

How to Actually Personally Fight Climate Change

Mitigating the climate crisis is top of mind for many people. While the climate change is heavily a systems and policy problem, there’s lots individuals can do to influence things in the right direction. This is your action list to get you started.

Make the system fight for the climate, not against it

We’re not going to solve the climate crisis without the help of government — we need to get every level of government rowing in the same direction of fighting climate change.

Personal Infrastructure: Electrify your life

Many of us own vehicles and appliances that burn fossil fuels (gasoline, natural gas, and propane), and emit carbon dioxide. We need to start replacing these with high-efficiency electric versions.

Green the Grid

Electricity is the clean power source of the future. Electricity is increasingly generated from renewables and zero-emissions sources, and we need to help accelerate that transition with funding, or personally installing renewable power generation.

Upstream Emissions

Nearly all of the goods, food and services that we use today contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. The long-term solution is that each of the industries providing these goods needs to adopt new technology and update their processes to become zero-emissions. Until then, we can be smarter consumers, and consume less, to mitigate the harm being done.

Offset Remaining Emissions

Since we can’t yet individually get to zero-emissions (because materials, food, manufacturing and transport all emit today), we should all help contribute to emissions offset programs.

Broaden your Impact

The climate crisis is a huge problem—the more people we have onboard to push for the right outcome in each of these categories, the better!

Basic Steps

These steps are all low-cost or cost-saving; they’re a great place to start to make a meaningful impact. Most people can take most of these steps fairly immediately.

- ☐ **Vote in every election.**
- ☐ **Join an environmental voting group.** Seek to understand the environmental stances of your politicians, and the environmental impacts of laws you vote for.
- ☐ **Talk about the climate crisis with your friends and family.**
- ☐ **Drive the highest-efficiency vehicle you can access.**

Advanced/Optimal Steps

These steps take a larger investment of time, money, or dedication. Take as many of these steps as you’re able to.

- ☐ **Write to your lawmakers with the help of climate action email lists.**
- ☐ **Move your money to fossil-fuel free banks and index funds.**
- ☐ **Become a climate activist.**
- ☐ **Support climate-policy and frontline community adaptation non-profits.**
- ☐ **Support pro-environmental candidates.**
- ☐ **Make your next vehicle electric.**
- ☐ **Your next space and water heaters needs to be electric, ideally a heat pump.**
- ☐ **Your next stove needs to be electric, ideally induction.**
- ☐ **Your next dryer needs to be electric.**

The above actions are your most important ones. Without government support at the federal, local, and state levels, resolving the climate crisis will be an impossibly steep uphill battle. We need every appliance and vehicle to be electric to remove our reliance on greenhouse-gas-emitting fossil fuels.

- ☐ Buy only renewable energy from the grid.
- ☐ Reduce electricity use.
- ☐ Talk about the climate crisis with your friends and family.

Travel and Transportation

- ☐ Reduce long-haul travel and air travel.
- ☐ Drive gas cars less.
- ☐ Rent electric vehicles.

Food

- ☐ Reduce food waste.
- ☐ East less beef and lamb.
- ☐ Reduce animal product consumption.
- ☐ Eat local, in-season produce

Consumption

- ☐ Try to be as zero-waste in your life as possilbe. Buy less stuff, and less new stuff. Buy for quality and longevity.
- ☐ Calculate your remaining emissions, and offset them.
- ☐ Increase your offsets for every flight you take.

- ☐ Use variable electric loads while the energy from the grid is cleanest.
- ☐ Better insulate your house.
- ☐ Install rooftop or small wind to generate renewable energy.

- ☐ Reduce the need for large groups of people to fly (for example, for a conference).
- ☐ Go vegetarian or vegan.

- ☐ Plant trees on any land you own.

- ☐ Become a climate activist.
- ☐ Organize your school, workplace, organization, or community to make shift like those above at the institutional level as well.

Rationale, how to do each of these steps, and a ton more context at <https://erikareinhardt.com/personal-climate-action>

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