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Global-Reducing ecological impact isn't always a burden

Going green includes the little things

[Elyse Narozonick](#)

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People talk about it almost every morning on the news, it's featured in magazines, and products are sold in many a grocery store to help save it. Yup, the environmental impact issue.

According to [World Centric](#), a global environmental website, it turns out that the good old USA has the biggest ecological footprint in the world. We can't even blame those darn developing countries because the countries with the biggest ecological footprint are in order from biggest to smallest as follows: United States, Canada, Norway, France, Israel, Chile, Mexico, China, Indonesia, and Ethiopia and Indonesia were tied.

An ecological footprint is the total amount of land and water that is required to provide the raw materials that a person or population consumes. The average person in the United States uses 24 acres for each person, which is 19.5 acres more than the average person worldwide.



Elyse Narozonick

By taking an [ecological footprint quiz](#), I was able to find out that I would need 2.6 planets if everyone in the world was to live like me. The quiz asks about your transportation, food, and the size of the home you live in, among other things, to come up with a rough estimate of the kind of consumer you are.

I consider myself to be fairly aware of my impact on the environment. I ride my bike instead of drive when I can. I only drink water out of my metal canteen that I fill up every morning. I even use those dorky sandwich containers to keep from throwing away a Ziploc bag every day I bring a lunch. And yet I use 11 acres of land just for myself.

It turns out other people are living large too because humanity as a whole is using 15 percent more resources than what is actually available, and we are starting to see the results in many natural ecosystems. Estimates show that if everyone in the world lived like people in rich western countries (this would be us in America I'm afraid) we would need four or five more planets just to sustain ourselves, according to World Centric.

Since it's obvious that we won't be able to find four or five planets with Earth's growing capacity anytime soon, it's time for people to really see what their lives are costing the earth. By going to the ecological footprint website, you will be able to see what kind of impacts your lifestyle is having on the earth, and it might shock you as much as it did me.

To conclude this array of guilt-inspiring numbers I have come up with several things to do that would lower someone's ecological footprint. First, eat locally. Even if it means you have to drive yourself to the farmer's market, it's worth it for the freshly picked fruit and the lowered impact on the environment. Second, consider eating meat occasionally instead of as a staple. Even carb-counters can find healthy alternatives like tofu, soy powder or even brown rice with considerable amounts of protein. Third, grab your bike out of the garage and use it for errands. You'd be surprised how great it feels to cruise around on a bike and enjoy the gorgeous weather. So those are my three steps to a smaller footprint, hopefully some of you will get tired of clomping around in big footprints too.

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