

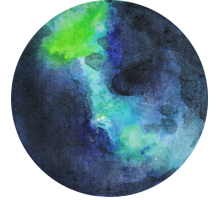
# 10 THINGS TO DO

to help the Earth during Covid-19 lock down  
(and beyond)

## #EarthDay

Some of us in the HE and FE sectors will be lucky enough to continue working during this difficult time, others will be furloughed, trying to manage childcare, volunteering for the NHS, helping our communities, and a whole host of other things.

What is apparent though, is that many of us will now have a little more time on our hands than we are used to. Many of the efforts to combat climate change planned for this year have understandably been delayed –so what can you do to help?



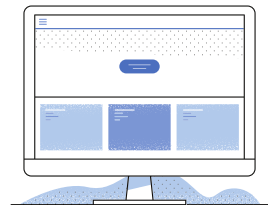
### KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

If you find yourself with extra time on your hands, and you can't go anywhere, use this time to learn (or increase your learning – there's always more to learn) about sustainability. Knowing what the issues are, and having time to think of innovative initiatives to remedy them is invaluable.

**1** Listen to podcasts about sustainability  
You can find a list created by members here. Use these to improve your understanding of the topic, learn from others' experience, and be inspired to think of new solutions.



**2** Take online training.  
Why not expand outside of your usual area and add some new strings to your bow! Then take this back to your institution when it is back up and running. There are some generic sustainability courses, but looking into specialist ones is advisable. Online training is available through the edX, OpenLearn and Coursera among many other providers. EAUC has a free elearning module as well.



**3** Virtually meet with others to discuss sustainability.  
Whether that is through EAUC, and the themed and regional meetings we hold, or through your institution or local community. Meet with people and talk about these issues. Raising awareness and engaging with others is the first step towards tackling an issue. You could even look at teaching others about sustainability online!



**4** Learn a new skill or get involved with voluntary work.  
Not everyone has the time for this, but new skills don't necessarily need to be time consuming, nor does volunteering. Skills could be learning how to make reusable sanitary pads, watching tutorials on mending clothes so you don't have to throw that old pair of jeans away, looking at how to start your own vegetable patch. Voluntary work could include helping the NHS directly, supporting local charities to ensure vulnerable people are safe and have access to necessities. The NCVO has more information on voluntary opportunities.



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## STAY ACTIVE

The human race is currently remarkably (and correctly) stationary. While the reason for this is entirely devastating, the impact of this on the planet environmentally is a silver lining to a very dark cloud. Emissions reduction across the world will not be insignificant. But needing to stay at home doesn't mean we have to be inactive within our houses and communities, and many countries are still allowing people to go outside to exercise once a day.

### 5 Prioritise physical exercise.

Take up cycling if you have a bike and you don't already cycle much. You are allowed one form of exercise a day. If you have always meant to get fitter through cycling, start now, and when the lock-down is lifted, commit to cycling more instead of using a car. This will help the planet by reducing carbon emissions, and it will help you by improving your fitness. Win-win. You could also take up virtual exercise classes or make your own gym using common household items.



### 6 Take time for your mental health and wellbeing.

This is a difficult and stressful time – if you can learn ways to manage these feelings, and ensure your wellbeing, then you are learning how to adapt and be resilient. These skills are invaluable to the planet. It needs us to be resilient and adaptable and to apply that same logic to tackling the climate crisis. There are some resources to help with anxiety about covid-19 here and eco-anxiety here.



## EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY

It is a common misconception that technology solves the problem of carbon emissions, because people do not realise that computers running, sending an email, or streaming Netflix all has a carbon footprint. However, it is clear, that this footprint is smaller than other fossil-fuel guzzling activities, like driving.

### Learn how to work well virtually.

### 7 This sounds silly – but virtual working is not as easy as it sounds. You have to have the right equipment, a set up at home that you can work in, your day needs to be surprisingly well structured, and you need to know how to use all the software to enable meetings and calls. If you have mastered this during lock-down, ask your employer if continuing some working from home is feasible after the pandemic. Lobby them to continue as many meetings virtually as possible. This will have a big impact on your carbon footprint.



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## LOOK AT YOUR ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Energy managers across the sector are looking at their institutions energy consumption at unprecedentedly low levels at the moment – and this is brilliant. However, we are now using more energy at home, and this is a good time to think about how we can make energy savings at home.

- 8** Look at your domestic energy consumption and make changes. Now is the perfect time to change to a greener energy company if you haven't already, and take the time to work out whether there are ways to reduce energy use through behaviour changes. Do your children leave the lights on all the time? Teach them why this is bad for the environment. Is your freezer working over time because it needs defrosting? Now is the time to defrost! Are you overfilling the kettle or underfilling the washing machine? Look at small changes you can make, and they will add up. If you have a smart meter, this will be easy to track. If not, get one of those, too! Make everyday #EarthDay at home.



## EAT LESS MEAT

This one is always brought out as a way to reduce emissions, and it is hit or miss in its reception. There is an intrinsic psychological connection between health, wealth and meat consumption that is hard to break. Meat has always been a sign of wealth, and protein is of course good for us (within reason) –meat is a staple in many people's diet. Theoretically, we all know that our consumption of meat is at a level that is actually bad for a lot of people's health, and bad for the planet. Over consumption of red meat has been linked to a higher risk of some cancers and dairy farming is responsible for a significant amount of GHG emissions.

Fall in love with vegetables.

- 9** It is hard to get hold of meat right now, so what better time to break the psychological link between meals needing to be meat and vegetable to be balanced. Support local farmers by buying fruit and veg boxes, and follow vegetarian and vegan bloggers to get some ideas. Eating more healthily also has the added benefit of making sure your immune system is as strong as possible. Now is also the time to really look at your food waste and challenge yourself to make it as little as possible. You could even start growing your own fruit and vegetables from your food waste. Get the kids involved, and have a virtual competition with your family on who can grow the most potatoes.



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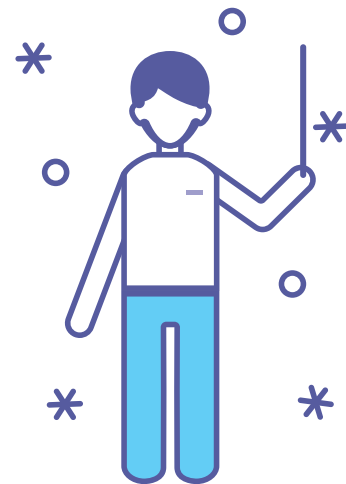


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## ONE FOR THE PARENTS AND THOSE TEACHING CHILDREN AT THE MOMENT

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Take the opportunity to incorporate ESD into your child's learning. If you work in the sustainability sector, or generally have an interest in sustainability (we all should), you probably already talk to your child(ren) about some sustainability topics, like recycling and nature. But one of our missions, as sustainability professionals, is to get ESD embedded in education. As an organisation, we promote this in post-16 education, but it should of course be embedded from the very start of a child's school life. While some schools, like eco-schools, are very good at this, other schools will choose whether to include any or some of ESD in the curriculum, usually through Global Citizenship classes. It doesn't tend to cover enough of ESD, and it isn't integrated into the whole curriculum like it should be. So, teaching your children is a **HUGE OPPORTUNITY** to integrate ESD into their learning. Schools are sending materials home, but this is your chance to show them practical application of ESD and enthuse them about it. Let them go back to school and tell their class and teacher about what they have learnt, and pass on this enthusiasm to others.



There are lots of resources on this here.

If you don't have children – why not take the time now to teach your family and friends more about sustainability, while you have a captive audience! You could set up a virtual sustainability quiz or simply talk about things you are all realising about the importance of sustainability during this slower pace of life.

For more information about EAUC and Earth Day  
-read our blog here.