If every American family replaced three of its 60-watt incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs, it would be like taking 3.5 million cars off the road.

If every American family lowered its hot water heater 20 degrees, it would be like taking 6 to 8 million cars off the road.

If every American driver bought a Toyota Prius, it would be like taking 60 million SUVs off the road.

The Broggi Glaciers in the Peruvian Andes have already receded to half the length they were in 1948. At this rate, experts predict they could be gone by 2030.

GLOBAL WARMING SPECIAL REPORT

KEEP YOUR COOL

It's pretty freakin' impossible to ignore the fact that our climate is changing more dramatically than the cohost lineup on *The View*. Whether we have Al Gore to thank or the bazillion scientists and researchers who pelt us with warnings about melting glaciers and confused polar bears, global warming is no longer just a theory. Earth has a fever: It's heating up because carbon dioxide (CO_2)–a gas we produce when we burn fossil fuels like petroleum or coal to make the electricity that powers our high-wattage lives–is trapping heat from the sun that would normally bounce away into space. The CO_2 acts like a layer of Saran Wrap around the planet, and like a bug in a roach motel, heat gets in but can't get out. It's what we call the greenhouse effect. So what's a little extra warmth? Is your life going to change that much? Well, it could–but not if you start doing some simple things now that'll make a major difference later. We read dozens of reports, interviewed experts from climatologists to sustainable farmers to women just like you who are working (literally) to save the earth, and came up with 31 no-sweat fixes–none of which involve getting rid of your car and moving to a cabin in the woods. Even if you tackle just a few of these, you'll help preserve the planet so you can enjoy a healthy life for years to come. It may be getting hot in here, but that doesn't mean you have to sweat it out. BY MICHAEL BEHAR ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL PERRY

YOUR AIR

How much would it suck to need an inhaler just to get through a 3-mile run? (Like we need another excuse to avoid working out!) Researchers at Harvard Medical School and the American Public Health Association say there's a connection between global warming and rising pollen counts. One study showed that if CO2 levels increase, the amount of ragweed pollen in the air will climb by up to 61 percent. Scientists believe it's one of the reasons nearly 20 million Americans now have asthma or allergies and could explain why we got 75 percent sneezier in the '80s and '90s. Twenty years from now, you might visit the allergist more often than you get a brow wax. Also, the air is getting dustier. Global warming = more droughts = more wildfires = more dust. Researchers at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California at San Diego found that the frequency of wildfires out West has quadrupled in the last three decades, and they expect more of the same. It's not just on the West Coast: Dust can hop an east-blowing wind and let loose anywhere in the country. But don't break out the Y2K gas masks just yet. There are ways to prevent this. It all comes down to lowering levels of CO2 in the air.

- **One North American uses the same amount of energy as 30 to 40 people in a developing nation.**
- **It takes the earth millions of years to produce 1 gallon of gasoline.**
- **In 2005 alone, Americans who used energy-saving advice from energystar.gov saved the equivalent of 23 million cars' greenhouse emissions.**

NO-SWEAT FIXES

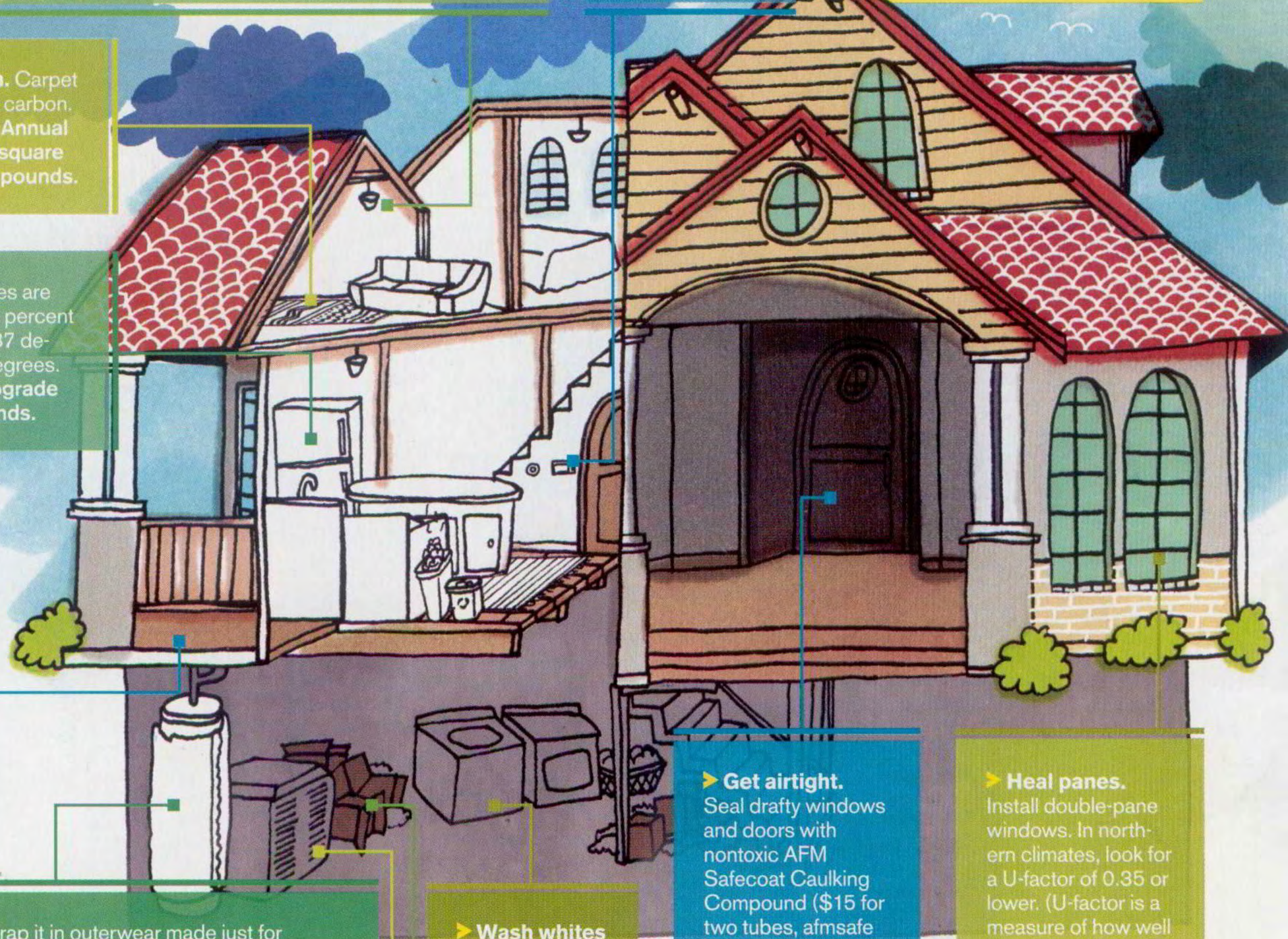
AT HOME

12 tweaks to cut your crib's CO2 output

Shed new light. Install compact fluorescent bulbs. The Greenlite 23-watt mini spiral ($5, greenliteusa.com) is as bright as a 100-watt incandescent bulb. **Annual CO2 savings: about 150 pounds per bulb.** For low-light areas try bulbs made of clusters of LEDs (light-emitting diodes), which use little energy and last long. "If everyone changed one bulb to an LED light, we could close the biggest nuclear power plant in the country," says Emanuel Rose, an LED expert at electronics company C. Crane in Fortuna, California. The SS Globe 50 DW ($40, theledlight.com) is the incandescent equivalent of 50 watts but uses 2.5 watts of power. **Annual CO2 savings: about 100 pounds per bulb.**

Adjust the temp. Lower your thermostat a couple of degrees in the winter and raise it a couple in the summer—you'll burn a lot less fuel. **Annual CO2 savings: about 900 pounds.**

Audit your appliances. Find out how much juice your appliances suck with the Kill-A-Watt monitor ($25, p3international.com). Plug it into the wall and your appliance into the device; a score on its LCD tells you how efficient your machine is. For tips on saving energy and the most efficient appliances, go to energystar.gov. **Annual CO2 savings: 500+ pounds.**



Give your floors a Brazilian. Carpet manufacturing produces tons of carbon. Opt for area rugs or bare floors. **Annual CO2 savings (if you leave 800 square feet uncarpeted): about 4,000 pounds.**

Rein in the fridge. Older ones are carbon sluts and account for 20 percent of your home's output. Set it to 37 degrees and your freezer near 3 degrees. **Annual CO2 savings (if you upgrade to a recent model): 500+ pounds.**

Bamboo's the bomb. This treelike member of the grass family sucks up four times more CO2 when it grows than trees do. We like laminated bamboo flooring from Smith & Fong ($5 to $6 per square foot, plyboo.com). **Annual CO2 savings: about 2,100 pounds.**

Pimp your water heater. Wrap it in outerwear made just for appliances and it won't have to work as hard to keep you in hot showers. We like the Frost King jacket ($16, frostking.com). **Annual CO2 savings (for an electric water heater): up to 1,000 pounds.**

Wash whites in warm, not hot. It lowers electric demand. **Annual CO2 savings: up to 500 pounds.**

Get airtight. Seal drafty windows and doors with nontoxic AFM Safecoat Caulking Compound ($15 for two tubes, afmsafecoat.com). To find out where to jam the stuff, ask your utility company to do a "blower door test." They'll use a giant vacuum fan to lower indoor air pressure so the higher outdoor pressure will flow air through any leaks. **Annual CO2 savings: up to 1,700 pounds.**

Heal panes. Install double-pane windows. In northern climates, look for a U-factor of 0.35 or lower. (U-factor is a measure of how well a window insulates.) In southern climates, note the Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC), a measure of the heat a window lets through. It should be 0.40 or lower. **Annual CO2 savings: about 3,000 pounds.**

Pick a filter holiday. Replace or clean the air filters you use in your furnace and AC every 6 months. Two easy-to-remember calendar moments that are 6 months apart: Independence Day and New Year's. **Annual CO2 savings: up to 350 pounds.**

Trash less. Aim to recycle at least half your garbage. **Annual CO2 savings: about 2,000 pounds.**

ARE YOU A CARBON JUNKIE?

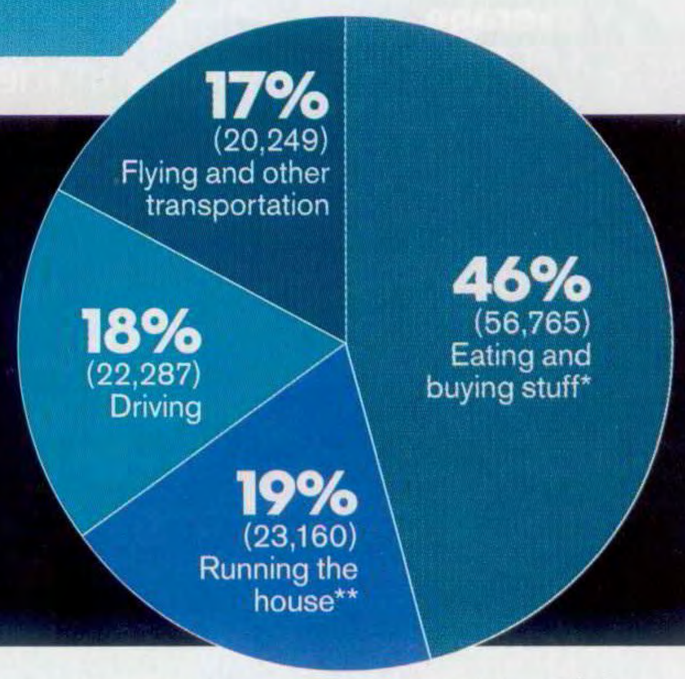
Scientists measure CO2—which is one carbon atom linked with two oxygen atoms—by its weight. So when eco wonks talk about your "carbon footprint," they mean the number of pounds of CO2 you personally add to the air each year. To calculate yours, take the test at climatecrisis.net/takeaction/carboncalculator, then compare it with the average (see pie chart).

THE TYPICAL HOUSEHOLD'S CARBON FOOTPRINT »

Annual CO2 emissions per average U.S. household (in pounds):

122,461

*The CO2 emitted to produce the goods and foods you consume
**Utilities, such as heating and cooling



OPENING SPREAD: GARY BRAASCH PHOTOGRAPHY; OPPOSITE PAGE: VEER

LAND YOUR

It would be a serious buzz kill if you planned a trip to one of our legendary national parks only to find that clouds of hungry mosquitoes had taken the place of wildflower meadows. Or if you had to fly to a remote part of Canada whenever you wanted to shred the slopes. A couple of decades from now, if current weather trends continue, this might be a reality. Need proof? Look at what's happening in Yellowstone National Park. According to a recent study by the Natural Resources Defense Council, hotter weather is changing the natural environment, making it possible for trees to grow higher in the mountains—meaning that the tree line is edging out wildflowers in alpine meadow areas. Mosquitoes thrive in warmer weather, and mosquito-borne illnesses like West Nile virus will likely increase, experts say. As for the white stuff? A study by the Aspen Global Change Institute in Colorado predicts that annual snowfall in Aspen will drop steadily—and projects that there will be no skiable snow in the area by the end of the century. Less snow in general means less will melt into rivers and streams and water levels will fall. In the Thunder Creek Watershed area of Washington's North Cascades National Park they're already 31 percent lower than 50 years ago.

The average car emits its own weight in CO_2 every year.

NO-SWEAT FIXES

WHEN YOU DRIVE

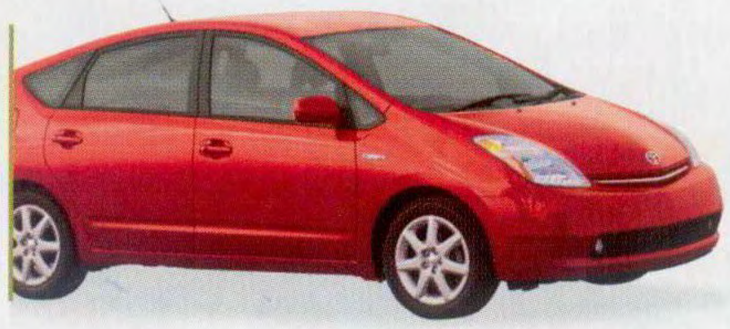
Smart ways to make your ride earth friendly

Go hybrid. The 2007 hybrid cars are way better than when Leo DiCaprio first made news with his Prius just 6 years ago. Okay, they may still be a teensy bit sluggish on hills, and they take longer to accelerate past lumbering rigs on the highway. But most hybrids zip around town with energy and style to spare and cost only about $4,000 more than regular cars—an amount you almost get back in tax credits and gas savings. And because hybrids run on two sources of power—a regular internal combustion engine and an electric motor (a combo that coughs up fewer pollutants)—they slash your CO2 output. Example: The 2007 Prius gets 55 miles per gallon versus 24 for the typical car, so it emits 3.4 tons of CO2 per year versus about 7.5 tons. (Insta-math: A ton equals 2,000 pounds.)

WH's top three green picks:

If you want to be super-virtuous **Toyota Prius**

Offers ultra-low CO2 emissions. Base price: $22,175; MPG (city/highway combined): 55; annual CO2 emissions: 3.4 tons



If you're a design snob **Honda Civic Hybrid**

The best-looking of the bunch. Base price: $22,600; MPG (city/highway combined): 50; annual CO2 emissions: 3.7 tons

If you crave more power **Toyota Camry Hybrid**

It has 147 horsepower, or about a third more than the Honda. Base price: $26,000; MPG (city/highway combined): 39; annual CO2 emissions: 4.8 tons

Not ready to trade in for a hybrid just yet? These simple adjustments will slash your car's CO2 contribution.

1. **Tread lightly.** So what if you miss the previews? When the light turns green, accelerate gently instead of stomping on the gas pedal. Gas mileage saved: up to 33 percent.
2. **Feel the breeze.** Slide open the sunroof instead of blasting the AC. Can't fathom that on 90-degree days? At least do it after the sun goes down. Operating the AC in hot weather increases fuel consumption by 20 percent.
3. **Get regular checkups.** Change the oil every 3 months or so and keep your tires at their optimal pressure to increase fuel mileage by 15 percent.
4. **Ditch your trunk junk.** You lose a mile per gallon for every 100 pounds you haul. Remove the bike/board rack when not in use, store climbing gear in the house, and don't lug around extra liquids (wiper fluid, water bottles, cases of beer). CO2 saved: about 20 pounds per gallon.

Making a Difference

Alison Gannett,
41, former world champion freeskier, Crested Butte, CO

"Global warming could eliminate snow in our lifetime. In 2004, I started the Office for Resource Efficiency, a global cooling and economic development project." One success story: Crested Butte Mountain Resort, one of Colorado's top ski areas. "Alison made us aware of what to do to deal with global warming," says operations manager Ethan Mueller. "We now recycle brown glass, plastic, cardboard, and paper. And Alison is helping retrofit the resort with energy-efficient light bulbs."

OPPOSITE PAGE: TONY DEMIN/AURORA PHOTOS/IPN; THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: COURTESY OF ALISON GANNETT; NO CREDIT (3)

NO-SWEAT FIX

One amazingly simple action that will help us out of the woods

Plant a tree! Yeah, it sounds as effective as plugging a burst dam with chewing gum. But the benefits are huge. Trees "inhale" CO2, removing it from the air, and "exhale" oxygen. **If every American household planted just one tree, we'd cut global CO2 by a billion pounds a year**—the equivalent of 100,000 cars. Plant just two trees and vaporize a month's worth of CO2 cranked out by the average house—or two-thirds of a ton. Two more and you've eliminated a month of car-generated CO2. A couple more for every cross-country flight and...you get the idea. **Bonus: "Plant just three trees around your home and the shade could cut your AC bills by 50 percent,"** says Deborah Gangloff, executive director of American Forests, an organization that coordinates tree-planting efforts. To find a volunteer tree-planting program near you, check American Forests (americanforests.org/campaigns) or the National Arbor Day Foundation (arborday.org). Gangloff says American Forests is getting so many donations that it'll plant 3 million trees this year, up from 1 million last year.

YOUR WATER

The good news: Fifty or so years from now, snorkeling vacations will be a bargain. The not-so-good news: All the pretty fish will be gone. Ocean temps have risen nearly 1 degree Fahrenheit since the '70s, and they could get warmer still. CO_2 is also making water more acidic, which dissolves the protective calcium carbonate that coral and plankton produce and rely on for survival; that in turn affects the rest of the marine food chain and the whole ocean's ecosystem. Researchers predict that Australia's Great Barrier Reef could be virtually dead by 2050. Without reefs to shelter them, tropical ecosystems are in trouble.

All this affects the weather too. Warm water fuels hurricanes, so expect bigger ones and more of them to hit coastal areas. As polar ice caps melt and spew freshwater into the oceans, sea levels will rise, possibly altering our coastlines. That influx of freshwater will also make oceans less salty. When their salt content gets out of whack, ocean currents veer off course like Nicole Richie behind the wheel. The result: freak tornados, epic blizzards, and long heat waves. Meanwhile, about three-fourths of the world's freshwater comes from glaciers that thaw a bit in summer. As they shrink, freshwater will become scarce.

1998 was the single warmest year in the past millennium.

In just 25 years, the Florida Keys' Carysfort Reef went from a thriving tropical ecosystem to a heap of dead rock.

NO-SWEAT FIXES

TO SAVE WATER

Two minimal-effort actions that conserve H2O

■ **Lower the flow.** The process of getting water to your house creates CO2: It has to be extracted from natural sources, purified, and piped. So every hot shower you take contributes to the problem. (We're not saying stop, though.) Since low-flow bathroom fixtures like faucets and toilets use less water, **you'll produce about 350 pounds less CO2 per year just by switching showerheads.** We like the Oxygenics Elite SkinCare Shower Series showerhead ($45, oxygenics.com), which slashes yearly water consumption for a family of four by 40,150 gallons—that's almost two 30-by-15-foot swimming pools.

■ **Save on a rainy day.** Before you dismiss collecting rainwater as a science project for third graders, think about this: Runoff from a 1-inch rainfall on a 1,000-square-foot roof equals 600 gallons, plenty to keep your average garden green. You can **buy a collection barrel to place under your downspout.** The best models are simple (no pump systems to mess with)—just attach the spigot to a hose to water your plants. We like the 50-gallon rain barrel with built-in overflow valve, water spigot, and hose connector ($90, cleanairgardening.com). As for how it looks, well, you can always plant a CO2-busting tree in front of it.

COOL TOOL

Go to h2ouse.org and take the Home Tour. As you click on different rooms, pop-up boxes will tell you how much water you use and how to cut back your consumption. In the bathroom, for example, you'll learn that by replacing your commode with a post-1993 model, you can save 1.9 to 6.4 gallons per flush.

NO-SWEAT FIX

TO CANCEL OUT CARBON

Use your wallet to reduce your impact

Carbon offsets are greenhouse gas-reducing activities that can make up for your CO2 footprint. The term sounds all techno-geeky, but the concept is simple. "Green" offset funds, such as those that bankroll renewable energy projects, sell offsets to individuals and companies. "Buying" one means giving money to a group that is working to reduce CO2—by, say, planting forests or funding wind- or solar-energy projects. The net effect: Even though you are polluting, the reduction in CO2 you paid for can practically void that pollution. It's like chowing down at the brunch buffet and taking an extra-long spin class later—okay, maybe not quite that simple, but you get the picture.

Carbon offsets aren't get-out-of-jail-free cards just for businesses. The Dave Matthews Band recently announced that it would purchase enough to account for 100 percent of the CO2 emissions from all its touring activities since 1991. And regular people can buy them too. The organizations that sell carbon offsets calculate how much you need to pony up to neutralize a specific amount of carbon. And it's not much. Let's say your car pumps 14,000 pounds of CO2 into the air each year. You can cancel it out by donating about $30 a year to one of these organizations. No, it's not a substitute for trimming your energy use—but if you want your net impact on the climate at zero and you can afford to part with a little cash, this is an easy way to do it. You won't be alone: One of the biggest offset funds, Carbonfund.org, "grew by nearly twentyfold last year," says Malin Jennings, a spokesperson for the nonprofit. "We offset over 350 million pounds of CO2."

To learn about choosing groups, go to green-e.org. Green-e certifies renewable-energy programs and is working to develop a standard for the sale of greenhouse gas offsets. Or visit ecobusinesslinks.com and click on Carbon Offsets for a comprehensive list of funds. Four CO2 offset funds we like:

- **Bonneville Environmental Foundation (b-e-f.org)** Funds solar-power projects and other renewable-energy programs.
- **Carbonfund.org** Lets you choose among renewable-energy projects, energy efficiency, reforestation projects, or a combo.
- **e-BlueHorizons (e-bluehorizons.com)** Supports Conservation Fund (conservationfund.org) land- and water-protection projects.
- **NativeEnergy (nativeenergy.com)** Funds Native American, farmer-owned, community-based renewable-energy projects and helped Al Gore make his book and film carbon neutral.

Making a Difference

Melissa Meehan,
25, organizer for the nonprofit Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, Knoxville, TN

"I grew up on the Connecticut shore and want to make sure beautiful coastal areas are still here a generation from now. So last year I quit my job as a PR exec. Now I build coalitions and educate people about the impact of global warming on coasts. The Alliance helped get legislation passed to create the North Carolina Global Warming Commission, which can recommend that the state set CO2 pollution reduction goals."

WWW H

Plan a carbon-neutral vacation

Log on to womenshealthmag.com/greentraveltips to find out how.

OPPOSITE PAGE: WILLIAM HUBER/GETTY IMAGES; THIS PAGE: COURTESY OF MELISSA MEEHAN

YOUR FOOD

When it comes to climate change, faraway concepts like shrinking polar ice caps and dust-filled air seem as much of a reality as an office party on an episode of *24*. But nothing hits home more than the food we put on our plates. And if global warming continues, our chow's gonna change. Over the next couple of decades, you may need to fork over a buttload of cash to stock your fridge. The San Joaquin Valley in central California grows about half of all the fruit and vegetables we eat. But in the next 20 years, if it gets too warm to snow in the nearby Sierra Nevadas, the water for those crops will be scarce, forcing farmers to fork over more cash—and pass the cost on to you. Hot weather is a bum deal for livestock too. Last year, 2 weeks of 100-degree-plus temps in California killed over 333,000 animals in Fresno County alone, the nation's number one agricultural region; farmers there suffered an estimated $114.7 million in losses. More such heat waves could push up the cost of milk, beef, and eggs. Wild seafood could be harder to come by, thanks in part to increasingly warm and acidic oceans (see "Your Water"), and we'll have to rely mostly on farmed fish raised in artificially treated water.

- **A microwave oven uses 50 to 65 percent less energy than a conventional oven.**
- **Growing crops the conventional way can take 56 percent more energy than growing them organically.**

NO-SWEAT FIXES

ON YOUR TABLE

Food tweaks for eco-happy eating

■ **Say no to chemicals.** Most conventional farms use chemical fertilizers that release nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas that's some 300 times more harmful to the atmosphere than CO2. Organic farms don't.

■ **Buy local.** Choosing food that's grown, raised, or caught within a few hundred miles of where you live lowers CO2 produced by transporting it. For strategies on how to eat well locally, even in the dead of winter, go to 100milediet.org. The site was started by Alisa Smith and James MacKinnon, who spent an entire year consuming only stuff produced within 100 miles of their Vancouver home. The couple points out that the 100 Mile Diet is about understanding where our food comes from—and at what risk to our health and the environment.

Roasted lamb with sweet potatoes, red peppers, and grilled asparagus

Don't have a cow. If you really want to save the planet, go vegetarian (see environmentalists' warnings for ways meatless recipes). Chilled red wines (serve them with the very fatty, lean-fed lamb) lower the risk of whipping. (It takes not all of methane, gases emitted greenhouse gas.)

Choose grass-fed meat. Some 70 percent of the corn grown in th U.S. goes down the gullets of livestock. Unfortunately, growing corn can require using fertilizer, which releases nitrous oxide, a harmful greenhouse gas. So if you're craving meat for dinner, go with lamb—or beef or buffalo—that ate only grass as nature intended. To find "pasture-fed" meats, check with your butcher or go to eatwild.com.

Shop at farmer's markets. To find one in your hood where you can buy locally grown veggies, go to ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/mapgui.htm.

Brew shady java. Farmers in Central and South America burned megatons of CO2-guzzling rainforest to make room for lucrative coffee plantations. But coffee grows just fine beneath the forest canopy. "Shade-grown" coffee has gotten much easier to find—even Starbucks sells it. As for the milk in your latte, find a local dairy that uses naturally raised cows at localharvest.org or visit dakotaxpacific.com/products/milkyway.htm.

Pick your own. Find local strawberries and rhubarb for your pie at localharvest.org. Plug your zip code and those ingredients into the search engine for a list of local farms that cultivate them.

Sip organic. Here's where many grape lovers draw the line. Are organic wines even halfway decent? Some are, says *Wine Spectator*, which rated both Badger Mountain Chardonnay ($14, badgermtnvineyard.com) and Organic Wine Works Zinfandel ($13, wineaccess.com) 86 on its 100-point scale. For other options, go to theorganicwinecompany.com, the largest U.S. importer.

MORE NO-SWEAT FIXES

■ **Make your dollars talk.** Support charities that work to end global warming. Check out Network for Good (networkforgood.org), an online database of organizations with many focused on global warming. For ideas on volunteering, check the Charity Guide (charityguide.org/volunteer/fowhours/global-warming.htm).

■ **Play politics.** Tell elected officials to slow climate change—now. Ask your mayor to sign the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement (go to seattle.gov/mayor/climate for more info). Encourage your senators and representatives to support these three important global warming bills making the rounds this year.

The Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act would lower the industrial CO2 emission cap to a third of 2000 emission levels by 2050. Sign a petition to support it: Go to undoit.org/home.cfm and click Sign the Petition.

The Global Warming Pollution Reduction Act calls for an 80 percent reduction in global warming pollutants by 2050. E-mail its sponsor, Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont), at sanders.senate.gov/comments.

The Clean Air Energy Act of 2007 would reduce our dependency on foreign oil by investing in renewable and alternative energy. Contact its sponsor, Representative Nick Rahall (D-WV), at rahall.house.gov.