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10 October 2017

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Project Green Challenge Day 10 Greener

HOW ACTIONS I TAKE AND ITEMS I USE EVERYDAY RELATE TO WATER
CONSUMPTION (whether I know that I am using the water directly or if it is “virtual water”)

Introduction

According to GRACE’s Water Footprint Calculator, (determine your water footprint at watercalculator.org), I use approximately 1,605 gallons of water per day. That’s a LOT of water! In my household, the average number of gallons of water we would use per day would be 6,556 gallons for only four people! A lot of this water usage comes from “virtual” water usage, or indirect water consumption. Things like shopping and your diet (which totaled over 1,000 of my personal gallons per day) influence your virtual water consumption. Here are a few things that I (or my family) do or use every day that influence our water usage.

1. CELL PHONE!!! (technology)



I know it is not good for the planet (or my health!), but I use my cell phone ALL THE TIME. According to the book *Your Water Footprint* (<https://voices.nationalgeographic.org/2015/04/09/daily-life-takes-how-much-water/>) it takes 240 gallons alone just to make the average cell phone. This may not seem like a lot of water because when you use your phone so much, it seems as if 240 gallons is not that much in comparison to how much water you use for other things. But if you factor in how much it takes to charge your phone every single day – for me it’s about four gallons per day according to the water calculator - it would add up to hundreds of thousands of gallons over time.

To conserve energy in this area (technology), I could try to limit the number of devices that I buy. For example, you do not always need the latest phone or laptop, so instead of continuously trashing your old phone, try to use the same one for as long as possible.

2. COFFEE (diet)



I personally do not drink coffee, but my parents have at least one cup every day. So how much water does it take to make one cup of coffee? According to National Geographic, one “cup of coffee takes 55 gallons of water to make, with most of that H₂O used to grow the coffee

beans” (<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/freshwater/water-conservation-tips/>). It makes sense that most of the water would be used for growing purposes, but when you think about how much water it takes to make something that in my life, I take for granted, the energy and effort needed is still shocking. For example, things like chocolate and butter take from 2,000 to 3,000 gallons of water.

I do not think my parents (or other people) are just going to stop drinking coffee because of this fact, and I would not expect them to. Instead, they could try to buy more sustainably sourced coffee, that uses practices and growing methods that conserve water and are eco-friendly (as well as fair-trade and locally!).

3. CLOTHES (clothing)



I go shopping for things like clothes every once in a while, and I never would have thought that water would have anything to do with my clothes other than doing laundry. I learned that it can take up to 713 gallons (<https://goodonyou.eco/fashion-and-water-the-thirsty-industry/>) to just make ONE cotton t-shirt. Like the coffee beans, most of this water is probably used on the actual growing of the plant.

To conserve water in this area, I could take better care of my clothes so that they would last longer and I wouldn't have to buy new ones so often. Also, just like the coffee, I could make sure that the fibers that make up my shirt are sustainably grown and produced.

4. CAR (DRIVING AROUND - transportation)



To produce the amount of steel *only* for one car is over 80,000 gallons of water (<http://www.gracelinks.org/285/the-hidden-water-in-everyday-products>). And for every gallon of gas the car uses, one to two and a half gallons of water is used to produce that gas. The US used about 143.37 *billion* gallons of gas in 2016 total (<https://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.php?id=23&t=10>), so at two gallons of water per gallon of gas, that's already 286.74 billion gallons of water.

To decrease water consumption in transportation, one could try carpooling with friends. This may be hard sometimes, especially when, like me, you live farther away and it would be easier if you just drove somewhere directly. To deal with this, try to only travel places that are absolutely necessary when using a car. Also, like with a phone, try to use your car for as long as you can without constantly switching it out of buying the latest model.

5. MAKEUP (personal products)



I thought it might be interesting to see how much water personal items use to be manufactured. Honestly, I didn't expect it to be *that* much, maybe 100 gallons at the most. But according to this blog (<http://waterwellnessproject.ca/cosmetics-and-water/>), it can take up to 23,775.5 gallons of water to make ONE tube of lipstick. That was one of the most shocking facts I learned. That would be more water than I would use in a week on average, even with my water footprint being so high.

To limit water usage in this area, try to only buy things that you really need or *really* want. Also, try to buy products that are eco-friendly and sustainably manufactured.

6. AN INTERESTING THING ABOUT RECYCLING



According to the water calculator, recycling things like paper, plastic, and bottles can actually decrease your water footprint. I found this interesting because even though I do not recycle everything, I try to recycle as much as I can, and even doing a little bit can decrease your water footprint by a lot of gallons of water.

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Instagram: savetheearth7

Transportation:

Diet:



The image shows a screenshot of an Instagram post. At the top, the Instagram logo and navigation icons are visible. The main image is a dark-colored sedan parked at night, illuminated by a light source. Below the image are icons for liking, commenting, and sharing, along with a bookmark icon. The text of the post reads: "1 like savetheearth7 Did you know it takes over 80,000 gallons of water just to produce a car? In the US alone, about 286.74 billion gallons of water were used to just refine the gasoline consumed. To limit water usage, try to only travel places that are absolutely necessary or carpool with a friend. #pgc2017 @turninggreenorg". At the bottom, it says "13 SECONDS AGO" and the navigation bar with home, search, post, heart, and profile icons.



The image shows a screenshot of an Instagram post. At the top, the Instagram logo and navigation icons are visible. The main image shows a white thermos with a "GREEN MOUNTAIN COFFEE" logo next to a black coffee maker with a white mug on top. Below the image are icons for liking, commenting, and sharing, along with a bookmark icon. The text of the post reads: "savetheearth7 Did you know it takes about 55 gallons just to make one cup of coffee? Try to limit water consumption by making sure that your coffee is grown sustainably with eco-friendly practices! @turninggreenorg #pgc2017". At the bottom, it says "2 SECONDS AGO" and the navigation bar with home, search, post, heart, and profile icons.