



Earthology

21 Tips for Your

5 Minute Sprint for a Planet Positive 2021



We have created 21 Planet Positive tips that will only take 5 minutes to do and will help to save you money, time and most importantly, help save the future of humankind. 2021 is going to be the year of Climate Action so get on board!

01. Read



One of the most important things you can do is to arm yourself with the facts and what you can do to make changes. Set aside 5 minutes a day to read up on the things you want to know about or change first. Once you start you'll find an amazing array of authors, scientists and change-makers who can encourage you to see things differently. The list below is just a snapshot, we've plenty more ideas under the resources section on our [website](#).

Beginners and kids

- ▮ How to save your planet one object at a time - Dr Tara Shine
- ▮ No. More. Plastic. - Martin Dorey

Want to know more

- ▮ There's No Planet B - Mike Berners Lee
- ▮ Zero Waste Home - Bea Johnson

Business

- ▮ Let my people go surfing - Yvon Chouinard
- ▮ Donut Economics - Kate Raworth

02. Less email



You know the big ones, fossil fuels, travel, energy, fast fashion but the hidden emissions of your inbox are not as easy to define. According to a recent study by Ericsson, the carbon footprint of the ICT industry remained largely unchanged at around 1.4% of global emissions. However, the potential for the ICT Industry is enormous with the possibility of reducing emissions by 15%, which is more than the footprint of the US and the EU combined.

So how do you make a difference from your inbox? According to energy provider OVO and Mike Berners Lee, Brits send an unnecessary 64 million emails a year. The top 5 are: Thank you, Thanks, Have a good weekend, Received and Appreciated. Other popular ones are LOL and You too. Ovo suggests we 'Think before we Thank'. You can download their [browser extension](#) which will prompt you every time you go to send an email with less than 4 words. It will free up space in your inbox and cut down on the volume of emails.

03. Eat the Fridge!



Your 5-minute Planet Positive task today is not to eat the actual fridge but to use up the food from it! This is a great way to save money and save the planet! People often have food leftover at the end of the week and that's a good time to take stock of what you have and see what needs to be used up first. Have a look and see what meal you can make from the contents of your fridge (you can include the freezer if you like). Try putting your ingredients into the [bbcfood](https://www.bbc.com/food) website and see what suggestions it throws up or make it into a work challenge and get colleagues to suggest recipes for leftovers. Some suggestions are:

- ☆ Grate and freeze leftover cheese to add to sauces and pizza
- ☆ Freeze milk and yoghurt in ice cube trays
- ☆ Freeze mince pies to be defrosted in the microwave or oven
- ☆ Make soup from wonky bits of veg that are going soft
- ☆ Make risotto from leftovers
- ☆ Freshen up your limp salad and vegetables in ice-cold water
- ☆ Soak or cook citrus peels in vinegar to make cleaning sprays

Click the links below to check out other great websites that have fabulous suggestions for using up food.

[stopfoodwaste.ie](https://www.stopfoodwaste.ie)

[Love Food Hate Waste](#)

[Food Space](#)

[Lagom Chef](#)

04. Compost



Your 5-minute planet saving tip for today is to compost! If you already have access to a compost bin, either in your garden or through your waste collection company, make sure you use it! According to [Project Drawdown](#), making sure our food waste doesn't end up in landfill is in the top 3 things we can do to address climate change. Food that ends up in landfills creates methane which is a gas at least 25 times more potent than CO₂.

At Home

★ If you live in an apartment and don't have access to a compost bin then check out [Sharewaste.com](#) and see if there is someone willing to take your green waste or check out your local allotments.

At Work

★ Does your green waste get collected at work? Can your Green team organise waste separation to include it? Get compost caddies for the kitchen areas and put up posters explaining what can go in the bin, including dirty kitchen towel, stale bread and biscuits as well as apple cores and orange peel.

Check out [diversion_green](#) for all things composting!

05. Meat Free Monday's



Your 5-minute tip today is to try and go meat-free for today's meal. Yes I know it's not Monday but sometimes it feels like it! If you're already veggie, can you squeeze in a vegan meal? According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, animal agriculture has a similar carbon footprint to the direct emissions from every car, truck, train and plane on the planet. Eating more plants is definitely healthier too. A report by the World Economic Forum showed that eating less beef and more beans would cut deaths by 5-7%.

At Home

- ☆ Check out meatfreemondays.com for inspiration and tips
- ☆ Check out veganuary.com for recipes

At Work

- ☆ Get your Green team to suggest meat-free recipes
- ☆ Have a vegan or vegetarian style 'Masterchef' Challenge

06. Lovely Lentils



Today's 5-minute challenge is to add some lentils and beans to your meals. Beans are really healthy source of protein and come in all shapes and sizes. They can be added to soups, salads, stews, risottos and are a great way to make a meal go further, especially if you're on a budget. If you've got picky eaters at home, try adding red lentils to a bolognese sauce, start with a handful and see if you can then make it 50/50.

At Home

- ★ With picky eaters, start with things like baked beans
- ★ Blend your pulses and beans if you need them hidden!
- ★ Try falafel or bean burger alternatives to meat

At Work

- ★ Encourage vegetarians and vegans to share their recipes
- ★ Provide more plant-based lunches and options

07. Pedal Power



Your 5-minute challenge for today is to dust off your bike! A big positive to come out of the pandemic is that many councils have been able to spend time improving cycle lanes and pedestrianise more streets. There is no better time to check out if your commute can be done by bike. No bike? No problem! Use the city bikes that are on offer to get you started before you commit. Make sure you wear a helmet, a high vis jacket and use lights. A rain jacket is also a good idea! The health benefits of cycling are both mental and physical.

At home

- ☆ Use your bike to pick up bits from your local shops rather than the car
- ☆ Getting out in the fresh air is great for mindfulness
- ☆ Even places like Amsterdam known for their cycle lanes are adding more due to demand!

At Work

- ☆ Can you offer or avail of the bike to work scheme to get a tax break on a new bike?
- ☆ Does your workplace provide changing facilities and showers for cyclists? If not can you ask them to do this?

08. Go Electric



Your challenge today is to research getting an electric car. If you need a car to get around and let's face it, not everyone has access to decent cycle lanes or a good public transport network, then why not go electric? We know that this is not an affordable option for everyone yet but there are some great second-hand cars available. There are plenty of reasons to go electric both at home and at work!

- ▮ No need for range anxiety anymore. There is a car out there for you that can do those longer journeys, up to 400km.

- ▮ It's Cheap! Save money on the running costs with home charging meaning you can cut your costs by more than half. The tax is lower too. Check out [Electric Ireland](#) and the [SEAI](#) for some great tips and comparisons.

- ▮ There are public charging points popping up all over Europe, with many offering rapid charging, especially those based at motorway service stations. It can take as little as 30 mins on fast charge to get to 80% battery.

- ▮ Investing now in a fleet of Electric Vehicles from a work point of view will save you money and cut your carbon footprint. Diesel cars are likely to become stranded assets in the future with the phase-out of Diesel and Petrol vehicles.

So take 5 minutes to read an article today and see how you can save on your motoring costs in the future and save carbon emissions!

09. Offset!



So your 5 minutes to save the Planet today is all about offsetting. This is not the answer to all our problems but the more you can do to reduce your carbon footprint the better, obviously. But there will almost certainly be a point where you've done all you can but are still leaving a mark. There are lots of options to choose from if you just google carbon calculators! However it is important that you check for certification, gold standard is a good place to start.

At home

★ Check out offsetting calculators to offset your 2020 or 2021 emissions today. It's not as expensive as you'd think. With [Vita Ireland](#) you can offset around 11 tonnes of carbon (the average person's emissions for a year) for €60.

★ Trees are a good way to offset BUT the average broadleaf tree will offset 1 tonne of CO₂ over its 100 year lifetime and we don't have that much time. So start by looking into projects that cover both short term CO₂ removal and long term.

At Work

★ Can you get your workplace to look into carbon offsetting their environmental impact? For offices without a complicated and carbon-intensive supply chain, this really isn't expensive and will boost the eco-credentials of the business.

★ Talk to your management team about offsetting employees' home office footprint for example, it should be part of the benefits package!

10. Fossil Free Energy



Today's 5 minutes to Save the Planet tip is to switch to renewable energy. This will not only help save the planet but save you money too! You can save between €200-400 a year! There are several companies in Ireland and Europe that offer this and switching really could not be easier. Many of the bigger players in most European countries only offer up to 30% renewable energy so look at switching today. Then continue to switch annually to keep saving!

At Home

★Check out a price comparison website that should list all renewable energy suppliers. In Ireland, check out bonkers.ie or switcher and in the UK Uswitch.com to see where you can save money.

★Be clever about your energy use. Try putting the washing machine and dishwasher on in the evening when there is less demand on the grid and cheaper if you are on a night saver tariff.

At Work

★Talk to your workplace about the energy supplier that you currently use. Can you consider moving to a renewable energy source the next time the contract is up?

★Get your Green Team to run an energy awareness session and boast about your own energy savings from switching providers!

11. Ocean Hero



Your 5 minutes to Save the Planet tip today is super simple. You've heard about @ecosa that plants trees for your internet searches. Well if Ocean plastic is what bugs you then try adding the Ocean Hero to your browser.

At Home

★Check out [Oceanhero.com](https://oceanhero.com). On average, for every five searches, they can pay a person to return the equivalent of one plastic bottle. So an easy win!

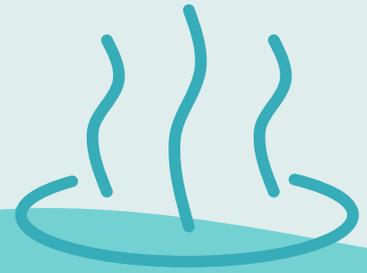
★Tell your friends and family and spread the message wide. This is one way to have an impact that won't cost you time or money!

At Work

★We know, not all IT departments will be down with the idea of making changes to browser bars so look at educating employees about what they can do at home.

★Can you hold a plastic awareness week? Of course we're slightly biased and think that a good place to start is with a talk from us! Our Plastic Free [talk](#) is very popular, particularly around July to coincide with the Plastic Free July campaign. Fire an email to your HR team today!

12. Insulate



So your 5 minutes to Save the Planet tip today is to look into insulating your home and workplace better. There are plenty of grants and initiatives in all European Countries to do this. It will save you money in the long run even if the upfront cost is high. Think of it as wrapping your house in a hat and scarf that will keep the heat in and the cold out.

At Home

- ★Go to the library! Yes seriously, you can borrow a home energy kit from the library that will help you identify drafts and air bridges where hot air is escaping.
- ★Make sure you draw your curtains early in the evening when it gets dark and colder. A lot of heat escapes through cold glass and this is a great way to keep the heat in before the radiators come on again to heat up the house.

At Work

- ★Can you get your Green Team to put some tips and tricks like ours upon their internal message board? Sharing your own ideas and knowledge is a great way to get people involved.
- ★Find out how your workplace is insulated and see what can be done to improve it. Again there are plenty of grants for energy-efficient buildings and sometimes just the smallest of changes can mean big savings in terms of bills and energy.

Needing some morale-boosting activities for your workplace team or community? We have just the thing, book us for a Lunch & Learn session. Get in touch today or email Sarah at sarah@earthology.ie.

13. Wardrode



So our next few 5 Minutes to Save the Planet tips are going to focus on consumerism and where better to start than your wardrobe! The Fashion Industry creates a huge amount of emissions every year along with the use of water, pesticides and land use, not to mention slave labour. So think about where you can:

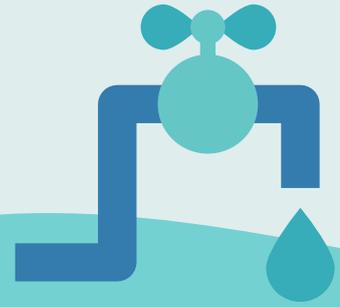
☰ Reduce - Yes this starts with slimming down your wardrobe and only buying stuff that lasts. Ok so this one might take longer than 5 minutes but we think it is worth it in the long run. We suggested checking out [Emma Gleeson's](#) website and book to help with this!

☰ Rewear - Think about creating a timeless capsule wardrobe. Get your colours done by someone like Sarah at [wellstyled.ie](#) and never buy a colour that doesn't suit you again! Think about swapping clothes with friends or consider renting/swapping them out through the [wearenuw](#) app.

☰ Recycle - Buy from a brand that will recycle your worn items such as Patagonia, H&M and Swedish Stockings. A las resort is to give them to a charity shop as they are already overloaded with items. If you are giving to a charity shop think if you would buy it or not.

☰ Repair - Can you mend that tiny hole in your jumper/socks/tights/t-shirt? Mending an item should extend it's life by at least 1-2 years and only take 5-15 minutes to do. All you need is a needle and thread!

14. Refill



So today's 5 minutes to Save the Planet Tip is to Refill - from water and shampoo to pasta and chocolate, you can get refills of just about anything. Refilling your containers and bottles saves plastic going to landfill and influences the demand for oil that makes the virgin plastic in the first place.

☰ Water. The Elixir of life. Buy a reusable bottle (in fact I'm sure you have one already), then USE it. Going for a walk? The Shops? Take it with you, with water in it! It's a no brainer, it will save you money and save the planet and right now, it's one less touch point. Check out [Refill HQ](#) in the uk and [Refill Ireland](#) and [Refill Northern Ireland](#) for locations of refills on the go!

☰ Toiletries. You can get refills of handwash, hand sanitiser, shampoo, conditioner, shower gel and much more. If you don't live close to a store that does it, then buy the biggest container you can find. Most soap dispensers with a tap are not recyclable as they contain metal and several different types of plastic in the one unit. Just use a bar of soap where you can.

☰ Food. Shopping from a zero-waste store, if you are lucky enough to have one close by, requires a little pre-planning - bringing your clean and empty containers and having extra for those items you didn't plan on buying! However, it is one of the easiest ways to cut your plastic habit and start cooking a little more from scratch. Otherwise, look for options in paper or plastic that IS easily recycled such as PET.

☰ In Ireland, check out [Livinglightlyinireland](#) and [gozero.ie](#) for maps of shops close to you

15. Buy Second Hand



Today's 5 Minutes to Save the Planet tip is to check for that new item you plan to buy on a second-hand website like eBay, depop, gumtree, adverts etc. This can be anything from a refurbished phone or laptop to clothes and toys. According to secondhand market place Schibsted, their users saved 25 million tonnes of CO2 emissions in 2019, the equivalent to the production of 444 million iPhone 11's!

- ★By buying preloved items you negate the need for the new materials, water, energy and transport used to make it in the first place.
- ★Buying second hand means saving money and often doesn't mean compromising on the quality.
- ★Quality isn't compromised, many refurbished IT items come with guarantees and some clothes come with the tags still on!
- ★Smug effect. Yes it's that feeling you get when you spy something that you know will look good in your home for half the price and saves the planet. Collective action here really does add up as you can see from Schibsteds members.

16. Wildlife Garden



Our next few 5 Minutes to Save The Planet tips are all about nature and biodiversity. Starting with today's 5 minute job. Do some gardening! The footprint of our urban and rural gardens really does add up and if you have a perfectly manicured lawn treated with fertilisers, you need to think again. A perfectly green lawn is like a dessert to our pollinators like bees and other winged insects. So our suggestions are simple:

≡ Don't mow! Well, this has to be the easiest, 5-minute tip ever. Do nothing, I mean, just leave it and save yourself the trouble! If you have to mow, then try to keep a wild patch in the middle or around the edge to grow wild.

≡ Leave the Dandelions for the bees and insects. According to [The All Ireland Pollinator Plan](#), Dandelions are one of the earliest wildflowers to bloom in springtime, giving much needed nectar to those bees, especially bumblebees that come out of hibernation early.

≡ Plant native trees like Holly, Hawthorn, Elder, Willow and fruit trees like apple, pear and plum that will have open flowers in the springtime.

≡ Purple flowers such as Campanula, Lavender, Alliums (this can include chives), Erysimum 'Bowles Mauve' are particularly attractive to bees.

≡ Buy a packet of wildflower seed and sow it on a bare patch of soil (don't try to sow it on existing grass - the grass always wins!).

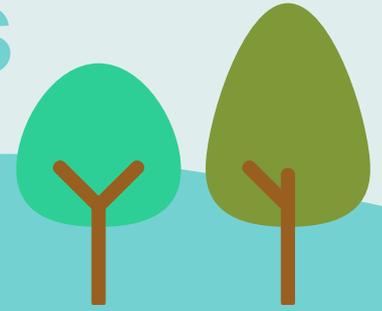
17. Houseplants



So our 5 Minutes to Save the Planet Tip today is all about houseplants. House plants are a great way to get you started with gardening and last a lot longer than cut flowers.

- Houseplants can bring the outside indoors. They provide Oxygen at your desk and brighten the smallest of spaces.
- Supermarket plants can be cheap but often more than one plant is crammed into a small amount of compost and space and won't thrive easily unless divided and given more space. So try and buy from a garden centre or reputable supplier where possible.
- Don't overwater! Once the plant is in your care make sure to check how regularly it needs watering or feeding, most houseplants especially cacti need little to no watering in the winter months.
- Share your divisions and plant babies with your friends and family as presents to share the love and lower the transport mileage.
- Give a house plant as a gift instead of cut flowers, granted the emissions of both are pretty bad but you can look for fairtrade or talk to the supplier about the origins of the plants.

18. Plant Trees



Today is Tip 18 of our 21 Tips for a Greener 2021 and we're talking about Trees. So we know trees don't grow in 5 minutes, in fact, it takes them a while to reach the stage where they draw down serious amounts of CO₂, but it does only take 5 minutes to plant one! A tiny sapling doesn't cost the Earth and will support a whole ecosystem. Your 5 Minutes to Save the Planet Tip can be any of the following:

☰ Plant a tree in your garden. If you've only a small space then pick one that won't worry the neighbours! Evergreens generally soak up more CO₂ over their lifetime and things like Holly are generally slow growing. Or pick a small flowering fruit tree like an apple, plum or pear, great for pollinators, can be grown up a wall if space is limited and provides fruit!

☰ No garden? No problem! Support a cause like [Easy Treesie](#) [East Coast Tree Project](#) or [Grown Clothing](#) who will plant trees on your behalf. It's important to pick a project where the trees will reach maturity and their full potential to withdraw CO₂ from the air.

☰ Want to plant trees to capture air pollution in your local area? Then consider species such as Silver birch, Yew, and Elder that have fine hairs on their leaves to capture the noxious particles (according to an article by [Anthropocene Magazine](#))

☰ At work can you get your company involved in planting trees in addition to reducing their carbon footprint? Planting trees should be seen as an add on not as the answer to offsetting the company's carbon footprint.

19. Green Team



So our last few 5 minute tips are all about things you can do to amplify the message and get as many people as possible involved, and as the Zero Waste saying goes, we don't need a few people doing things perfectly, we need 7.8 billion people doing it imperfectly. Today we're talking about Green Teams. Ok, so setting up a Green Team is not a 5-minute job... but sending that first email could be! Here are top tips for setting one up:

- Send an email to everyone in the company telling them about your plan to set up a team.
- Explain that you want a cross-section of the company, anyone and everyone should be involved from cleaners, marketing and finance to senior management, secretaries and factory workers. Everyone has a part to play.
- If you get lots of people interested, you can rotate members every 6-12 months.
- Draft an agenda, this could include, the benefits of a Green Team, how often you should meet, how to communicate with other employees and what projects can be worked on.
- At the first meeting, make sure every voice is heard and go around the (virtual) room asking for everyone's contributions.
- Get someone to take notes, or use a whiteboard (mural.co is great for virtual brainstorming).
- Create a plan of action and follow up afterwards with an email of everyone's commitments.

20. Amplify



So today's 5 minutes to save the planet tip is to Amplify the message. Once you're in the 'Sustainability Bubble' it's sometimes hard to remember that others aren't and might need some encouragement to move over to the Green side. This is an integral part of our talks and workshops. We know that most of you who attend are people that get that we're in a bit of a pickle and want to make a difference. So today try to add some people to your bubble!

- Receive our newsletter? Forward it on to someone else!
- Just saved a bundle on your electricity bills by switching to a renewable supplier? Tell someone about it.
- Saw a great campaign by Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, 2 Minute Beach Clean, Flossieandthebeachcleaners? Then celebrate it with someone else.
- Found a cafe taking reusable cups? Highlight and Congratulate them on your social media accounts!
- Seen a great initiative by another company? Get yours to do the same! If you don't, who will?
- Do one act of kindness everyday for someone you don't know. Apparently, that ripple can impact up to 20 people who appreciate it!

21. Celebrate



Today is our last 5 minutes to save the planet tip for our Sustainability Sprint for 2021. How did you do? Did you manage more than 5? Well done! It's time to celebrate! Seriously! It's all about celebrating your wins, big and small. We need to make time to appreciate the effort we put in. So these are our ideas:

Managed to find out what your carbon footprint is? Work or home, this is so important, you can't manage what you can't measure. So tell everyone you know and give yourself a round of applause.

Started shopping at a Zero Waste Store or buying in bulk? Give yourself a pat on the back and tell others why you are so happy about less plastic in your bin - whoop whoop!

Found a decent organic wine that doesn't cost the earth and tastes amazing? Share your secret with your friends and family.

Joined a club or group that understands where you are coming from? Chances are you need to invite others who don't know about it too and spread the message

Celebrate you. You are a climate crisis-fighting superhero who needs to take time out sometimes, to recharge your batteries and make sure you continue to sparkle and shine!



Earthology

For more information on our talks and workshops visit:

www.earthology.ie



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