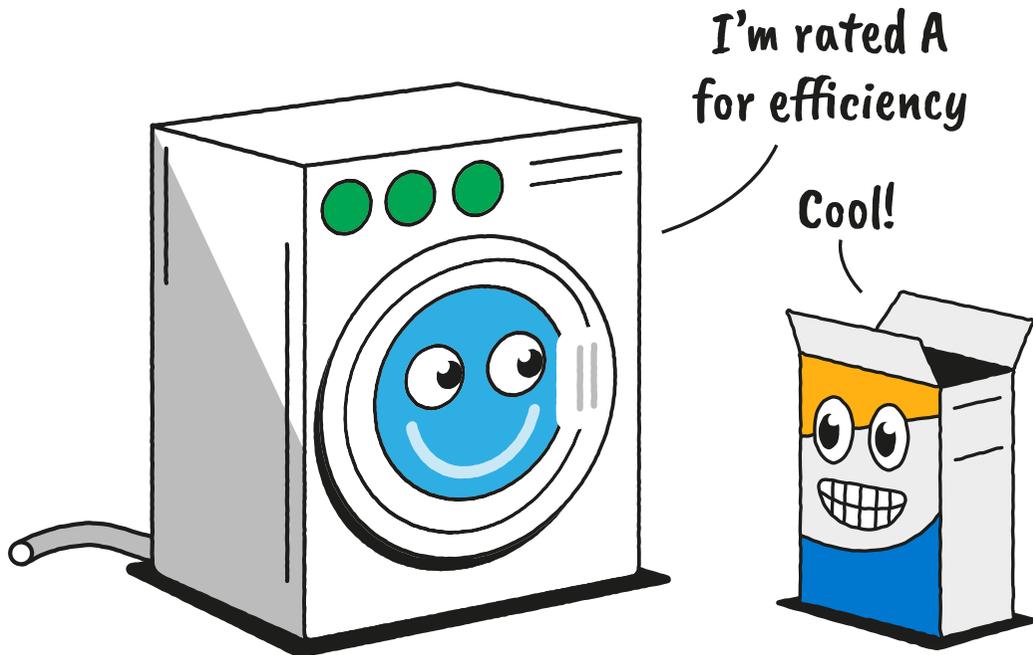
Cooking



Water heating **14.8%**



# WHAT CAN I DO?



## THINK EFFICIENCY WHEN BUYING APPLIANCES

- If you're buying an appliance, choose the most energy-efficient version you can afford. Many countries have a labelling system for energy, making it easier to find the most efficient models.

- Changing a bulb? Choose an LED – it will last longer and use much less energy than an incandescent bulb.
- Choose water-efficient taps, washing machines, shower heads and toilets.
- But don't forget: even the most efficient appliance will use a lot of energy. Only use it when you really need to!

## TURN IT OFF

- Always switch off the lights when you leave the room. Don't light up empty space. You'll reduce your electricity bill too.
- Sunny day? Dry your washing on the line rather than using the tumble dryer.
- Research in the US suggests turning off the tap while brushing your teeth could save 30 litres of water per day, that's 11,000 litres per year!<sup>9</sup>
- Say no to standby. In the EU, around 6.3% of household electricity consumption may be spent powering appliances in standby mode.<sup>10</sup> Turn off appliances and unplug chargers when not in use.

## MAKE THE SWITCH TO RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY

- Find out where your electricity comes from and, if you can, pick a provider who uses renewable energy. This will have a big impact on your carbon footprint. Some alternative electricity deals can even save you money.
- If you can, turn your home into a mini power station by installing photovoltaic (PV) solar panels on your roof.

## TURN IT DOWN

- Adjusting your thermostat by just one or two degrees can save a lot of energy. A cooler room improves concentration and can help you sleep.
- Feel a bit chilly? Put a jumper on rather than turning up the heating.
- Too hot? Try an electric fan rather than an air conditioner. It will use far less energy and encourage good air circulation.
- Washing your clothes in cold water saves big on water heating costs. It also keeps colors from fading and clothes from shrinking.

Energy-saving superhero!



## ONLY USE WHAT YOU NEED

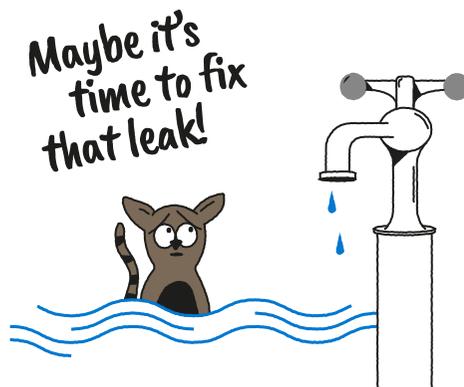
- Making tea or cooking dinner? Don't boil more water than you need!
- Wash your clothes less frequently – they'll last longer and you'll save on water. Don't forget to air them!
- Need to wash your sports kit? Remember that half loads waste water. Don't start the washing machine until you have a full load.
- Doing the dishes? Don't wash each dish individually in running water. Fill up a washing bowl or the sink, add a little detergent and wash a stack of dishes at a time. Or use the dishwasher – depending on the model, a full load on eco setting may use less water than washing up by hand.

## SHORT SHOWERS RULE

- Having a shower after the match? A lot of the energy we use at home goes to heating water for our showers and baths. Choose a shower over a bath and keep it short!
- A power shower uses around 15 litres a minute. Using a low-flow shower head could reduce that to six litres – and you'll still enjoy a great shower.<sup>11</sup>

## KEEP UP WITH MAINTENANCE

- Fix leaks quickly – a dripping tap wastes at least 5,500 litres of water a year. That's enough to fill 69 bathtubs!<sup>12</sup>
- Keep vents and radiators clear so air can circulate around your home. This can improve the efficiency of your heating or cooling system.
- Remember to bleed your radiators! By letting out the trapped air, you'll make sure your system works efficiently.
- Look after your fridge and defrost it regularly. When ice builds up, more energy is needed to keep food cool. Clean the heat exchangers (coils) on refrigerators and air conditioners regularly so that they can perform efficiently.



## BE WATER-SMART IN THE GARDEN

- Install a water butt/rain barrel and make the most of free rainfall!
- Water plants in the early morning or the evening – less water will evaporate so you won't need as much. Try to use a watering can rather than a sprinkler.

## GET ENERGY SMART

- Install a smart meter and a thermostat that you can programme. These will help you monitor and reduce your energy use.
- Use power strips so you can easily turn off several appliances at the same time.
- Draughts make your home more expensive to heat. Fit draught excluders around windows and doors – it's easy to do and an inexpensive way to save energy.
- If you can, make your home even more snug and comfortable by insulating your attic, walls and floors, and installing double-glazed windows.
- Live in a hot country? You can keep down the temperature indoors by adding reflective coatings and white roofs to your building. Planting trees and vegetation to create shade can also make a difference.



Smart meter

# BUY LESS, BUY BETTER AND USE AGAIN!

Everything we buy affects our planet – from the raw materials and natural resources that we cut down or dig up, to the energy used to manufacture and transport new products and the impacts of waste disposal.

What’s more, with nearly eight billion of us, we’re buying a lot! We’re buying more stuff than ever before and research suggests that today we need 1.5 planets to sustain our consumption. If we keep buying as much, this could increase to three planets by 2050 as our population grows.<sup>13</sup>

So what can we do? By buying less, buying better, and reusing and recycling more, we can do some good for the planet – and save ourselves money too!



“With my main sponsor, we have collected unwanted table tennis equipment throughout France and distributed it for reuse.”

**Sarah Hanffou**

 Olympian, Table Tennis

## WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?



**Resource depletion.** We’re using up natural resources – such as trees, water, metal, land – at an alarming rate. In fact, our natural resource consumption tripled in just 40 years from 1970 to 2010. The world’s richest countries consume on average 10 times more materials than the poorest countries.<sup>14</sup>



**What a waste!** We’re throwing too many valuable resources away and creating mountains of waste. Fast fashion is just one example with only 13% of material from old clothes getting recycled.<sup>15</sup>



**A plastic problem.** In the last 60 years we’ve ditched nine billion tonnes of plastic and recycled just 9%.<sup>16</sup> Each year, eight million tonnes more plastic ends up in our oceans.<sup>17</sup> Much of the plastic we throw away today still won’t have decomposed by the Olympic Games 3020!



**Hidden costs.** What we pay to buy something doesn’t always reflect its true cost to the people who made it. Poor and dangerous working conditions, child and forced labour, long hours and low wages are all common problems in global supply chains.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Around 24 billion pairs of shoes are manufactured each year and sneakers account for the largest share.<sup>18</sup> More than 90% of those will one day end up in a landfill site.<sup>19</sup> That’s a lot of waste!

SDGs

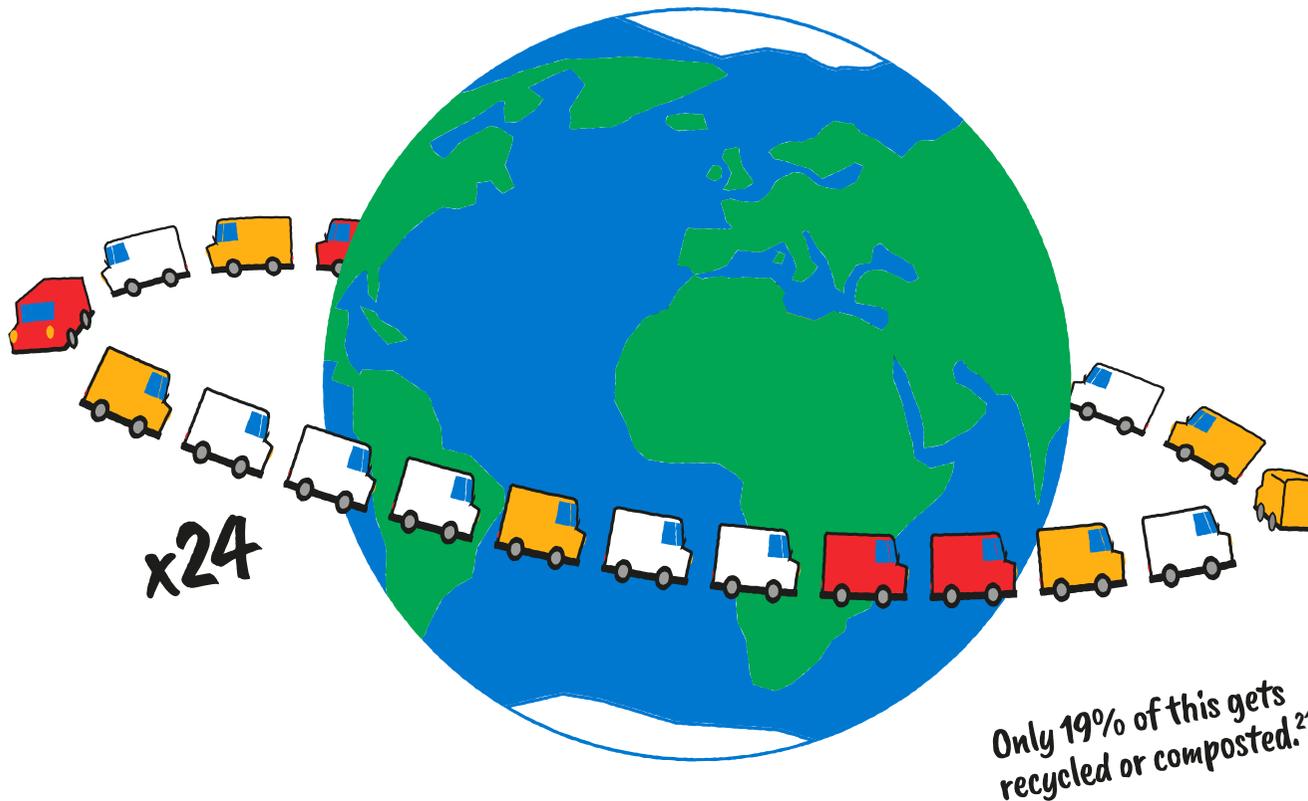
12  
RESPONSIBLE  
CONSUMPTION  
AND PRODUCTION

14  
LIFE  
BELOW WATER

# WHAT'S OUR FOOTPRINT?

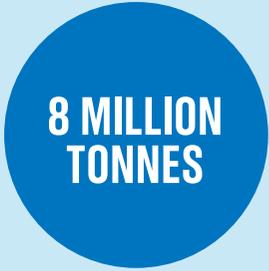
EVERY YEAR, WE GENERATE  
TWO BILLION TONNES OF WASTE.<sup>20</sup>

That's enough to fill a line of trucks stretching around the world 24 times.



## BAD FOR OCEANS

8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the sea each year



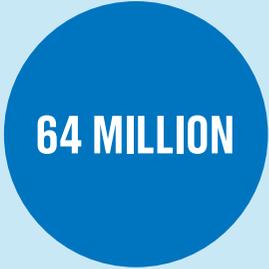
## BAD FOR THE CLIMATE

5% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions come from waste<sup>22</sup>



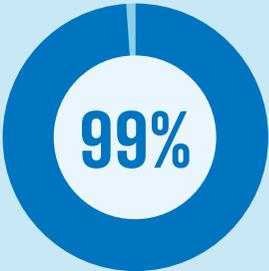
## BAD FOR HEALTH

The health of 64 million people is directly affected by unsafe waste dumps<sup>23</sup>



## BAD FOR OUR WALLETS

99% of what we buy gets thrown away within six months<sup>24</sup>



# WHAT CAN I DO?



## BUY LESS STUFF!

- Buying things we don't really need is a major cause of waste. Pause before you buy and ask yourself: do I really need it? Will I use it? Where will I keep it? How long must I work to pay for it? Could I rent it instead? This will help you focus on the things you really need and reduce what you buy.
- If you still really want it, don't impulse-buy. Sleep on it and look for the best quality and most sustainable product you can afford.

- Tempted to buy one to get one free? These kind of offers sound like bargains but can entice you to buy more than you need. When it comes to food, that means you're likely to end up with more waste.
- We're used to buying and owning things, but we don't actually use many products that much. Look around for opportunities to borrow, rent, swap or share. It can save you money and mean fewer resources are used and wasted.



## BUY BETTER

- Do you know where the things you buy come from, how they're made or what materials are used? Do your research and vote with your wallet by picking responsible brands that are taking action for people and planet. Look out for products with eco labels.
- Sports kit, like everything else we buy, uses precious resources. From footballs and walking poles to running vests and mountain bikes to diving gear, try to choose good quality, long-lasting kit made from sustainable or recycled materials and use it for as long as possible.



- Some leading sports apparel and footwear brands are now designing products made from recycled or waste materials – like recovered ocean plastics and even old car tyres! If your favourite sports brand hasn't stepped up, get in touch and urge them to act.
- Billions of unworn clothes, unread books and unwanted gifts find their way to charity shops every year. Save yourself money and be kind to the planet by choosing a charity shop for your next shopping trip. You can feel doubly good, knowing the money from your purchase goes to help a good cause.

## USE, REPAIR AND USE AGAIN

- Try to keep your possessions for longer, and repair where possible. This reduces the need for new resources. If something is beyond repair, make sure you recycle it safely so the raw materials can be used all over again.
- From watches to rackets and bikes to balls, smart tech is transforming sport – but many of these products contain metals that can pollute the environment. Buy from companies that enable their sports tech products to be returned for reuse or recycling.
- Lost weight or gained muscle? If you've got sportswear that no longer fits but is still in great shape, donate it

to a charity shop. If it can't be reused, take it to the recycling centre or a clothes bank, where it can be made into all sorts of new things – from insulation to park benches.

- Off to the gym, shops or for a walk? Cut down on single-use plastics by taking your reusable bottle and bag with you next time you go out.
- Many of the clothes we wear, and most of today's sportswear, is made from plastic. This sheds microfibrils in the wash that end up in the ocean. You can reduce plastic microfibrils by putting your gear in a washbag and washing it in a full load at a low temperature on a short cycle. When you need to replace worn-out kit, look for alternatives made from natural materials.

## TAKE THE BIG PLASTIC PLEDGE

British athlete Hannah Mills MBE, the most decorated female sailor in Olympic history, was so shocked by the sea of plastic she experienced while training for and competing at an Olympic Games that she wanted to turn the tide on ocean plastics.

Supported by the IOC, Hannah launched the Big Plastic Pledge. It invites sportspeople and their supporters to take three actions to reduce their reliance on single-use plastic. It can be something as simple as using a refillable water bottle, consuming your morning coffee in a reusable cup or rejecting a plastic straw with your smoothie.

By taking the pledge, you'll join elite athletes, fun runners and sport fans the world over, all united in the mission to achieve zero plastic waste in our oceans.

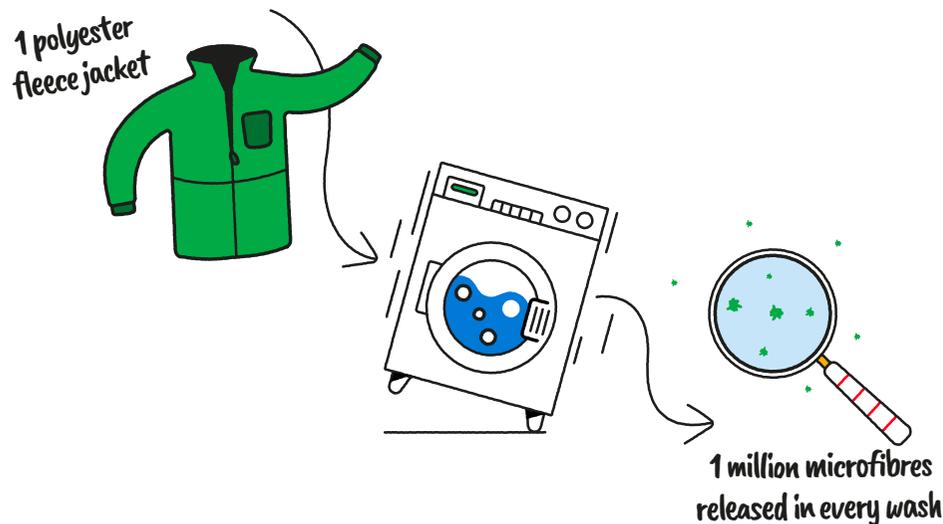
Make your pledge at [www.bigplasticpledge.com](http://www.bigplasticpledge.com)



**"Sport inspires and unites, reaching all corners of the globe. By coming together and using our voice to call for action, athletes and sports fans everywhere can help change the fate of our planet. I set up the Big Plastic Pledge to help more of us take a small step to tackle plastic pollution – by making a change every day, we can change the world!"**

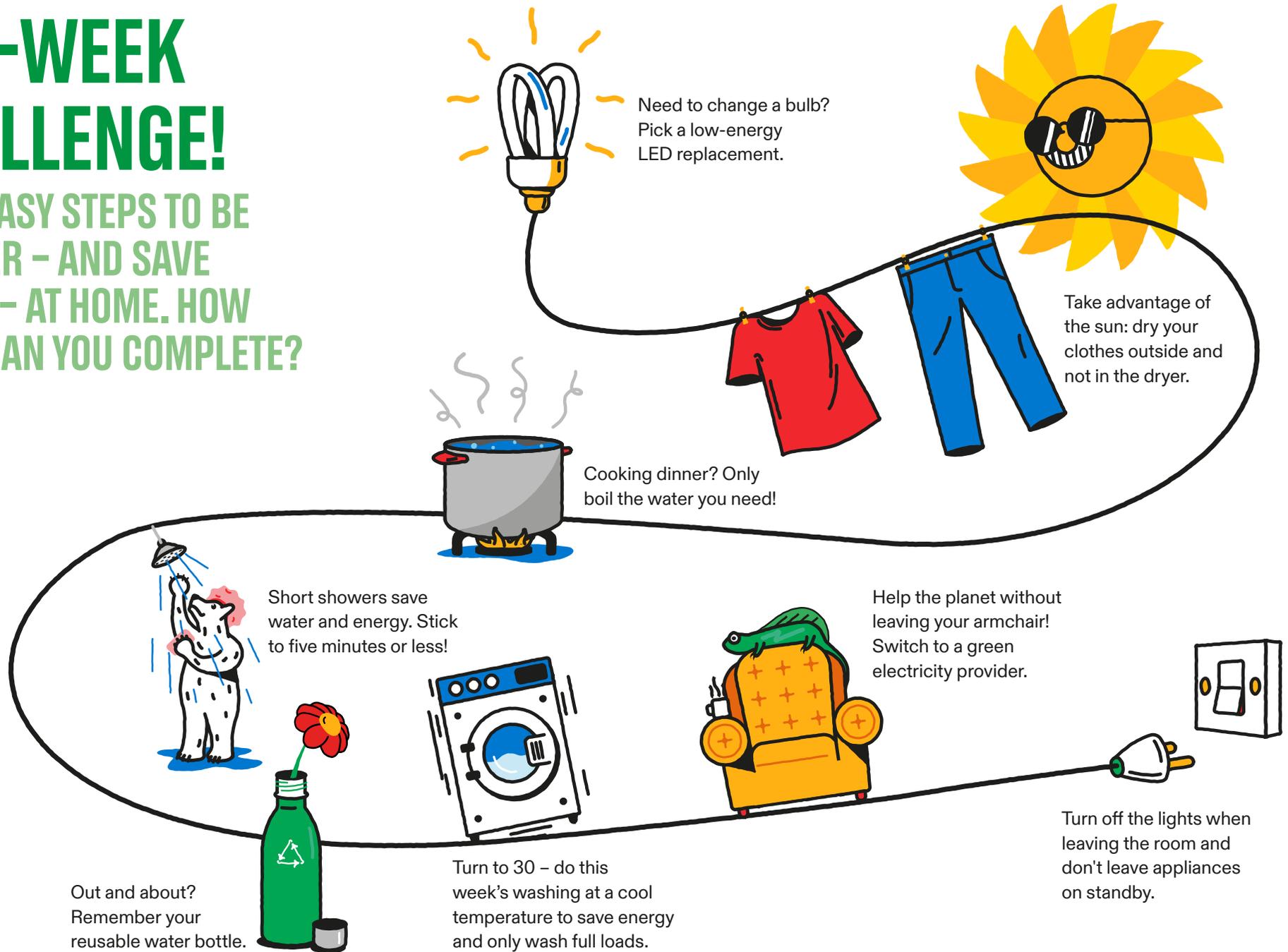
**Hannah Mills**

 Olympic Champion, Sailing

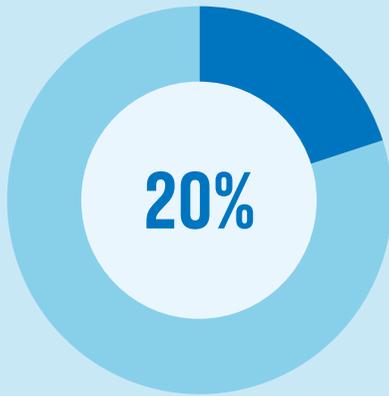


# ONE-WEEK CHALLENGE!

## EIGHT EASY STEPS TO BE GREENER – AND SAVE MONEY – AT HOME. HOW MANY CAN YOU COMPLETE?



# WHAT CAN YOU SAVE?



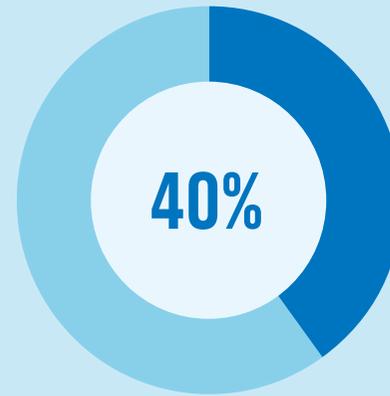
**20%**

Over 14% of your energy bill may be spent on lighting and appliances. Turn them off when not in use to cut your bills.<sup>25</sup>



**USD 266**

Switching to reusable water bottles could save you USD 266 a year.<sup>26</sup>



**40%**

Washing at 30° uses around 40% less electricity than higher temperatures.<sup>27</sup>



**50 LITRES**

A five-minute shower could save 50 litres of water – and save money on heating too.

# HEALTHY DIET, HEALTHY PLANET, HEALTHY YOU

**A**s every athlete knows, what we eat is all-important. Our food provides the fuel and nutrients we need to repair from training, build muscle and optimise our performance.

Unfortunately, food production today has an enormous environmental footprint, putting pressure on the climate, natural resources and people. But we can all help to change this. What's more, sustainable food choices are often part of a healthier diet too.

By making informed food choices and cutting down on waste, you'll feel the benefits for your health and your wallet while doing your bit for the planet. Eating better can even help your performance on the sports field.

This section has some simple ideas to get you started.



**"First of all, I love vegetables. I love fruits and vegetables. It's not hard for me. I saw all the benefits of being vegan: the ethical, the environmental, the social. All these things I could do to help contribute to a better, a bigger cause. I have all the protein I need."**

**Vivian Kong**

 Olympian, Fencing

## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?



**A big climate footprint.** Over a third of all greenhouse gas emissions come from food production, but some foods are more climate-friendly than others.<sup>28</sup> Vegetables, grains and legumes have a much lower footprint than meat and dairy products.



**Crowding out nature.** Producing food contributes to loss of habitats and species around the world. In fact, around 60% of biodiversity loss is related to food production.<sup>29</sup>



**Thirsty work.** Food production uses huge amounts of water and other resources.



**Forest friend or foe?** The production of products like beef, palm oil and soy is often linked to deforestation. Palm oil is used in a huge number of products and soy is a major ingredient in livestock feed – so it's likely that some of the food you buy has contributed to the loss of precious forests.



**A waste problem.** Some 30% of all the food produced is never eaten! In fact, an area the size of Mexico is farmed each year for food that ends up going to waste.<sup>30</sup> Single-use plastic food packaging is a growing problem.



**Unhealthy diets.** Many health problems are linked to a poor diet – including diabetes, heart problems and some cancers. Processed foods can be low cost but may provide very little nutrition or fibre, come with a lot of packaging, and contain high levels of sugar or salt.

SDGs

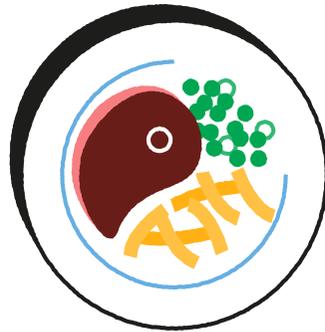
2
ZERO HUNGER


3
GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING


# WHAT'S OUR FOOTPRINT?

## EVERYTHING WE EAT HAS A HIDDEN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.

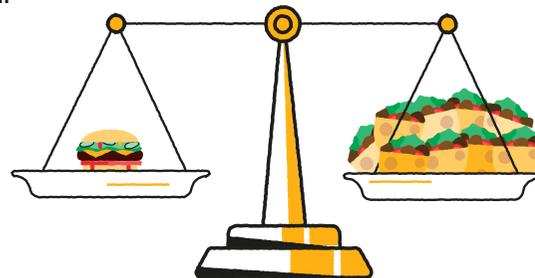
1 meal for 1



800L of water  
1.3L of diesel  
= 10kg of soil  
3.5kg of CO<sub>2</sub><sup>31</sup>

## HOW DOES IT STACK UP?

Try switching to a plant-based option. Research shows that a plant-based burger may generate 90% less greenhouse gas emissions, require 46% less energy, and have 99% less impact on water scarcity compared to a beef burger.<sup>32</sup>



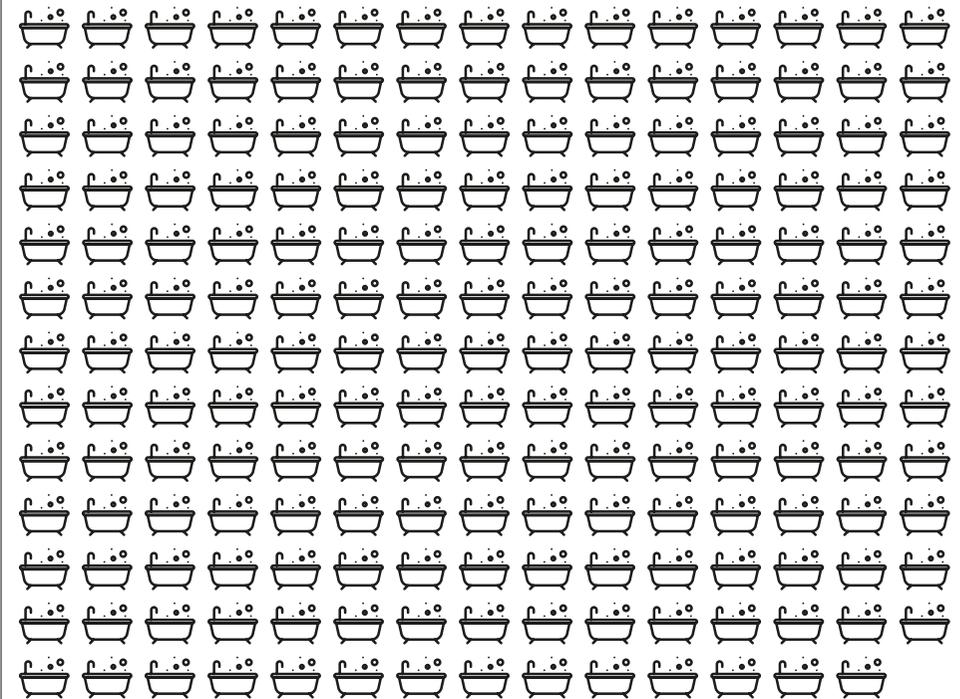
And it tastes great too!

## SOME FOODS HAVE AN EVEN BIGGER FOOTPRINT.

To make just six beef burgers...



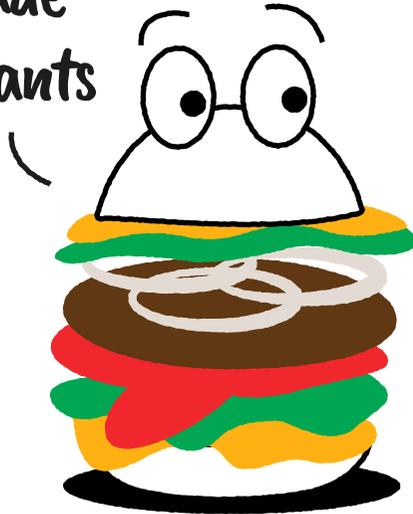
... requires around 15,500 litres of water.<sup>33</sup>



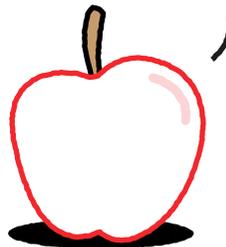
That's enough for 194 baths!  
Still really want a burger?

# WHAT CAN I DO?

I'm made from plants



Me too



## EAT LESS MEAT AND DAIRY

- Cutting down on meat is one of the easiest ways to make your diet more sustainable. Research suggests that a plant-based diet can reduce your food carbon footprint by 73%.<sup>34</sup> Eating more vegetables is good for you too.
- But you don't have to be perfect. Even one meat-free day a week will make a difference!

- Think you're a committed carnivore? There are lots of tasty plant-based proteins now available that have the texture and feel of meat – why not give them a try?
- Dairy also has a big carbon footprint, and some people find it hard to digest. If you can, why not try switching to oat milk – it uses a fraction of the land and water needed to produce cow's milk.

## WASTE LESS

- Good planning is the enemy of waste! Create a meal plan for the week and only buy what you need. You may be surprised how much food and money you can save.
- Try a portion size tool or weighing scales so you always cook the right amount of rice or pasta.
- Eat up your leftovers the next day, use them in a new recipe or freeze them for another day. You'll spend less time in the kitchen for your next meal too.
- Download a local food waste app – you'll be able to pick up great-tasting food for bargain prices in your area.

## CUT DOWN ON PACKAGING

- When out shopping, look for food options without unnecessary plastic packaging, and bring your own reusable shopping bags.
- Why not give your local farmers' market a try? You'll often find fresh, local produce without excessive packaging.
- Cut down on takeaways, which often come highly packaged and cause lots of waste.

Nature makes the best packaging!

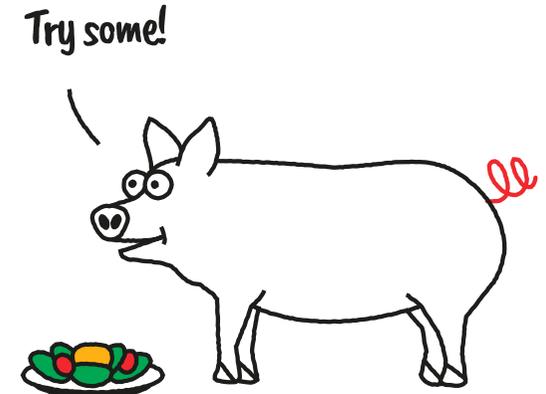


## BUY LOCAL, BUY SEASONAL, BUY BETTER

- Opt for locally produced food that's in season – it will have more flavour and be more nutritious. You'll be supporting local food businesses too.
- Transporting food has a big carbon footprint, so by eating local you'll also be doing your bit for the climate.
- If you're a meat eater, try to choose high-quality meat and dairy such as free range and organic options. You'll be supporting better animal welfare standards and benefit from food produced with fewer chemicals.

## OR GROW YOUR OWN!

- Reduce food miles even more by growing your own fruit and vegetables. Gardening is great exercise too!
- Don't have a garden? Herbs work well in a window box or on a balcony. You can also check to see if there's a community garden or local food growing project near you.
- Start a compost heap for waste food – your soil will thank you.



## GET COOKING

- Cooking your own meals with fresh produce is often much healthier than opting for ultra-processed foods, takeaways and ready meals.
- Cooking doesn't have to be time-consuming – there are lots of simple, healthy recipes available online.
- If you have a freezer, batch cooking can help you save money and reduce time in the kitchen.
- How about creating your own healthier snacks for refuelling after your next sports session?

## LOOK FOR THE LABEL

- Choose products that have been sustainably sourced and produced to high animal welfare standards. There are many labelling schemes to help make these choices easier.
- Or try your local health food shop – they'll have done the hard work for you and found lots of tasty and healthy products you can try.

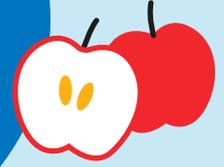
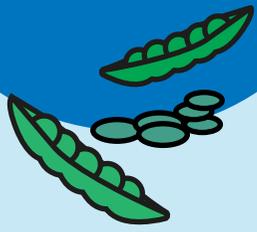
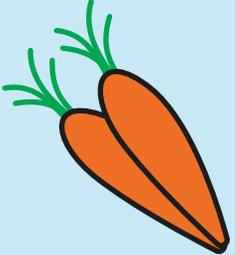
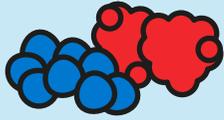
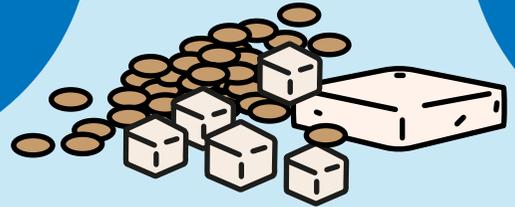
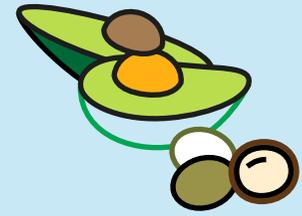
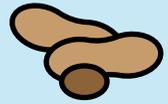
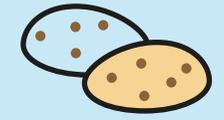
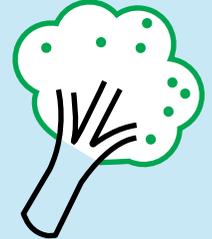
# HARNESS THE POWER OF PLANTS<sup>35</sup>

Plant-based eating is good for the planet, good for our health and tastes great too. Even going meat- and dairy-free for one day a week can make a big impact.

Did you know that many athletes have switched to plant-based diets to support their training? Some find it helps them recover more quickly after an injury.

Fruit and vegetables are a great source of vitamins, minerals, fibre and other nutrients. Eating a wide variety every day can help you stay healthy.

A study by the University of Oxford showed that producing a glass of dairy milk results in almost three times more greenhouse gas emissions than some plant-based milks and requires nine times more land.<sup>36</sup>



# A FRIEND TO NATURE

Spending time in nature makes us feel good, and research shows it benefits our health too – reducing stress and anxiety, and even boosting our immune systems. It’s no wonder that people enjoy taking part in sport in the great outdoors.

Yet nature doesn’t just make us feel good, we depend on it for survival. Our forests, wild areas and oceans store carbon, clean our air and provide us with food, medicines and materials.

Today, our natural world is in trouble, with up to a million plants and animal species at risk of extinction.

Luckily, there are things we can all do in our everyday lives to help take care of the plants and animals who share our planet.



“Make sure to put your trash properly in a bin so I can spend more time preparing for the Olympics, rather than putting on my wetsuit to pick it up from the seabed for you.”

**Martin Helseth**  
 Olympian, Rowing

## WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?



**A sixth mass extinction.** We are losing species up to 10,000 times faster than the natural rate.<sup>37</sup> The main causes are habitat loss due to deforestation and development; fishing, farming and hunting practices; climate change; pollution and chemicals. The illegal wildlife trade is also pushing many species to the brink of extinction.



**Food production.** Very few of us would ever knowingly harm an endangered species, but we often do so unknowingly through the food we eat. Crops such as palm oil and soya are often linked to deforestation, and this loss of precious tropical forests puts iconic species like orangutans and tigers in danger.



**A problem in our seas.** Overfishing and illegal fishing are harming our oceans, and hundreds of thousands of dolphins, whales, turtles and sea birds die each year by getting caught or tangled in fishing nets. Fish farms can cause serious pollution and the loss of important habitats such as mangrove forests. Plastic pollution is affecting streams, rivers, landscapes and oceans across the world.



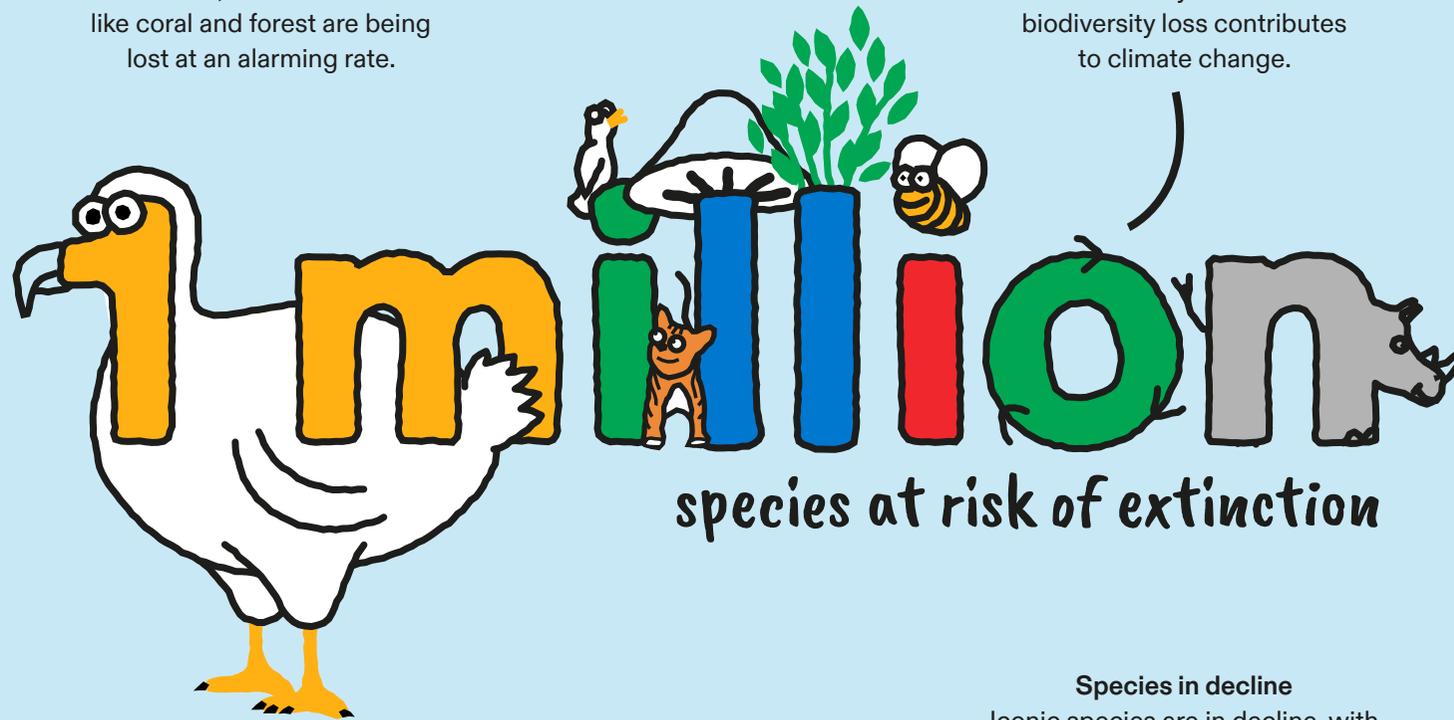
**Pollution and chemicals.** Chemicals used in our homes and gardens, and in manufacturing and farming, are having a big impact on the natural world. Some are linked to the decline in bees and pollinating insects, which is bad news for us humans too since insects pollinate three-quarters of the crops we eat.<sup>38</sup>

**Nowhere to live**

Only 15% of land and 7.5% of seas are protected.<sup>39</sup> Humans have affected 75% of the world's land,<sup>40</sup> and vital habitats like coral and forest are being lost at an alarming rate.

**A vicious circle**

Climate change causes biodiversity loss – and biodiversity loss contributes to climate change.



**Dead as a dodo?**

The dodo bird is famously extinct due to human activity. But did you know that we've also caused the loss of 84% of all wild mammals and half of all plants?<sup>41</sup>

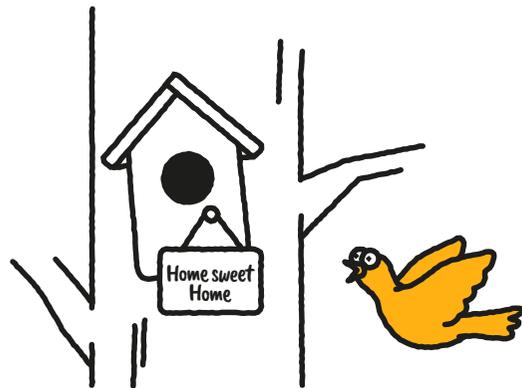
**Species in decline**

Iconic species are in decline, with 71% of sharks lost since 1970<sup>42</sup> and 96% of tigers lost in 100 years.<sup>43</sup> But the species we can't see matter too – like phytoplankton, which feed ocean life and store half of the world's carbon. We've lost 40% of them since the 1950s.<sup>44</sup>

# WHAT CAN I DO?

## MAKE YOUR HOME AND GARDEN NATURE-FRIENDLY

- Got a balcony or space for a window box? Add some flowers to provide a pit-stop for bees, butterflies and other pollinators.
- If you're lucky enough to have a garden, there are lots of ways you can make it nature friendly. Start by growing lots of flowers and native plants. Why not add a bug hotel, a bird box or a small pond to help wildlife find a home in your garden? Log piles can also provide shelter for many small species.



- Say no to pesticides! These chemicals kill bees and butterflies and harm birds and other wildlife. They can also be bad for our health and pollute the air and water. Opt for natural methods of pest control instead.
- Think about the chemicals inside your home too – they can end up in the environment when they get washed down the drain. Look for more environmentally friendly options when buying cleaning and personal care products.



## CONSIDER NATURE IN YOUR SHOPPING BAG

- Look for fish and seafood that has been sustainably sourced. Selecting different types of fish, rather than the most popular varieties, can be a good way to reduce pressure on fish stocks.
- Choose sustainably sourced mussels and oysters for your next meal. They can help to clean up our seas and can be produced very sustainably.
- Ask your favourite food brands how they're protecting the environment. If they're not doing anything, ask them to change!

## THINK YOU DON'T EAT PALM OIL OR SOY? THINK AGAIN!

Palm oil is found in up to 50% of the packaged goods on sale in a typical supermarket – from biscuits to shampoos.<sup>45</sup> Soy is one of the main ingredients used in animal feed – so any meat you eat is more than likely to have been reared on a soy-based diet.

- Don't buy products linked to deforestation. If you're buying a product that contains palm oil, make sure it has been certified by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). Eating more plant-based food and less meat can help reduce the use of soy in the food supply chain. For wood, pick Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified products, or a similar certification scheme.
- Everything we buy can have an impact on nature, from the pesticides used to grow cotton for our clothing to the chemicals used to mine the metals in our mobile phones. Read more about buying better on page 10.

## LOOK AFTER OUR WILD PLACES

- When you're out and about, always put your litter in the bin. Never drop unwanted food, cigarette butts, plastic bottles or packaging on the ground because they can end up in our seas, rivers and countryside.
- So many sports take place outdoors – from football to biking, diving and skiing. Whatever your sport, always clean up after yourself and take all



your kit home. Stick to marked trails and avoid protected areas – you'll stop erosion and prevent damage to delicate plants. You'll also be leaving more space for wildlife, enabling them to safely feed, hibernate and bring up their young.

- Going camping? Only set up camp in established campsites, and be ultra-careful when lighting campfires. Fires can easily get out of control and devastate wild areas.
- Encourage your government to increase protected areas for wildlife.

## KEEP WILD ANIMALS IN THE WILD!

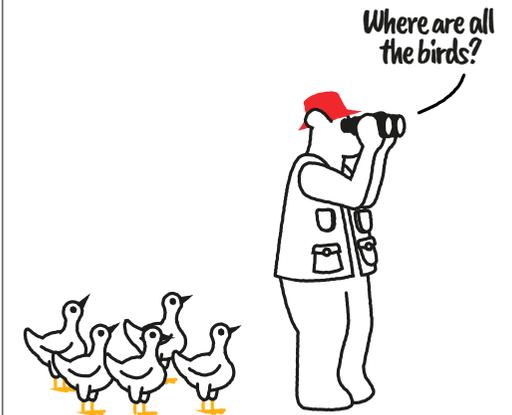
- Never buy products made from wild animals and endangered species. Say no to ivory, tortoiseshell, reptile skins and fur.
- Don't buy medicines or eat foods made from protected and endangered animals such as tigers, pangolins and sharks.
- Don't buy shells, starfish and coral or take them from the beach. Often, the amazing shells you see on sale are harvested illegally, and the animals that live in them are killed in the process.



- Don't visit exotic animal cafés that feature wild animals, and be careful if buying an exotic pet – you could be supporting the illegal pet trade and encouraging wildlife trafficking.
- Think you've witnessed illegal wildlife products or practices? Report any concerns to the relevant authority in your country.

## BE A CITIZEN SCIENTIST

- Why not learn about the nature in your area? There are lots of guides and apps available to help you identify the species you may see on your next walk.
- You can even take part in one of the many citizen science projects and wildlife surveys that happen each year. These may involve counting or photographing the wildlife you see and help to improve scientific understanding and protect nature. Check with local wildlife organisations to see how you can get involved.
- Want to go even further? There are lots of conservation organisations that need your help! If you volunteer at your local nature reserve or community garden, you won't just be giving nature a hand – it can also be a great way to spend time outside, meet new people and get fit!



# COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

In today's digital world, we don't always feel so connected to those around us and may not really get to know our local neighbourhood. That's a shame because feeling part of a community can make us safer, happier and healthier, and give us opportunities for work, friendship and fun.

Whether it's joining your local sports team, starting a new hobby or helping out at a local charity or neighbourhood group, getting involved can be good for your community and good for you.

So why not see what's happening in your neighbourhood?



“In order to keep my island clean, I have brought the community together to clean our beaches and recycle the plastic we collect into sport equipment.”

**Valéry de Falbaire**

IOC Young Leader Alumni

## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?



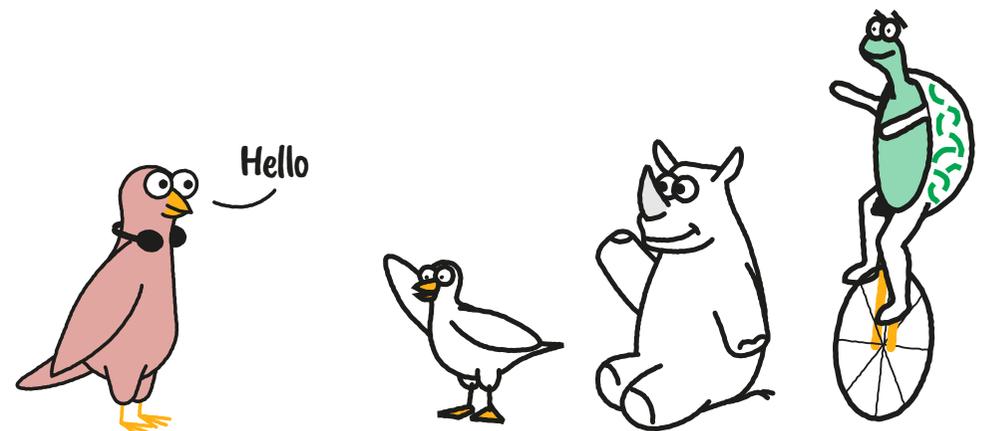
**Loneliness.** More and more of us are feeling lonely, and it's a big problem for our mental and physical health. Research shows that social isolation can increase our risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, depression, dementia and many other health concerns.<sup>46</sup>



**Community spirit.** Research shows that people who feel a sense of security, belonging and trust in their community have better health than those who feel isolated or marginalised.



**Charities and non-profits.** Many charitable and non-profit organisations are doing amazing work but with very limited resources. Volunteers can help these organisations achieve their goals and help more people.



# WHAT CAN I DO?

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Getting involved in your neighbourhood is a great way to help others – but you'll gain a lot too. By investing your time in your local area, you can:

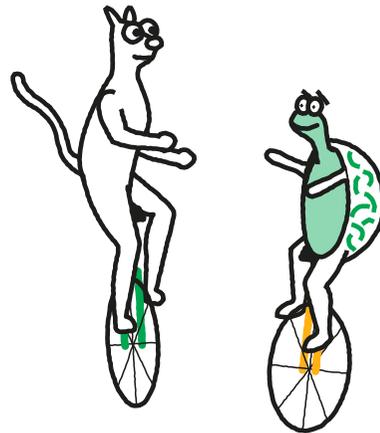
- Feel more connected to your community

### Connect with your community



### Make new friends

- Meet your neighbours and make new friends



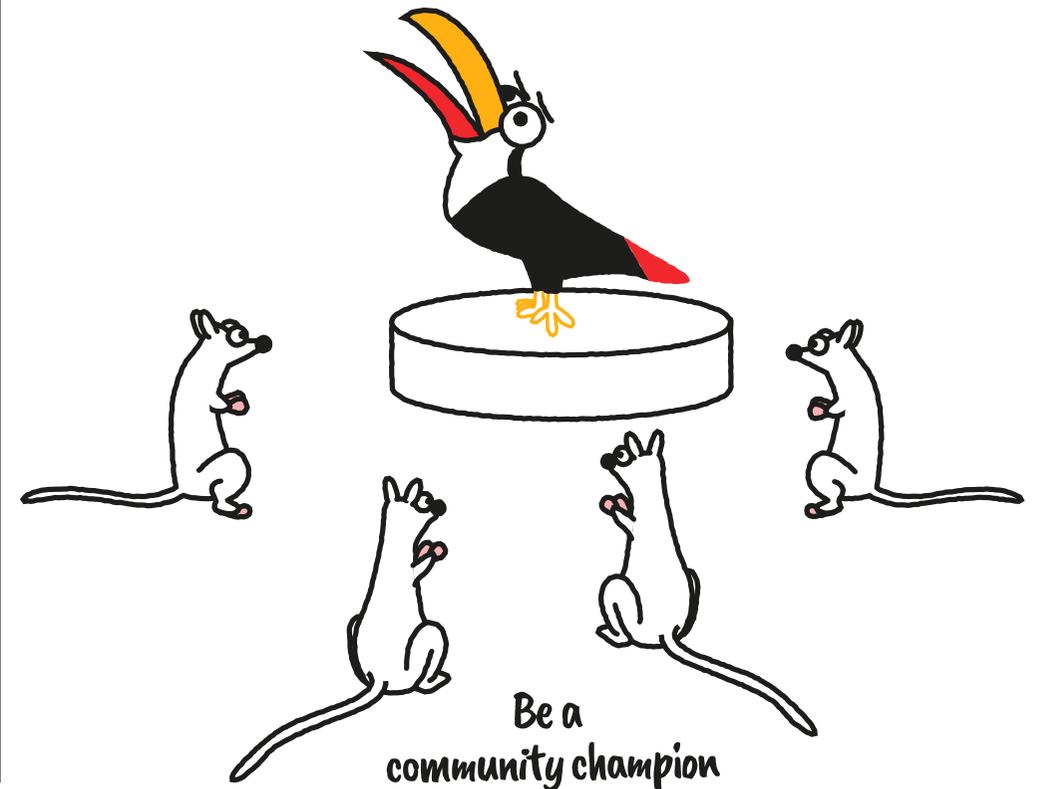
### Learn new skills

- Discover new interests and develop new skills

- Gain valuable experience that can help you to get a job
- Get fit! Many volunteering opportunities, like conservation projects, can be a source of exercise
- Know you've made a difference to someone's life



### Have fun and get fit



### Be a community champion

## GET INVOLVED

If you've got a skill and a bit of spare time – then why not volunteer? It's a great way to meet new people, gain new experience and even to get fit.

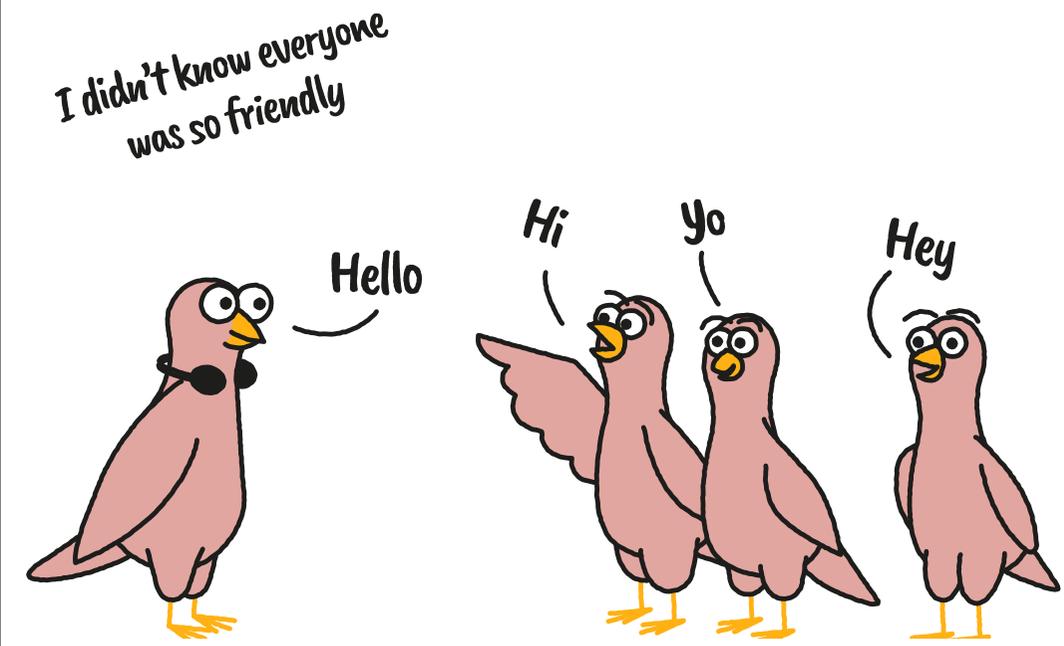
There's a volunteering opportunity to suit everyone. Great at sport? Become a volunteer coach at your local sports club. Love to chat? Sign up to visit elderly people living near you. Do you love plants and consider yourself green-fingered? Join a local gardening club or conservation project.

Can't find a local volunteering project? You can try contacting local sports clubs, schools, libraries, religious centres, food banks, hospitals or charities. There's bound to be someone that needs you!

Looking for a new challenge? Try signing up for a local class or trying out a new sport. It's a great way to meet people and learn new skills. There are clubs and classes for everything – from cooking and mechanics to yoga and running.

## SHOP LOCAL

Support the local businesses near where you live and work by shopping locally. It can help boost the local economy, support jobs and contribute to a thriving community.



## TALK MORE!

Finding opportunities to talk to people in your neighbourhood can make you feel good and help build a community spirit. Why not strike up a conversation next time you're at the coffee shop or visiting your local sports club? Start by putting away your phone and taking off your headphones – you might be surprised how many conversations result. Research shows that chatting with people we come across during the day can boost our wellbeing.

Fond of a film night, bake sale, street party or craft fair? Interested in talks and lectures? Find out about local events and go along. Want to get fit? Find a local running club. You can improve your fitness and meet new people.

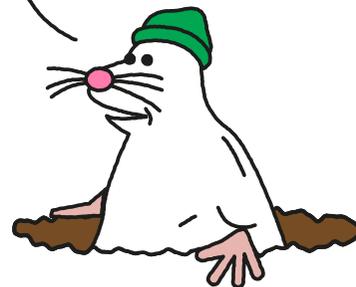
If there's nothing happening in your neighbourhood, why not get together with a few others and organise something?

*Home-grown food always tastes better*



Good idea!

You should join our gardening club



# STAND UP FOR EQUALITY

**Despite great progress, millions of people across the world are still affected by prejudice and discrimination such as sexism, racism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia, among others.**

**There are steps we can all take every day to stand up for equality and help to change attitudes and actions.**

## **Don't stay silent**

Whether it's at home, at work or on the sports pitch, call out any discriminatory comments. By speaking up, you can help change attitudes and behaviour for the better.

## **Listen**

Recognise that others' experience will be different from your own. Create space for underrepresented groups to be heard. Treat everyone fairly and with respect.

## **Learn**

Value and learn from people's different cultures and perspectives. Be curious and ask questions. Being open to other viewpoints makes life more interesting and helps us all to understand each other better.

## **Be aware of stereotypes – and challenge them**

This includes your own biases. Everyone has biases, but if we're aware of them, we can take steps to stop them influencing how we think and act.

## **Be a role model at home**

Share the household chores and childcare equally with your partner. Tell your friends and family about it and why it matters.

## **Stand up for equality at work and in sport**

Support equal pay and other actions that promote equality, such as ensuring diverse voices in decision-making bodies and providing equitable development and training opportunities.

# HOW TO MAKE A CHANGE – AND MAKE IT STICK!

This Guide is full of ideas for how you can get involved, feel healthier and do something good for the planet. Each time you implement one of the ideas, you're casting your vote for the kind of world you want to live in. But changing our habits isn't always easy – so how can we make change stick?

## It's a journey!

Change happens bit by bit. It's all the small actions we take every day and how often we repeat them that count. When it comes to changing our habits, it's a marathon – not a sprint.

## Know “why”

There are so many benefits to living more sustainably. What motivates you? Write down your ideas so you can keep reminding yourself why this matters.

## Set a goal

Think about the changes you want to make in your life and write down a goal or goals for the things you want to change.

## Tell others

Tell your friends and family what you're doing. Saying it out loud can help to keep you motivated.

## Put into action

You know what you need to do – now let's do it! Walk to work, donate old clothes to the charity shop or try a meat-free day.

Start with just one action that's realistic and attainable.

When you succeed, add another one. Tried a change that doesn't work for you? Don't be put off – do pick something else to try. Keep reminding yourself why you're doing it!

## Rinse and repeat

Take time to reflect on how you're doing. Have any of the changes become new habits? Did you deviate from your goals? Either way, it's okay. Celebrate your successes and reflect on your challenges. Can you do something different next time?

## Don't try to be perfect

You probably won't achieve all your goals at once, but don't get disheartened. It's always better to do something than nothing. Keep taking small steps to create the kind of world you want to live in – you'll be a champion in no time!



“One of the most impactful ways to make a difference is to engage the people around you. It was great to talk with my teammates about our environmental impact and find ways to reduce it together.”

**Nike Lorenz**

 Olympian, Field Hockey

# BE A TRAVEL CHAMPION

**T**ravel opens up new horizons and creates opportunities for fun and adventure. Whether it's trying new food, learning about different cultures or experiencing one of the world's many natural wonders, the trips we take can be a source of happy memories for years to come.

For a sports fan, travelling to support your team or to cheer on a friend or family member can be a real highlight. Tourism can also benefit the places we visit – creating jobs for people around the world, supporting local businesses and raising funds for conservation.

Yet sometimes our holidays and sports trips come at a big cost to the environment, from greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change to litter and pollution at tourist hot spots.

This section contains tips to help you make your next trip a more sustainable one. From how you travel to where you visit and what you do when you get there, by making smart choices you can have an amazing trip and leave your destination in great shape for future visitors.



“You might not be able to avoid flying to get to events, but think about your travel footprint in your home life. Are you able to take a train? Or could you have just as good a time vacationing closer to home and exploring your home or neighbouring countries?”

**Seyi Smith**

 Olympian, Athletics and Bobsleigh

## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?



**A big carbon footprint.** In a typical year, tourism is responsible for 8% of all global greenhouse gas emissions. The majority of these come from transport, with flights having the biggest impact.<sup>47</sup>



**Water-thirsty holidays.** Tourism can contribute to the over-use of water, particularly in hot, dry countries. Large hotels, golf courses and swimming pools all have a big impact, while many plastic water bottles end up as litter.



**A litter problem.** Not every tourist remembers to take their rubbish home, so many beautiful places end up blighted by litter. In some destinations, local waste management infrastructure struggles to cope with the rubbish left behind by tourism.



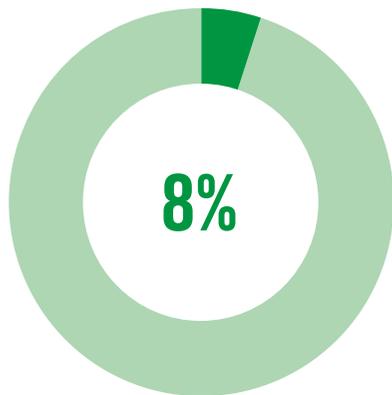
**Too many visitors.** Tourist numbers have risen significantly in recent years. This can result in overcrowded sites, high levels of litter and pollution, and price increases for local communities. In some cases, not enough local people and businesses directly benefit from the money spent by tourists.



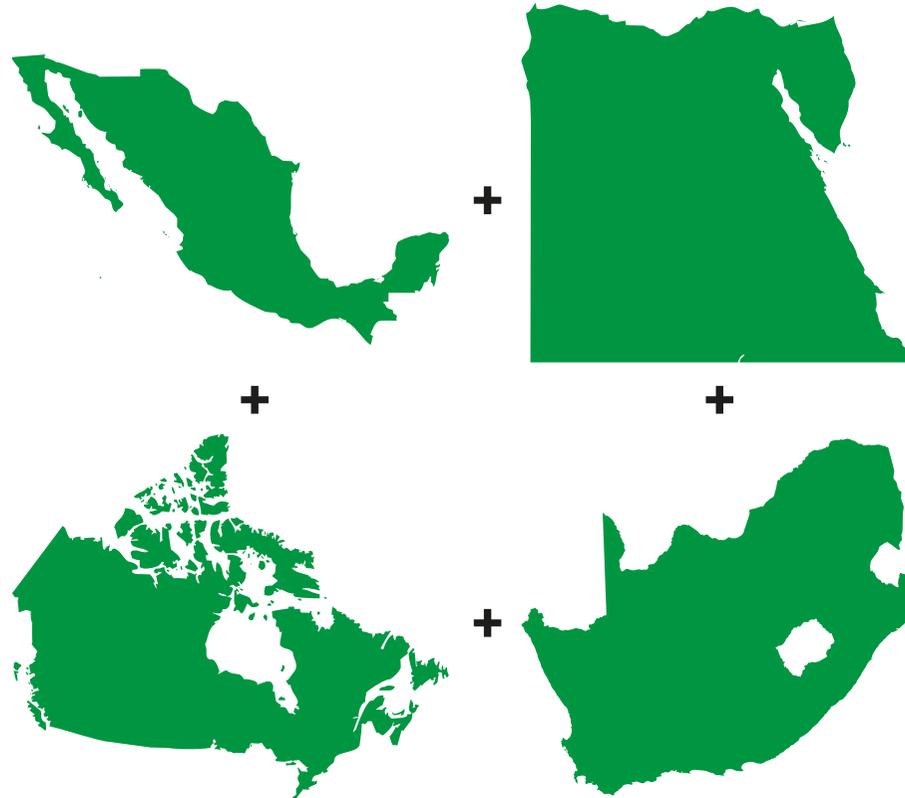
**A big impact on land and wildlife.** Use of land for tourism can lead to natural habitat loss and pressure on endangered species. When many people visit the same sites, problems like soil erosion can affect the local ecosystem.

# WHAT'S OUR TRAVEL FOOTPRINT?

In a typical year, tourism is responsible for 8% of all greenhouse gas emissions worldwide.<sup>48</sup>



That's as much as all the emissions produced by Canada, Egypt, Mexico and South Africa put together.<sup>49</sup>



Three-quarters of emissions from tourism are due to the transport we take to get to our destinations.<sup>49</sup>



Long-haul flights are the biggest contributor.

Flying from Tokyo to Sydney and back may produce over two tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per passenger. That's more than the average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of someone living in Indonesia over a whole year.<sup>50</sup>

# BEFORE YOU LEAVE: PLANNING YOUR TRIP

**W**ant to choose a planet-friendly option for your next holiday or sports adventure? With the right planning and some smart choices, you can make a big dent in your travel footprint.

How you travel, where you choose to stay and what you take with you are some of the important factors to consider.



“Being involved in winter sports, I’ve seen the impact of climate change first-hand with milder winters and more rain when it used to snow. I am trying to make everyday changes to reduce my impact and my goal is to halve my carbon footprint over 10 years.”

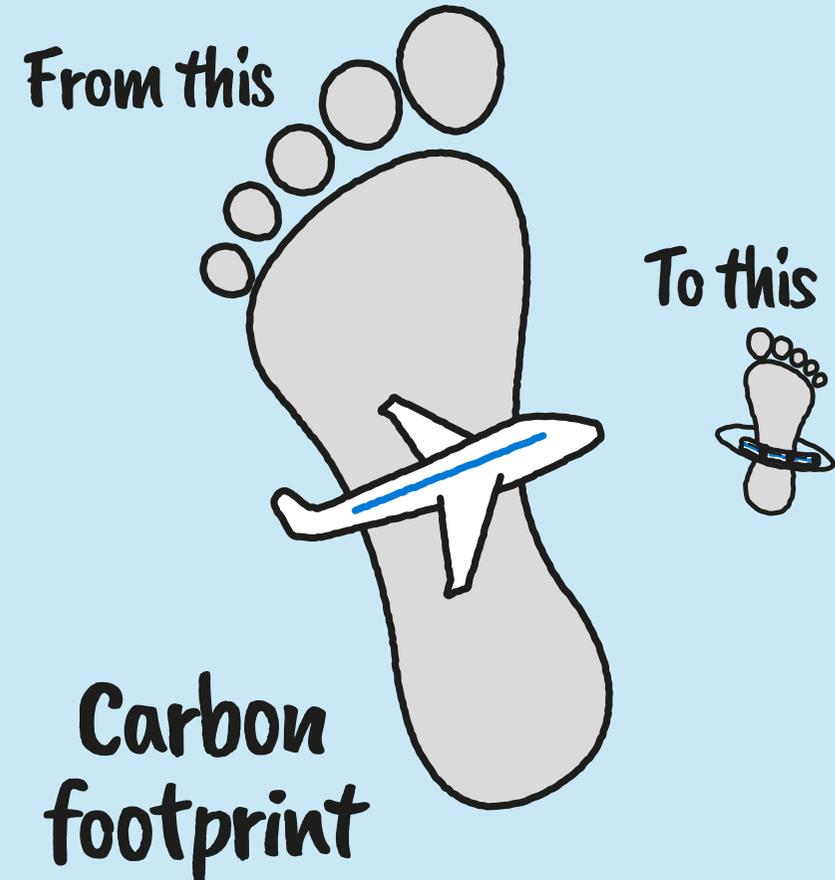
**Chris Mazdzer**  
 Olympian, Luge



## SHRINK YOUR FOOTPRINT

When it comes to your travel footprint, the biggest change you can make is to travel by road or rail rather than fly.

Taking the train from London to Paris will produce 90% less CO<sub>2</sub> than flying the same distance.<sup>51</sup>



# WHAT CAN I DO?

## PICK A LOW-IMPACT TRANSPORT OPTION

- If you can, travel to your destination by train or coach. A train journey may emit around 90% less CO<sub>2</sub> than the equivalent flight. For short trips, it can often be just as fast.
- If you have to fly, reduce the number of plane journeys you take each year. Remember, short-haul routes produce less greenhouse gas emissions than long-haul journeys.
- If flying is your only transport option, consider offsetting the emissions from your flight. There are many ways to do this – look for a provider whose projects are independently certified.
- Show you care. Contact your airline and ask them what steps they're taking to reduce emissions. Customer feedback can help motivate businesses to make changes.



## CHECK THEIR CREDENTIALS



- Using a tour operator? Pick one that has a clear policy on responsible tourism and protecting the environment. Things to look out for include a commitment to small group tours, use of eco-friendly accommodation, and support for local people and businesses.
- Staying in a hotel? Find out what they're doing to protect the environment and support their local community. If they don't have a policy, ask them why not.
- Opting for independent small hotels rather than big chains can increase the benefits of your stay to the local economy. Or why not immerse yourself in the local culture by choosing a homestay?
- Taking a cruise? Big cruise ships can have a big impact on the ocean environment. Ask what they're doing to reduce waste and protect the environment before you book.

## CONSIDER YOUR DESTINATION

- Read up about where you're going. Knowing about the local culture and traditions can help make your trip more enjoyable and ensure you respect local customs.
- Bit of a linguist? Learning a few words and phrases of the local language before you go will come in handy and will often be appreciated by the local people you'll meet.



## PACK SMART, PACK LIGHT

- Going to a sporting event? Bring your reusable banner with you. Avoid single use plastic items like balloons and clappers.
- Protect your skin and the sea by finding an ocean friendly sunscreen. Avoid products containing chemicals known to damage coral and ocean life.
- Don't forget your reusables. Bringing your reusable water bottle and shopping bag can help you cut down on plastic waste during your trip.
- Don't pack more than you need. The heavier your suitcase, the more energy required to transport it.
- Can you save paper by using a digital version of your ticket, boarding pass and itinerary?



# WHEN YOU GET THERE: BEING A GOOD GUEST

**W**hen we travel, we become a guest in someone else's home. Whether you're going on a beach holiday, a trip to watch your national team in action or embarking on a once in

a lifetime trekking adventure, there are some easy steps you can take to make sure you're a good visitor. You'll reduce your impact on the planet and have a more enjoyable trip too.



## DID YOU KNOW?



Around one in 10 jobs worldwide are linked to tourism.

More of the money spent with local businesses stays in the local economy. By supporting local shops rather than big chains, you'll be helping to create jobs and contributing to a thriving community for local people.



“There are over 100 million beach visits every year so if we each pick up just five pieces of litter, that would equate to over 500 million pieces of rubbish being cleared – imagine what a difference we can all make.”

**Ben Fogle**

UNEP Patron of the Wilderness



# WHAT CAN I DO?

*I've been to Paris, Rome and London*

**Bring your reusables**



## CUT DOWN ON ENERGY, WATER AND WASTE

- Try to walk and cycle, or use public transport when getting around. It's better for the environment, and you'll see more of the local area than if you whiz past in a car or taxi.
- Staying in a hotel? Do you really need fresh towels every day? Reducing your laundry can help save energy and water – particularly important in hot, dry countries.
- Avoid plastic packaging, and don't forget your reusable bag and water bottle when you're out and about.

## RESPECT LOCAL PEOPLE AND CUSTOMS

- Read up on local customs and learn a few phrases of the local language. Your hosts will appreciate your efforts and it can help you feel more at home in the place you're visiting. If you're visiting religious and cultural sites, follow the rules and dress codes.
- Always ask before you take someone's photo.
- Hiring a local guide can be a great way to find out about local customs and explore beyond the usual tourist hot spots.

- Travelling in peak season? Ask your host or hotel staff to recommend quieter, less well-known places to visit. Getting off the beaten track can make for a more interesting experience and reduce pressure on the most crowded sites.

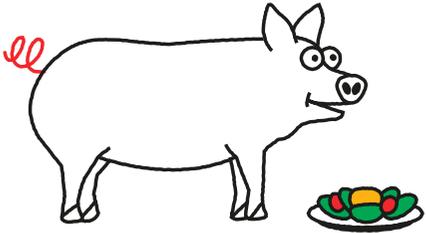
## BE PLANET-WISE WHEN ENJOYING SPORT

- When taking part in sport, always look after the local environment – especially if you're in protected areas with fragile ecosystems such as coral reefs and mountains. Never leave litter or kit behind, and remember your ocean-friendly sunscreen.

- Stick to established paths and routes when hiking, biking and skiing. You'll be doing your bit to stop erosion and protect plants and animals.
- Going golfing? Pick a course that has been certified by the Golf Environment Organisation (GEO), showing it has strong environmental policies.
- Ask sporting venues that you visit about their environmental policies.



## EAT AND SHOP LOCAL



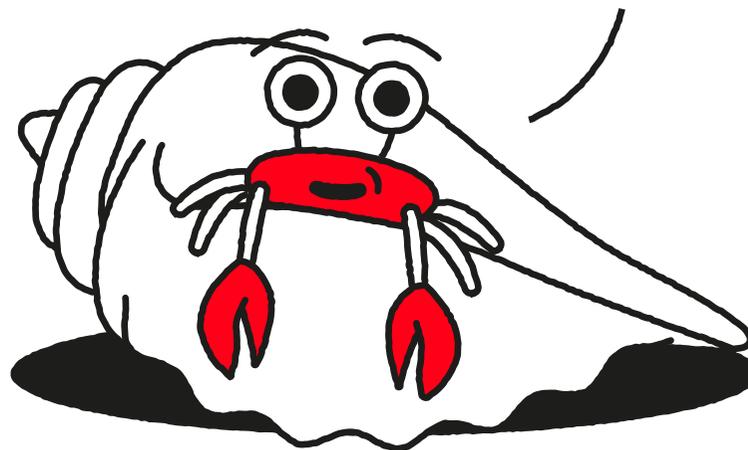
- Want to buy a souvenir? Look for something that is handcrafted locally, or made from local sustainable materials. A product from an artisan seller at the local market will be more unique than a mass-produced trinket from a big chain store.
- Embrace the opportunity to try new foods at local restaurants. Try to shop locally too, and choose markets over supermarkets – you’ll be supporting local businesses and giving back to the community you’re visiting. Eating local dishes with local ingredients is also good for the environment because it reduces food miles.
- On a homestay? Ask your host to recommend the best restaurants and shops in the area.

## SAY NO TO THE ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

- Never buy products linked to wild animals and endangered species. Say no to ivory, tortoiseshell, reptile skins and fur.
- Don’t buy medicines or eat foods made from protected and endangered animals like tigers, pangolins and sharks.

- Don’t buy shells, starfish and coral or take them from the beach – it harms marine ecosystems. Often, the amazing shells you see on sale are harvested illegally and the animals that live in them are killed in the process.
- A wildlife holiday can be a great experience and provide vital funds to support conservation work. Make sure you pick a responsible tour operator and check their policies. Don’t visit zoos or theme parks that offer wild animal shows or rides – they are unlikely to be supporting genuine conservation work.

*It's my home*



## LEAVE NOTHING BEHIND



- Always put your rubbish/trash in the bin. Never drop unwanted food, cigarette butts, plastic bottles or packaging on the ground.
- Use the recycling bins at your hotel or accommodation. If there isn’t one, ask the manager why not.
- On a homestay? Ask your host where to put the recycling.
- Want to be a true champion? Pick up a few pieces of litter on your next visit to the beach or beauty spot and put them in the bin.

# TRAVEL CHAMPION TOP 5

1

## STAY ON THE GROUND

Whenever you can, pick road and rail. Avoid flying.

2

## KEEP WILDLIFE IN THE WILD

Never buy or eat products made from protected or endangered species.

3

## KEEP THE WORLD BEAUTIFUL

Never drop litter. Take your reusables on your next trip.

4

## SHOW THAT YOU CARE

Ask travel companies what they're doing to protect the environment.

5

## THINK LOCAL

Shop and eat locally. Learn some phrases in the local language. Respect local customs.

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