

## What can I do about climate change?

The unfortunate truth is that the key players in halting climate change are companies like BP, Shell and Exxon; in fact, just 20 companies worldwide have created one third of all greenhouse gas emissions since 1965 (which amounts to 480 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide) [1]. Corporations like these hold massive amounts of power and often use it to deter action against climate change, so it often seems up to the individual person to make the changes. Progress by world governments seems painfully slow at times, so a lot is left up to us. Here are a few things you could do to play your part.

### Top Tips from AHS Eco Ambassador Phoebe Boersma

#### Tip 1: Use your voice

The most important thing you can do to make lasting change is make your voice heard by those in power. Contact your local Member of Parliament, councillor or mayor to demand more action, start petitions or join a movement or campaign that focuses on protecting our planet from climate change, such as Extinction Rebellion or the UK Student Climate Network. You can use this link for more information about these groups: <https://extinctionrebellion.uk/join-us/>  
<https://ukscn.org/take-action/>  
You can use this link to find out who your local MP is: <https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP>

#### Tip 2: Eat less meat and dairy

Food culture in current society revolves around the consumption of meat, so much so that around 60% of all mammals on the planet are livestock, and 70% of birds are farmed poultry. Animal farming and agriculture is a disaster for the climate- they create massive emissions and destroy vast areas of the natural world. Eating too much meat is also bad for your health; 45,000 early deaths a year could be saved by switching to low or no meat diets. It's clear that meat and dairy have adverse effects on both the environment and our health, so why not cut some out? There are now many dairy alternatives, such as oat milk or coconut yogurt, and new meat alternatives are constantly being developed.

#### Tip 3: Change how you travel

In some instances, this is easier said than done. However, transport has become one of the largest emitting sectors of the UK economy, accounting for

28% of greenhouse gas emissions in 2018. There are simple ways in which we can reduce our reliance on cars and planes; for example, a large proportion of car journeys in the UK are under 5 miles long, so some of these could easily be switched with catching the bus, or even by cycling or walking, and some long car journeys could be replaced with the train. For travelling to different countries, you could take the train not the plane! Or, if flying is unavoidable, paying a little extra for carbon offsetting would be a great way of reducing your carbon footprint.

#### Tip 4: Review your consumption habits

This sounds like a big one, but there are small changes everyone can make to use less energy, cut your carbon footprint and your bills! At home, turning off lights and appliances when not in use certainly helps, but your heating might be undoing all your hard work. Make sure your home is properly insulated and wear an extra layer rather than turning up the heating. To go even further, you could switch your energy supply to a green tariff, which can often save you money in the process! For more information on energy saving, please see [Ruby's article on Big Energy Week](#).  
Moving away from energy usage, we also need to look at our product consumption. In terms of fashion, a cheap top from PrettyLittleThing or Missguided will always be more attractive than a more expensive one, especially for teenagers who often just don't have enough money to make more sustainable choices. However, the purchase of fast fashion comes with hidden consequences, such as child or slave labour as well as detrimental environmental impacts. To fight against this, don't buy more than you need, and when buying clothes look for second hand items or quality pieces that will last a long time.

You might choose to include one, two or four of these tips into your daily life. The truth is, every little helps! As increasing numbers of people make small and sustainable changes, soon an environmentally friendly way of living will become commonplace. Why not try one today?