Sometimes we drive even though other options are available.

Driving less is an easy way to reduce our gas consumption, emissions and our impact on traffic congestion. The tips below are great tactics for achieving your 15% reduction while saving money too. Depending on where you live and where you need to go, some tips may work better than others. It’s up to you to decide which methods best suit you.

**Walk**
The average person can walk a kilometre in ten minutes, so you may be surprised how many destinations are within an easy walking distance. Before you jump in your car, consider whether you can walk there instead.

As a challenge to walk more, consider getting a pedometer. It will track your steps as you walk and you can set goals to increase your steps and walk even further.

Many communities are making their streets more pedestrian friendly. Improvements include better sidewalks and crossings, pedestrian shopping zones and entire neighbourhoods designed as “complete communities” so that major destinations are within walkable distances.

> To see how walkable your community is, find out your local Walk Score
> For more information on walking, visit Canada Walks
> To get step-by-step walking directions and to find different routes in your area, visit Google Maps and use their Directions tool

**Bike**
Cycling might be an alternative for getting around. Many Canadian commutes are under 10km or even 5km - distances that are easily traveled by bicycle. In 20 minutes, the average person can bike almost 5 km. In the city, for distances under 10km, it’s usually faster to get there by bike than by car.

Cycling can also be a great alternative for going shopping, running errands or visiting friends and family. Consider whether biking might be a good fit for your next trip.

Fitting your bicycle with a basket or pannier is like giving your bike a trunk. Carrying groceries and other small items is a good way to get more use out of your bike.

Effort is beginning to remove the barriers to cycling as a mode of transportation. By providing special lanes and lights as well as secure and covered bike parking, many municipalities and businesses are demonstrating the value for increasing cycling infrastructure.

> To explore local cycling options in your community, visit HUB
> For some helpful cycling tips to get you started have a look through HUB’s bike tips
> To get turn-by-turn biking directions and to find different cycling routes in your area, visit Google Maps and use their Directions tool

**Drive Less Tools**
Translink is your transportation and trip planning portal for transportation information in Metro Vancouver. Visit the site to explore local transportation options in your community.

**Take Transit**
Leave your car at home and let the professionals do the driving.

Instead of concentrating on traffic, free up your time to
- Catch up on the news
- Curl up with a book
- Play a game on your phone
- Work on your laptop
- Talk, text or email
- Take a nap

There are so many options to move you around town or around a region!

> To explore local transit options in your community, visit Translink’s Trip Planner
> To get transit directions, find transit stops in your area and view station information and schedules, visit Google Transit
Drivepool

Whether going to work, taking kids to soccer practice or going with friends or family to an event, there are so many opportunities to share a ride. Try talking with your neighbours, friends, family and colleagues to see if rides can be shared.

If you’re looking for people to carpool with, many employers and regions now offer ride matching services. Online tools such as Smart Commute’s Carpool Zone are free resources for matching drivers with passengers – visit Translink’s Carpooling page for more info.

Even the infrastructure on many of our highways and roads is encouraging carpooling. High occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes are increasingly popular among transportation planners. Vehicles with more than one occupant are given priority placement in HOV lanes, allowing those who carpool to cruise past single occupant vehicles stuck in congestion.

An important point to remember, the Smart Drive Challenge encourages you to drive your car less. While you’re encouraged to try carpooling and ride sharing, for your three week Challenge see if you can carpool with others. You can then return the favour at the end of the Challenge!

Telecommute

Working from home, or telecommuting, is an increasing option for many workplaces. Some employers allow their employees to work from home one or more days a week. Telecommuting just once a week can reduce our commute impact by 20%! Additional benefits of telecommuting can include greater job satisfaction, higher productivity, less stress and fewer work/family conflicts.

Telecommuting may not be possible in your workplace, but it doesn’t hurt to ask. If you think you might be able to accomplish some of your work from home, approach your employer about occasionally telecommuting.

Combine Tips and Trips

Using only one of these tips on its own is seldom possible. More likely, combining transportation methods will give you the freedom to move while reducing your impact.

Just a few of the possible combinations include:

- Let your bike have a ride – many buses and trains are now equipped to take your bike with you
- Stroll to roll – walk to your bus stop or subway station
- Park and ride – park your car at the local transit hub and forget about the traffic
- Streetcar to car-share – have a driver pick you and others up from the station

There are so many options and combinations to choose from! If you do have to drive, combining your trips and errands into one is a great way to reduce your gas and distance driven. Driving under 5 km is the most polluting type of trip because your vehicle’s engine and pollution control system never reach peak operating temperature. Rather than running one errand today and one tomorrow, run them one after the other, planning your route to avoid backtracking and rush-hour traffic. The longer trip will allow your vehicle’s engine to warm up to its peak operating temperature and combining several trips into one can cut fuel use and emissions by 20 to 50%.

Retire Your Car

The time may come when you or someone you know will want to permanently retire an old vehicle. Older models often produce more harmful emissions and should be taken off the road and retired. If a car is too old to sell, there is a great option to ensure it will be retired responsibly. Scrap It, a program for BC residents, enables people to get rid of their older, high-polluting car and receive an incentive of their choice.

Visit Scrap It for more information.

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