

# A RACE TO NET ZERO – Part 1

## Calculating a carbon footprint

Climate change is real, and while vaster solutions will require action on a global scale, there are many adaptations you can make to your daily life that can lessen your personal impact on the environment, such as shrinking your carbon footprint.

But before we get into altering our lifestyles, let's break down some of the terminology first....

### What is climate change?

The last 10 years have been the hottest ever record. Why? That would be climate change. The global temperature has risen by 1 degrees since the industrial revolution. That 1 degree doesn't sound like much but if we don't change our ways significantly, then the global temperature could rise by 5 degrees and the planet may become inhabitable for us humans.

Things that cause climate change are carbon dioxide, methane and water vapour. Carbon dioxide remains in the atmosphere for a lot longer than water vapour but water vapour is considered the gas with the greatest effect on global warming.

### Ever heard of Carbon offsetting?

This is a fairly genius idea which allows you to cancel out any unavoidable emissions that you make. You can purchase a carbon offset online which will in turn fund projects that aim to reduce carbon emissions, such as restoring forests, improving the energy efficiency of buildings or supplying enough power to over 70,000 local homes in Indonesia through wind farms.

### What is Net zero (or carbon neutral)?

In order to become Net Zero, you need to remove the same amount of greenhouse gases as what you emit into the atmosphere. If we all achieve becoming Net Zero, the planets global heating would likely stabilise within 20 years or so. This strategy is the key to reducing global warming and probably a lot easier to do than you think...

### What about carbon footprint?

A carbon footprint is the greenhouse gases (particularly carbon dioxide) released into the atmosphere through the activities of an individual, community or organisation.

It may seem daunting trying to figure out how to calculate your carbon footprint, but worry not. Carbon calculators do all the hard work for you, all you have to do is enter a few details and it will reveal your carbon footprint result.

However, there are hundreds of carbon calculators online. So we did some research to find the ones we thought were best.



## Carbon Footprint Calculators

### 1. Climatecare carbon calculator <https://climatecare.org/calculator/>

**Pros:** This calculator is one of the more in-depth ones that we found. It introduces several sections including flight, car, energy, event and business for you to be able calculate your carbon footprint. If you are looking for a very accurate result, a calculator that asks you very thorough questions will likely bring you a better result.

**Cons:** If you have only just started out on your quest to becoming Net zero, this calculator may seem a bit daunting as the questions are quite specific. Hopefully our terminology definitions will help.

### 2. WWF Footprint calculator <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/>

**Pros:** Following the previous calculator, this calculator also introduces many sections such as food, home, travel but it doesn't stop there, it also provides tips and recommendations for each section, to help guide your carbon transformation. This process is also the quickest of the three to complete, it can take as little as five minutes. It is also a perfect calculator if you're just starting your journey to becoming Net Zero and learning the ropes.

**Cons:** Whilst the calculator is quicker to complete, we also found that this calculator was quite vague when it came to asking specific questions, so therefore it is less accurate.

### 3. Carbon footprint calculator <https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>

**Pros:** If you're after a very accurate and thorough result, this calculator is for you. Whilst some of the questions can be quite complex, this is the most detailed of the three, and will provide you with the most exact outcome. This calculator delivers six sections; house, flights, car motorbike, bus & rail, and secondary, the main focus of the calculator being travel and transport.

**Cons:** To produce such in depth results, this process takes a longer time to complete, depending on the speed of your answers, the questionnaire could take up to twenty minutes to half an hour to answer. And you need to provide further requirements, such as heating and electric usage, and need to know (at least your recent) travel history.

What is even better about all three calculators is that they're free to use, unless you are calculating for a business, in which case they offer a premium, for better results.

## Want to find out more?

Here are some interesting links we used when creating this resource:

<https://www.google.co.uk/amp/s/www.bbc.com/news/amp/science-environment-24021772>

<https://www.npr.org/2020/12/18/943219856/2020-may-be-the-hottest-year-on-record-heres-the-damage-it-did?t=1610025059108>

<https://www.nationalgrid.com/stories/energy-explained/what-is-net-zero>

<https://www.goodenergy.co.uk/blog/2017/11/20/what-is-a-carbon-footprint/>

<https://marketplace.goldstandard.org/collections/projects/products/sidrap-wind-farm-project-indonesia>

## About this resource

The Race To Net Zero is a feature of the Race Against Climate Change with Amy and Ella; an educational series created by Kids Against Plastic in collaboration with Envision Virgin Racing.