

THE GREEN QUIZ

We all like to travel, drive nice cars, eat fine food and have all the latest gadgetry, but think about how you go about your lifestyle luxuries first. Each and every one of us leaves our own carbon footprint on the globe; a trail of burnt fossil fuels that leads directly back to us. And a carbon footprint doesn't just relate to the petrol you use or electricity you waste. A secondary footprint exists from the energy it took to manufacture your car in the first place, or how long it takes to brake down all the packaging that you throw away.

So how well do you rank on the creation of a carbon-neutral lifestyle?

1. Your electricity bill is higher than usual. What's your reaction?

- Put it down to your new 52-inch LCD flat screen television and get back to watching the F1 GP.
- Feel concerned about the pinch on your wallet so decide to cut back on the booze a bit.
- Replace all bulbs in your home with long-life low energy alternatives and switch off all unused appliances.

Very simple measures can make for immediate savings. Just unplugging your mobile phone as soon as you're finished charging, turning off unused lights, computers and air-conditioning can substantially reduce wasted energy – and money!

2. If you have an outside space, how is it used?

- It's been covered in tarmac to keep your vintage motorcycle and new Audi TT off the roadside.
- You like to have mates over so have some patio furniture and a barbeque but that's about all.
- You've embraced the opportunity to garden and filled it with potted plants and greenery.

The smallest of gardens can be turned into a haven for wildlife

in even the most urbanized areas. The trend to convert outside space into off-road parking is diminishing valuable inner-city green spots. Plant more trees and shrubs that are tolerant of atmospheric pollution and absorb potentially harmful gases, for example bamboo, palms, rubber plants and peace lilies. Even if you only have a wall outside, think about creating a vertical garden of trailing plants in pots secured to the wall. Not only do they look good, but they absorb excess carbon dioxide emissions in the air.

3. What products do you like to buy when food shopping?

- You love imported goods; British Asparagus and Belgian beer.
- You're a carnivore and buy meat at least twice a day.
- You stick to local produce that's in season.

Some food can rack up incredible air miles that all contribute to your personal carbon footprint. If it's an international brand, exotic fruit or an out-of-season product, chances are it's been flown or shipped in from far away. Also, reduce your consumption of meat. The UN recently reported that direct emissions from meat production accounts for about 18 percent of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions.

4. Do you travel regularly for business or pleasure?

- Of course. You can gloat to friends about all the exotic locations you've managed to visit and fancy hotels you've stayed in.
- You mainly travel locally but never turn down a business trip on the expense account.
- You've learnt about the benefits of video conferencing rather than taking days away from family and friends.

Think about your travel in advance. Business trips are hardly a barrel of laughs and new video conferencing technology means you can get the same rewards from home – without even losing the time you'd normally spend in transit. Also, before jumping on a plane to go half-way round the globe on holiday, consider the wealth of places closer to home that you still have left to see.

5. What do you like to do in your spare time?

- You're an adrenaline junky and get your kicks from go-karting and taking your motorbike up to full speed on open roads.
- You go to restaurants, watch movies and socialize with friends.
- You get back to nature; rock climbing, mountain biking and even find time to do some volunteer work.

Alright, nobody's going to convince you to spend your entire weekends doing volunteer work, but at least consider the many ways you can dedicate giving something back. And getting an adrenaline fix doesn't need a petrol guzzling motor; take up an active outdoor hobby and you'll look better, feel better and even save on gym membership.

6. Do you have a recycling system implemented at home?

- No way, you're not sifting through all your rubbish.
- You don't personally, but think that your building may have municipal recycling.
- Of course, it's so simple you'd be a fool not to.

Recycling is probably the easiest thing you can do to go green – it cuts up to half a ton of annual carbon dioxide emissions. Even if you do recycle, choosing products with the least amount of packaging or already recycled packaging cuts down on waste even further.

7. What kind of women are you into?

- High-maintenance dolls that think appearance is everything, and who expect you to match their high standards.

- You don't really have a type, but like girls with some substance.
- You like the natural look – girls with a vintage wardrobe that don't wear much make-up or care about the car you drive.

When the girl you're dating has a high carbon footprint, it all rubs off on you – especially if you're supporting that lifestyle. Go for someone with a bit more substance, who can take care of herself and realizes the effects of her actions.

8. How do you get to work and travel on the weekends?

- These days your car is your office and sanctuary – you eat, work and sometimes even sleep in it. The skytrain may be quicker, but it's for the working class and you don't get to control the air-conditioning.
- You use public transport because it's comfortable, clean and efficient.
- You go all out and cycle despite the stifling heat and fumes.

Cars are not only one of the greatest polluters on the planet, but they spend half their time stuck in traffic, belching out fumes. Although we're not advocating you cycle or walk everywhere, at least go the public transport route.

So there you have it, chances are you don't need us to tell you that if you answered mainly option 'a' you're in need of some serious lifestyle changes. Living in the real world obviously means some car and air travel, and everybody likes the occasional luxury, but think twice about these things rather than adopting them as part of everyday life. Going green doesn't mean substituting all of life's luxuries – but it does mean taking responsibility for your actions.



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