

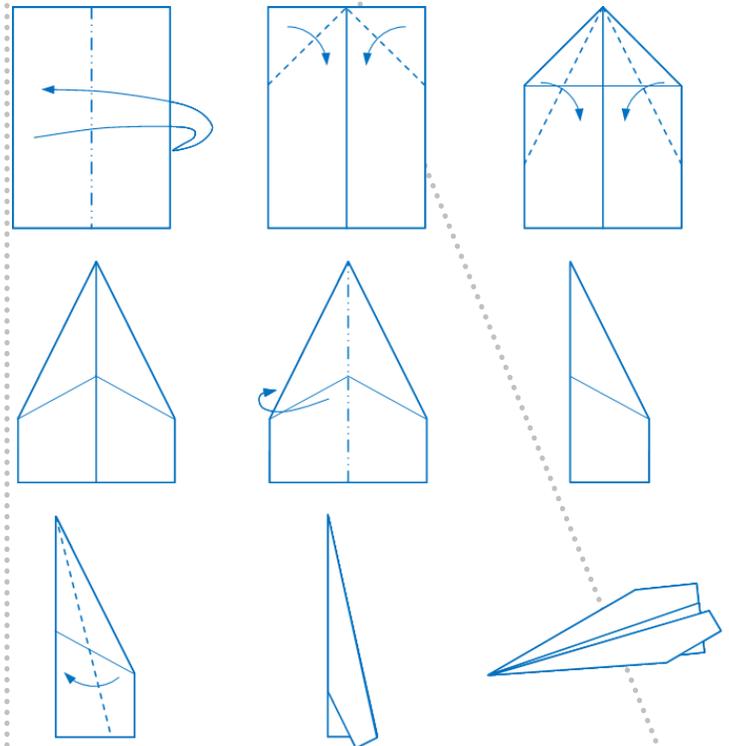
# How Flying Impacts Carbon Footprint

Is it possible to fly sustainably? This question is on many people's minds as awareness of green practices requires a critical eye on our current lifestyle choices. This question is also of growing importance as, "demand for flights [are] projected to double over the next 15-20 years." (Forum) Finding solutions to make this mode of transport more sustainable or reduce that demand is vital to stop emissions from growing exponentially within the next few decades.

## How to Reduce Emissions When Flying

For many, flying is not an option for leisure but a requirement for work. In these instances, there are still a few steps one may consider reducing their carbon footprint. First, check where the airline ranks on the Dow Jones Sustainability Index before booking. Secondly, "When you opt for connecting flights, you have to fly a greater distance" (Fly Green) so instead reduce the number of layovers on your trip. Lastly, see if you can drop the weight of your luggage to a minimum, "...as the total weight of the aircraft directly affects its fuel consumption." (Aviation Benefits)

Since it isn't possible to eliminate your carbon footprint with the above methods, offsetting the emissions is another strategy for those who cannot utilize alternative modes of transport. Doing this in your personal life may not be an effective method, given that, "To save for the emissions of your return flight to New York [from London], you have to follow a vegan diet for over a year." (Fly Green) Instead, there are services and even booking websites that allow you to donate to projects that reduce greenhouse emissions. Due to economies of scale, it can be relatively inexpensive to mitigate your impact from flights. (Aviation Benefits)



## Alternatives to Flying

When travelling for leisure, there are a few alternatives to flying that can be employed. Driving may be minimally more efficient or even worse than flying depending on various factors, so it can not be considered an appropriate substitute. Trains and buses, on the other hand, do provide marked improvements to one's carbon footprint and therefore should be used when available.

## The Future of Flight

Innovations to aircraft and necessary maintenance to airspace networks are greatly contributing to more efficient airlines, but it is not outpacing the projected growth of aviation use in the coming decades. Alternative fuel sources, such as biofuel, are promising in this regard but their cost relative to kerosene makes replacing them entirely a daunting prospect (Fly Green).

In order to catch up with the growing demand, “defin[ing] a pathway towards net-zero flying” (Forum) is essential. Electric flying or hydrogen are common examples of advancements that could quell this growth, but regardless of specific method, progress in reducing emissions is necessary. Until technology has advanced towards net-zero flying, truly sustainable flying is not possible, and it remains the personal responsibility of those who fly to mitigate their impact.

Due to COVID-19 concerns, business travel has changed for many as we turn to webinars or online events as alternatives. This will be discussed further in our next Environmental Moments.

**Produced by the Utility Arborist Association Task Force and Davey Resource Group:**



## Works Consulted

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