GUIDEBOOK

CARPOOLING

(IT’S ONE SMALL THING YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW TO MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE)

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LEARN | SHARE | GET INVOLVED
“In cities, people should start forming groups and travelling to work together. Many times people drive to work and back with no one else in their car. If five or six people who live and work in the same area can get together and car pool, it could really help save fuel and reduce the amount of pollutants from automobiles. The oil in the earth is almost used up. Carpooling, in this way, will help conserve the remaining oil.”

Amma

“Amma is truly such an enormous fountain of energy and love and compassion. I think if all of us were to get even a fraction of it within our own beings, there would be only joy in the whole world... Whatever little I can do with her inspiration, I will strive my best to accomplish it.”

— Dr. Rajendra K. Pachauri, Chairman, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 while Dr. Pachauri served as IPCC Chairman)
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Over the past two decades, Amma has addressed numerous international forums convened to discuss a more peaceful and harmonious world. At each of these forums, Amma has shared her vision of the way humanity can traverse the difficult road ahead — navigating from interreligious discord to harmony; from terrorism to peace; from competition between the sexes to mutual trust and co-operation; from war between nations to a collective war on poverty; and from environmental chaos to ecological balance. Amma’s observations invite each of us to reflect deeply and to get involved in the process of rebuilding a concerned and caring society.

**WELL-KNOWN FACT:** Amma has embraced more than 32 million people worldwide.

**LESS WELL-KNOWN FACT:** She also has a lot of good ideas on how to make the world a better place.

**Taken together, Amma’s speeches form a prescription for a humanity in crisis, addressing each of the most pressing issues of our time with clear, practical recommendations for positive change.**
WHAT IS THE INDEED CAMPAIGN FOR NATURE?

Embracing the World’s InDeed Campaign for Nature is an online framework built to support individuals to implement Amma’s practical suggestions about the way we might use the earth’s remaining resources, and the way we interact with the natural world into practice in our own lives and our own communities. It is about accepting that the world’s problems are our problems, and the fact that if we don’t do something about them, we cannot expect anyone else to do it for us. It’s about taking responsibility for the world in which we live, and acting as if we will have to answer to future generations for the state of the world we leave to them. Ultimately, it’s about what each of us can do, right now, in our own backyard, to help restore the lost harmony between humanity and nature.

“We are not isolated islands, but connected like links of the same chain. We are part of the chain of life. Our every action, whether deliberate or not, affects everyone. Without waiting for others to change, if we change ourselves first, that in itself will make a difference… Seeing the change in us, others will naturally begin to change as well.” –Amma
While to our way of life, there’s no escaping the fact that cars are a problem. There are now more than a billion cars on the planet, and 78% of all car rides involve only one person. There’s obviously room for improvement. The number of cars on the road today contributes to a broad range of problems, and carpooling will go a long way toward solving those problems. We have identified the four key problems that carpooling will help to solve.

**REDUCE TRAFFIC CONGESTION**

Sharing your trips also reduces traffic congestion, and if every driver took one more passenger, traffic could be significantly reduced. A major factor in the traffic crisis is single-occupant vehicles: people travelling to work, school, and other activities in cars by themselves.

**REDUCE AIR POLLUTION**

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the average adult breathes over 3,000 gallons of air every day. Children breathe even more air per pound of body weight and are more susceptible to air pollution.

The American Lung Association reports that 30,000 people are killed by car emissions annually in the United States alone. Air pollution also causes numerous respiratory and cardiovascular problems and may exacerbate pre-existing conditions such as asthma. Air pollution threatens the health of human beings and all living things. Air pollution, cause in part by car emissions, creates smog and acid rain and can cause cancer and other serious health effects.

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WHY CARPOOLING MATTERS

CONSERVE OIL

As the world’s supply of fossil resources plateaus and eventually declines, it will be more and more difficult, environmentally harmful, and energy-intensive to extract them. At some point in the future, we may expend as much or more energy to extract these fuels as we gain by burning them. Even before that point is reached, the dependence on fossil resources is problematic, to say the least. In addition to causing the price of these resources to increase, these new extraction methods can also cause significant harm to the environment by polluting oceans and fouling surface and underground water and otherwise harm the ecosystem that humanity needs to survive. The burning of these fuels already causes manmade global warming. Using more and more energy to extract the resources increases the emissions of harmful greenhouse gases.

For most of us, these inconvenient truths are still completely disconnected from the way we act in our daily lives. Most car owners today still turn on their ignition without a care in the world. It seems we are still in the calm before the storm. We still think that we can get away with using energy carelessly. But the reality is, we are quickly rushing toward a future in which not all of us will have the energy we need to continue leading our lives as we are now.

Reducing our energy consumption is one way of adapting to living with less energy, or with more expensive energy. The more we anticipate changes, the less painful the transition to less energy will be, especially for the more vulnerable people in our societies. The most vulnerable are unfortunately less able to anticipate these changes, since they already struggle to survive day by day.

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WHY CARPOOLING MATTERS

HELP STOP CLIMATE CHANGE

Scientist tell us that there are more than 200 billion tons of excess CO$_2$ in the atmosphere, and every car on the road is making the situation worse—the average commuter emits more than 600 kg (1,320 lbs) of CO$_2$ per year by commuting alone. Excess CO$_2$ in the atmosphere is the leading cause of global warming.

Global warming is indeed a complex phenomenon, but it can be understood fairly simply. The infrared radiance of the earth is absorbed in part by gases that we call greenhouse gases. The sun’s light that warms the earth passes through these same gases.

Greenhouse gases are essential for life on earth. The average temperature on earth is 15°C (59°F). It would be -18°C (0°F) without them, therefore extinguishing most forms of life.

Greenhouse gases can be compared to a blanket that keeps heat close to your body. When we add a second blanket, more heat is retained and the temperature stabilizes at a higher level than before. That’s what we do when we emit greenhouse gases: we keep piling up blankets that we can’t take off afterwards. One blanket is good, two blankets cozy, but ten may be pretty uncomfortable. Feeling the heat?

(For more information on global warming, make a personal commitment to reduce your carbon footprint at embracingtheworld.org/indeed. If you decide to carpool, you are already reducing your carbon footprint. But making the commitment gets you the free InDeed Guide to Reducing Your Carbon Footprint, helps you explore other fun and easy ways to reduce your carbon footprint, and tells the world that Amma has inspired you to make a difference!)

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When you join a carpool, you save time, save money, save energy. You also get the satisfaction of doing the right thing: carpooling, or car-sharing, is one of the most effective and easiest ways to reduce carbon emissions, traffic congestion and travel costs. By simply sharing your trips with one other person you can cut your CO$_2$ emissions and your out-of-pocket costs by 50%. If you share with three other people, you’re cutting them by 75%. It’s really a no-brainer.

**REDUCE STRESS**

Carpooling reduces or eliminates the stress of finding and paying for parking. Driving, also, can be stressful, especially during rush hour. When you carpool, you cut the time you spend driving in half or even more.

**GET MORE DONE**

When it’s your turn to be a passenger, you can use the time to catch up on email, work on a presentation, or even read a book.

**GET WHERE YOUR GOING, FASTER**

In many urban areas, major highways have special lanes dedicated to multiple occupant vehicles. Carpool with at least one other person and zip by the single-occupant vehicles as you get where you’re going, faster.

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CARPOLLING: WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME?

SAVE MONEY

Carpooling will cut your fuel expenses by 50% or even more, depending on how many people you choose to carpool with. Same goes for your parking expenses.

BUILD COMMUNITY

Carpooling offers the chance to get to know/spend quality time with your coworkers and neighbors. (Note: we recommend carpooling only with people you know.) Companies who encourage their employees to carpool not only reduce their parking requirements, they also demonstrably improve employee morale and productivity and reduce absenteeism.

CARPOLLING CAN BE SAFE AND EASY

Finally, despite some people’s fears, carpooling can be very safe. In fact, insurance companies encourage carpooling because they recognise that fewer cars on the road makes for fewer accidents. Following the suggested guidelines in this guidebook will ensure an easy and comfortable ride. Furthermore, as long as the driver isn’t making a profit there are no tax implications. It is also important to note that more and more cities and states offer facilities to encourage carpooling as an easy and cost-effective way to reduce pollution and greenhouse gases emissions. Many states and local units of government provide carpool parking lots in suburban and rural areas.

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There are numerous ways to form carpools. Often, word of mouth is the best and easiest way. Beyond just talking to your friends, neighbors with whom you are acquainted and coworkers, your company may have a service to help you find coworkers with whom you can share a ride. Some businesses and schools even have private carpooling services. If your employer does not already have a structure in place to facilitate carpooling, you can encourage your company to turn to such tools and initiatives as part of its environmental initiative and to reduce the amount of money spent on employee parking.

But carpooling is not just for your daily commute; carpooling is as flexible as your daily life. You can do it on routine trips such as school-runs, sports trainings, fitness classes, recycling trips, supermarket trips, as well as for special events like festivals, weddings, spectator sports, and conferences. In addition, carpooling can be used for business trips, airport runs, hospital visits, cross-country trips, and more.

Once you’ve found your carpool mates, there are a few simple steps to take to make your carpooling experience safe and pleasant.

**I HAVE A CAR BUT DON’T ALWAYS WANT TO DRIVE, WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

Drivers can also carpool with each other - it’s called carsharing. Once you find your trip mates, you can work out arrangements like alternating who drives. There will be plenty of other drivers like you who don’t want to drive every day. You could even alternate a week on, a week off. If you have three other trip mates with cars then you only need to drive one week in four and be chauffeured the rest of the time, when you can spend your commute catching up on work, reading, taking a nap, or listen to music or an audiobook while someone else takes over the stress of driving and parking.

**WHAT ABOUT INSURANCE?**

You have to check with your country’s laws about your responsibility when carpooling. Ask your insurance company about the possibilities and how to maintain your rights. Carpooling should not cause a problem and in many countries there are no negative implications as long as the driver is not collecting more money than the expenses. For instance, in Ireland, the Irish Insurance Federation advises that, as long as you are not making a profit from the arrangement, carpooling should have no implications for your car insurance. We do, however, advise you to check with your insurance company or broker as terms and conditions may over time.

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MAKING IT WORK: COMMUNICATION AND ETIQUETTE

Following these simple rules will help to ensure that you and your carpool stick together over the long haul.

- Talk about everything first - the more clearly you communicate with your trip mates about your needs and expectations, the better it will be for everyone. If you have something to say, say it as early as possible. Like any long-term relationship, success involves communication, understanding, respect, and flexibility.

- Discuss things like smoking, food, music and seating ahead of time. Lay ground rules and observe them. Unless you’ve discussed it already, the driver should have final say on the choice of music/radio station, food bans, etc.

- Decide on a meeting location that will work for everyone – carpooling can be door to door or you can use a central meeting location such as a grocery store or childcare center.

- Some people will prefer not to talk on the journey – this is no problem as long as you remind your trip mates in advance that you’re not a chatty person, or that you’re really behind in your work or reading and would like to catch up, or just feel like having some quiet time.

- Work out beforehand issues like how long you will wait if one of your trip mates is late (a good rule of thumb is a 5 minute wait time, 10 minutes tops).

- Things happen - if you’re not going to make your pick-up or collection, call your trip mates immediately. But if you keep changing agreed-upon arrangements, be prepared for your fellow carpoolers to find other carpools. Make sure that everyone in your carpool has exchanged telephone and/or cell phone numbers. It is also a good idea to get emergency contact information for each carpool member.

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MAKING IT WORK: COMMUNICATION AND ETIQUETTE

- It’s best to leave the groceries and dry-cleaning for your own time. The point of carpooling is to travel from home to work or school; save the errands for later.

- Finally, remember why you’re doing it: the primary objective is to get from point A to point B in an environmentally friendly and cost-effective manner. And remember, politeness and common courtesy will go a long way in keeping your carpool successful for the long term.

- How do you know if someone is trustworthy? We advise that you carpool only with people you already know.

It’s important to work out beforehand how you’re going to split the costs of operating a vehicle. Some drivers will want to include the costs of their car’s depreciation and insurance (particularly if you’re doing a daily commute). Others will just want to be reimbursed for the fuel used to make the trips. Toll charges and parking fees may also come into the equation.

It’s a good idea to work out a mileage rate, and then calculate payments from there. Guidelines for these rates can be found at most local community centers or chambers of commerce if you don’t want to work it out for yourself. As previously mentioned, it’s often illegal for drivers to make a profit, so the payment amounts must be reasonable and fair. It’s always best to pay in advance to avoid any awkward moments.

If you carshare, then no money need change hands as it can be a reciprocal arrangement.
Collectively, road transportation emits more greenhouse gases than any other form of transport. Even when carpooling, you can apply the following guidelines to reduce fuel consumption and $CO_2$ emissions.

**SMOOTH DRIVING**
Start your engine without pressing the accelerator, choose the appropriate speed and do not “push” the engine, try to drive at a constant speed—aggressive driving in cities can increase fuel consumption by 40%.

**SLOW DOWN**
Reducing your speed by 10 km/h (6 mph) on highways is good for safety and money. For a 500 km journey, it may save more than 5 liters of fuel. If your car has cruise control, use it—it makes it much easier to maintain a steady speed.

**TURN OFF THE ENGINE**
When stopped in traffic or picking someone up, turn off the engine. Stopping and starting the engine usually consumes less fuel than letting it run for just 20 seconds.

**LIMIT AIR CONDITIONING**
Air conditioning may make for a more comfortable ride, but not a more comfortable planet—it increases the consumption of fuel up to 10% on roads and 25% in cities. When in use, air-conditioning can cause the car’s engine to emit more than 2kg of $CO_2$ per 100 km (60 miles).

**CHECK THE TIRE PRESSURE**
Driving with under-inflated tires is dangerous and consumes more fuel. It is important to check tires’ pressure every 2 or 3 months on “cold” tires (after rides less than 3 km).

**REGULARLY CHECK AND MAINTAIN YOUR VEHICLE**
If your vehicle is not properly maintained, it may cause a 25% increase in fuel consumption.

**KEEP YOUR VEHICLE LIGHT AND EMPTY**
Be careful not to unnecessarily overload your vehicle: 100 kg of luggage increases fuel consumption by more than 5%. Roof racks that are not in use also add drag and reduce your car’s fuel efficiency.
“Amma has a request for each and every person on this planet: to play their part in restoring harmony to nature.”

- Amma

Embracing the World’s InDeed Campaign for Nature has been officially recognized by UNESCO as a project of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.