

Communications  
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## Ecological Footprint

An ecological footprint is a measurement of mankind's demand on the environment. This measurement expresses the extent of the land and water area the human population consumes and the amount of waste we make, that the Earth consumes. By using this method of measurement it is possible for us to estimate how much of the Earth or how many Earths it takes to support how mankind lives. It also tells us how fast we use up the Earth's resources before the Earth can renew them. For instance, currently humanity's ecological footprint was estimated to be 1.5 plant Earths to provide for us, so we are using the Earth's resources 1.5 times faster than they can be renewed. The UN scenarios are indicating that if our current population and consumption trends don't change by the 2030s, we will need the equivalent of two Earths to support us, within another twenty years it will be three. The average person's footprint is 2.3, although Americans have one of the largest footprints being at 9.6. It would approximately take five Earths to support us if everyone consumed as much as them. China only stands at 1.4 however; their fuel consumption is far less than that of America. My current ecological footprint is 4.26. Since my footprint is about double the average size I need to seriously consider how I can change my lifestyle to reduce my impact on the earth.

A few ways I can reduce my ecological footprint are by reducing my food footprint, adopting more energy-saving habits and by adding more energy-saving features to my home. I could reduce my food footprint by eating more organic in season foods, which I could accomplish by planting a garden. I could also eat less meat, eggs and dairy products. Veganism is good for the environment because meat is a waste of land usage. It consumes an enormous amount of energy. Forests are being destroyed waterways and air becoming polluted. This results in significant amount of climate change. For energy-saving habits I can keep my thermostat lower and unplug my electronics when I'm finished with them. I could add more insulation to my home to better keep the temperature longer. I can use more energy efficient appliances and use fans rather than air conditioning in the summer. Energy efficient window blinds to hold in the heat better for the winter, they also will keep the rooms cooler in the summer. When we use energy it makes a negative externality, each form of energy we use changes into carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, methane and other harmful gases. These harmful gases are not created at the home end of the user but at the power plants that generate the electricity. If I do these things my footprint should go down to at least average.

This is an important concept for the future. I believe this because at the rate that we are going there won't be much of a future left. If mankind doesn't change and start being more ecologically friendly then the Earth won't be capable of renewing itself before we can consume what it has replaced.