

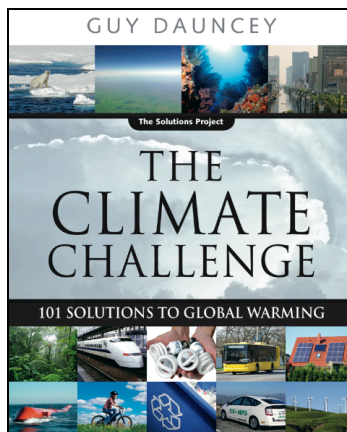
CLIMATE CHALLENGE CIRCLES

A Week-by-Week Guide by Guy Dauncey

I have written this Guide for anyone who wants to run an 8-week Climate Challenge Circle, based on Solutions #1 to #10 in *The Climate Challenge: 101 Solutions to Global Warming*. There are doubtless a hundred ways to run such a course, so experiment to find what works best, and use these guidelines as you please. The course was trialed as a 10-week course by the Cowichan Carbon Busters on Vancouver Island, who provided feedback that caused me to modify it and cut it back to 7 or 8 weeks.

This Guide is designed to complement *The Climate Challenge*. If you buy it through the book's website at www.theclimatechallenge.ca, you can get these bulk rate discounts (plus shipping). (1 book costs \$24.95).

2-4 books:	\$20 each	21-40 books:	\$14 each
5-10 books:	\$18 each	41-100 books:	\$12 each
11-20 books:	\$16 each	101 + books:	\$11 each



STARTING A CIRCLE

How do you create something out of nothing? It's all about intention, and your belief that you can make a difference.

If you have a friend who shares your passion, it'll be easier and more fun. Meet together to discuss the idea, fix a date for the first meeting, and decide where you'll hold it - ideally a room in someone's home with space for up to 15 people and allow access to a computer so that you can look at a carbon calculator.

That sets the intention and makes it firm. Next, write a persuasive email and send it to your friends, asking them to forward it to their friends. You could also create a poster to display at local community centres; write a letter to the Editor of your local paper; submit an article on the Circle (email the Editor first); and call your local radio station to see if they'll let you come on air and talk about the Circle.

Ask people to call you, so that you build a relationship and know when to close the list. For a good Circle you want 10-12 people, and some may drop out, which is why it's good to aim for 12-15 people. For the first meeting, invite people to bring food for a potluck meal to get you started.

WEEK 1: MEET, GREET, AND CALCULATE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

1. Enjoy your potluck meal, and get to know each other.
2. Explain the purpose of the group, distribute copies of this Guide, and give a run-down on how it will work. Once you get underway, each week has four main activities:

The Welcome Circle
Last Week's Action Circle
The Learning Circle
This Week's Action Circle

3. **The Welcome Circle.** Go around the circle and introduce yourselves, sharing something about yourself and your family.
4. Decide how you want to run the meetings. Who has skills at running this kind of meeting? Will you have one facilitator for every meeting, or take it in turns? The facilitator assigns approximate times for the tasks for each week, so that it can all wind up in two hours or less, and leads the group through the activities, encouraging everyone to speak and no-one to dominate. In most groups, without a facilitator, a third of the people enjoy talking all the time; a third prefer to keep quiet; and a third try to talk, but find it hard to get a word in. 😊
5. Decide when and where you want to meet each week. Will you meet at each other's homes in turn, or at the same place each week? Will you have a potluck each week, or keep it simple with coffee, tea, fruit and cookies? Will different people volunteer to provide fruit, cake or cookies each week?
6. Decide whether you want to invite one or more volunteers to be the "expert" for each week, to do some homework and become more informed, or whether you want to share the process of learning, with each person looking at one website and reporting back the following week. If you choose the former, at the end of this meeting you will decide who will be each week's expert.
7. Go around the circle and take it in turn to share your family situations. You might use an egg timer to keep things on track, giving each person four minutes:
 - the kind of food you like to eat, and whether you grow food in your garden;
 - the kind of energy you use for heat and electricity;
 - the way you travel;
 - what you do about recycling, and to reduce your waste.
8. **The Learning Circle.** Gather around a computer, and explore the carbon calculator at <http://calc.zerofootprint.net/calculators>, entering different values to see how a carbon footprint changes with different lifestyles.
9. **This Week's Action Circle.**
 - Decide whether you want to have one or more voluntary experts for each week, or whether to share the research with everyone choosing one website and reporting back on what they have learnt. If you choose volunteer experts for each week, here's a guide to the next five weeks:

Week 2: Food
Week 3: Electricity
Week 4: Heating and Cooling
Week 5: Transport

Week 6: Consumerism, Investments, & Carbon Offsets

- If you choose to share the research, look at the websites listed in Solution #2 of *The Climate Challenge* and choose one each to report back on next week. When you explore your website, choose three interesting things that you can share with the group next week in two minutes.
- Your group will benefit from having the use of a Kill-A-Watt Meter that enables you to measure the electricity use from any specific appliance. They cost \$50, and are available from Amazon. Decide who will buy one for the group.
- Discuss the things you will do before next week's meeting (below), and make sure everyone understands them. Then that's it!

Your Carbon Footprint Actions
1. Hold a Family Meeting to tell the other members of your family about the Climate Challenge Circle, explain what it's about, and line up their support for each week's actions.
2. Buy a notebook or create a binder to be your Carbon Notebook, where you will record your decisions and results.
3. Calculate your household's carbon footprint, using http://calc.zerofootprint.net/calculators .
4. Choose a Family Carbon Reduction Goal. This might be 10% a year, or 25% the first year and then 10% a year.

Week 1 Reading: <i>The Climate Challenge Solution #2 - Change the Way You Eat</i>
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WEEK 2: FOOD

1. **The Welcome Circle.** Go round the circle and take a total of 10-15 minutes to share personal or family updates *not* connected with your carbon footprint. This helps you get to know each other.
2. **Last Week’s Action Circle.** Take it in turn to share how your Family Meeting went, what your family’s carbon footprint is, and what your carbon reduction goal is for the year ahead.
3. **The Learning Circle.** If you chose to have one volunteer expert, give him or her 15-30 minutes to share what he or she learnt. If you chose to share the research, give each person 2-3 minutes to share the 3 most interesting things they learnt from the website they looked at.
4. **This Week’s Action Circle.** Go around the circle and take it in turn to talk about the food you eat, and your thoughts about the Sustainable Food Actions (below).

Note: These Action Lists are designed to cover the entire range of possible actions. At your Family Meeting, run down the list and decide which actions you can do this week, which you can do this month or this year, and which you will leave for a future year.

Sustainable Food Actions	This week	This month	This year	Future year
1. Hold a Family Meeting to share what you have learnt about your food’s carbon footprint, and to explore the list below				
2. Calculate your family’s carbon emissions from food, using www.eatlowcarbon.org				
3. Borrow or buy a vegetarian cookbook, and try a recipe				
4. Eat out one night at a vegetarian restaurant				
5. Eat 100% vegetarian food for one day a week				
6. Go vegetarian for three days a week				
7. Go vegetarian full time				
8. Read a vegan cookbook				
9. Eat out at a vegan restaurant (if there is one locally)				
10. Go vegan one day a week				
11. Go vegan three days a week				
12. Go vegan full time				
13. Decide to buy more organic food				
14. Decide to buy mostly organic food				
15. Decide to buy all organic food				
16. Decide to buy mostly locally grown produce and vegetables				
17. Decide to see how little food you can waste each week				
18. Consider how much food you could grow in your garden or patio, and how much time, energy and money it would take				
19. Join a “grow your own food” course				
20. Learn how to make compost				
21. Start a small food garden				
22. Start a larger food garden				
23. Increase the size of a food garden you already have				
24. Grow tomatoes, herbs and other food in containers				
25. Buy or build a greenhouse				
26. Change lawnmower from gas to electric or hand-pushed				

Week 2 Reading: <i>The Climate Challenge Solution #3 - Wake Up to Green Electricity.</i>

WEEK 3: ELECTRICITY

1. **The Welcome Circle.**
2. **Last Week's Action Circle.** Take it in turn to share how your family food actions went.
3. **The Learning Circle,** applied to your use of electricity.
4. **This Week's Action Circle.** Discuss this week's Actions. There's a lot to cover here, so I recommend breaking into twos or threes. Use your Carbon Notebook to track your decisions. As soon as the Kill-a-Watt Meter arrives, arrange to share its use.

Green Electricity Actions	This week	This month	This year	Future year
1. Hold a Family Meeting to discuss this week's actions				
2. Get in habit of switching off lights that don't need to be on				
3. Replace ten old light bulbs with compact fluorescents				
4. Replace all commonly used light bulbs				
5. Unplug every appliance using standby power that is not in regular use				
6. Call to book a home energy audit (Yellow Pages)				
7. Learn about home energy upgrade grants and incentives				
8. Use the home audit information to create an upgrade plan				
9. Buy or borrow a Kill-a-Watt meter to see how much power your appliances use (Amazon)				
10. Go around house, list all appliances you'd like to upgrade				
11. Research the cost of upgrading the first three appliances				
12. Upgrade your most inefficient appliance(s)				
13. Use outdoors clothes-line or indoors rack instead of drier				
14. Install water-saving showerheads, faucet aerators				
15. If you have second fridge, ask family if you really need it				
16. Switch off the second fridge, permanently				
17. Replace inefficient fridge with smaller more efficient one				
18. Only use dishwasher when full; turn off the drying cycle				
19. Wash all your clothes in cold water				
20. Replace inefficient washer with front-loading efficient one				
21. Ditch the waterbed				
22. Put your main consumer electronics on power bars, and switch off the bar when they're not in use				
23. Turn off your computer and printer when not in use. Change the back-up timing so that it does not interfere with switching off at night				
24. Research the options for solar photovoltaic for your home, including grants and incentives that might be available				
25. Call a solar PV company to get an estimate				
26. Install a 1 kW solar PV system				
27. Install a 2 kW solar PV system				
28. If you already have a solar PV system, make it larger				
29. Turn your hot water thermostat down from 140°F to 120°F (60°C - 49°C)				

30. Wrap your water heater in an insulating jacket				
31. Insulate your hot water pipes				
32. Call a solar hot water company to get an estimate				
33. Install a solar hot water system on your roof				
34. If your utility gives you the option of buying Green Electricity, call and ask about making the switch				
35. Change to a utility that sells Green Electricity				
36. Sign up for a local PeakSaver program to minimize pressure on grid during peak				
37. Build or buy a solar dryer				
38. Build or buy a solar cooker				
39.				
40.				

Week 3 Reading: *The Climate Challenge Solutions #4 - Keep it Warm, Keep it Cool, and #5 - Heat Your Home Without Carbon*

WEEK 4: KEEPING WARM and COOL

1. **The Welcome Circle.**
2. **Last Week’s Action Circle.** Take it in turn to share how your electricity actions went.
3. **The Learning Circle,** applied to your methods of heating and cooling.
4. **This Week’s Action Circle.** Discuss this week’s Actions. As before, there’s a lot to cover, so I recommend groups of two or three.
5. Before you finish, decide whether you want to hold Week Eight, which is a chance to invite friends and neighbours to a potluck to share what you have learnt, and inspire them to organize their own Climate Challenge Circles. If the answer’s “No”, your group will end after Week Seven. If the answer’s “Yes”, now’s the time to decide on a place to hold it, and organize a planning session to sort out the details.

Keeping Warm, Keeping Cool Actions	This week	This month	This year	Future year
1. Hold a Family Meeting to discuss this week’s actions				
2. Install programmable thermostats in your main rooms set to 68°F (20°C) when in use, 55-58°F (15°C) at all other times.				
3. When it’s chilly outside get in the habit of wearing a sweater				
4. Seal large air-leaks. Caulk/weather-strip around windows, doors, baseboards, attic hatches, power switch plates				
5. Add extra insulation in the attic (R-30)				
6. Add extra insulation in the basement				
7. Add extra insulation in the walls				
8. Upgrade to high performance windows				
9. Add thin plastic film to the windows in winter				
10. Seal and insulate heating ducts				
11. Call to get your heating system serviced and tuned				
12. Research the cost of air or groundsource heating				
13. Change home heating to air or groundsource heating				
14. Install a solar wall on south side of house				
15. Switch your heating oil to sustainable biofuel				
16. Upgrade to a super-efficient woodstove or a pellet stove				
17. Raise your cooling thermostat to 78°F (25°C)				
18. Tune up your air-conditioning unit				
19. Add an attic radiant barrier				
20. Paint your roof white, to reflect heat and increase cooling				
21. Install skylight or a solar chimney in a dark area of house				

<p>Week 4 Reading: <i>The Climate Challenge Solutions #6 - Change the Way You Travel, #7 - Drive a Greener Car, and the section on Flying in Solution #9.</i></p>
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WEEK 5: TRANSPORT

1. **The Welcome Circle.**
2. **Last Week’s Action Circle.** Take it in turn to share how your heating and cooling actions and decisions went.
3. **The Learning Circle,** applied to the way we travel.
4. **This Week’s Action Circle.** Discuss the full range of possible Transport Actions.

Transport Actions	This week	This month	This year	Future year
1. Hold a Family Meeting to discuss this week’s actions				
2. Create a trip diary for this week, to analyze how each of you traveled to each destination				
3. Decide to walk for most short local trips				
4. Decide to cycle for all short local trips				
5. Buy a bicycle				
6. Take a cycle safety course				
7. Buy bicycle safety clothing				
8. Try cycle commuting one or two days a week				
9. Switch to cycle commuting every day				
10. Research electric bikes in local stores and on the Internet				
11. Buy an electric bicycle				
12. Convert your bicycle to electric				
13. Research local ride sharing possibilities				
14. Join a ride share group				
15. Research local car sharing possibilities				
16. Join a car share group				
17. Study the bus timetable to learn more about what’s possible				
18. Decide to do more trips by bus				
19. Study the train timetable to learn more about what’s possible				
20. Decide to do more trips by train				
21. Research local groceries home delivery services				
22. Join a groceries home delivery service				
23. Research teleworking possibilities				
24. Decide to telework from home one or more days a week				
25. Research tele/videoconferencing possibilities				
26. Calculate your CO ₂ emissions from last year’s flights				
27. Plan to videoconference more instead of flying				
28. Plan to holiday this year without flying				
29. Research your options for buying a greener vehicle				
30. Exchange your car for one that is more fuel-efficient				
31. If you have two or more cars, sell one				
32. Buy a Scan Gauge, for real-time fuel consumption data				
33. Buy 4 LED tire pressure indicator lights (Amazon)				
34. Take the Eco-driving Questionnaire (page 91)				
35. Learn eco-driving techniques				
36. Get in the habit of checking your tire pressure every month				
37. Buy a Scan-Gauge for real-time MPG data on car’s dash				
38. Research electric cars possibilities				

39. Buy an electric vehicle				
40. Convert your car to electric				
41. Switch a diesel vehicle to sustainable biodiesel				
42. If you use a boat, calculate its emissions				
43. If you have a fossil-fueled boat, sell it				
44. Buy an electric boat or sailboat				
45. Decide to only rent hybrid cars				
46.				

Week 5 Reading: *The Climate Challenge Solutions #8 - Take a Climate-Friendly Vacation, #9 - Change Your Consumer Habits, and #10 - Become a Climate Champion*

WEEK 6: EVERYTHING ELSE

1. **The Welcome Circle.**
2. **Last Week’s Action Circle.** Take it in turn to share how your transport actions went.
3. **The Learning Circle,** applied to holidays, consumer habits and buying carbon offsets.
4. **This Week’s Action Circle.** Discuss this week’s Actions.
5. If you are ending your Circle next week, decide how you want to celebrate completion, and do whatever planning you need, such as having a potluck. If you are holding a larger Week Eight Celebration, now is the time to be on top of the details, and for each of you to be inviting your friends and neighbours.

“Everything Else” Actions	This week	This month	This year	Future year
1. Hold a Family Meeting to discuss this week’s actions				
2. Take the Ecological Footprint Quiz				
3. Plan to maximize your household recycling				
4. Set a goal to decrease your non-recyclable garbage				
5. Join your local Freecycle network				
6. Take the Carbon Rally Challenge (page 94)				
7. Fill in the Simple Living America scorecard (page 94)				
8. Research good carbon offset organizations				
9. Buy carbon offsets to neutralize last year’s CO ₂ emissions				
10. Consult a green investment adviser about moving your investments into green socially responsible funds				
11. Switch to green, socially responsible investments				
12. Discuss how you can have a happy holiday together with a low carbon footprint				
13. Decide to stop using bottled water				
14. Decide to stop using plastic shopping bags				
15. Join or start a voluntary simplicity circle				
16. Decide to eliminate all your junk mail				
17. Make a family visit to the local landfill				
18. Plant a tree				
19. Plant ten trees				
20. Use recycled wood for building projects				
21. Move to a smaller house				
22. Build your own eco-house				
23.				
24.				
25.				

<p>Week 6 Reading: <i>The Climate Challenge Solutions #11 - for Family, Friends and Neighbors and #16 - Start a Climate Action Group</i></p>

WEEK 7: COMMUNITY ACTION

1. **The Welcome Circle.**
2. **Last Week's Action Circle.** Take it in turn to share how you got on with “everything else” - your holidays, your consumer habits, your investments, and buying carbon offsets.
3. **The Learning Circle.** Discuss ideas for taking wider community action. This could be a big discussion, ranging all over the place. If you decide to engage in a wider action, you will need to embark on a new planning process, which is outside the remit of this Guide. There are plenty of ideas in Solutions #11 to #20. I would suggest that you:
 - (a) Brainstorm a list of possible ideas,
 - (b) Focus on the one that has the most energy and seems the most practical and easy to achieve,
 - (c) Decide when and where you will meet to develop your plans further.
4. **Week Eight Planning Circle.** If you are not holding Week Eight, skip this. If you are, take the time to go through your Week Eight plans, and make sure you're all on the same page. If someone can make a display, so much the better. Would some of you be willing to lead the first week of a new Circle, if there's interest? Make sure you invite your own family members!
5. **The Closing Circle.** Whether you are ending the group tonight or not, take it in turn to go around the circle, and give everyone a chance to share how they found the past seven weeks. If you feel inclined, choose someone to keep notes, and send any feedback that might improve these Climate Challenge Circles to guydauncey-at-earthfuture.com.

WEEK 8: COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

1. Welcome everyone as they arrive, and let the socializing, eating and drinking happen first. It always helps! If you have a display set up, this is a good time for people to look at it.
2. After the potluck, invite everyone to be seated, and ask the members of the Circle to come up to the front. One of you gives a presentation on what you have been doing for these past 7 weeks, and how it went. If you have photos and slides, so much the better.
3. Invite other members of the group to add to the presentation. The more varied the voices, the better.
4. Invite questions and discussion. The only preparation people need is to buy or borrow a copy of *The Climate Challenge*, and download this Guide from www.theclimatechallenge.ca
5. Ask if people want to start a Circle, to see who's interested. Suggest that potential starters hold up their hands, say where they live, and that anyone who wants to join a Circle clusters around them, and exchanges contact details. (Have sign-up sheets and pens ready.) If members of your Circle are willing to help them get started in their first week, arrange who will help each new Circle.
6. Before you end, ask if anyone has any announcements they'd like to make about community events that might be coming up.
7. Finish by thanking everyone, and wishing them good luck!

At some future date, I may create a website where Circles can share ideas and get up-to-date information. Do please keep me informed as to how your Circles go. You'll find me at guydauncey-at-earthfuture.com. *Thankyou!*