

Global warming is a subject that everyone has an opinion on. Some experts say that the sole cause is the excessive CO2 emissions released into the atmosphere. Then there are other experts who say that since the beginning of time the planet has gone through cycles of 'rejuvenation' from ice caps to deserts. There are those who say that nature is resilient and that nature will always take back its own. There are facts in all of those statements, however, the one factor that is not mentioned as often as global warming is the Earth's population boom. The last 5 decades has seen significant global increases in population that coupled with better medical care and healthier lifestyles people are living longer. The net result is the impact this population increase has on the planet - is it sustainable? I don't have the answer.

One thing is certain, the planet is getting warmer and yes this has happened in the past. In the past this was the planet's natural cycle. Now, however, the planet's natural cycle is being directly effected by all of us. With CO2 emissions creating the greenhouse effect and the Sun's radiated heat being trapped the Earth is getting warmer at an alarmingly high rate.

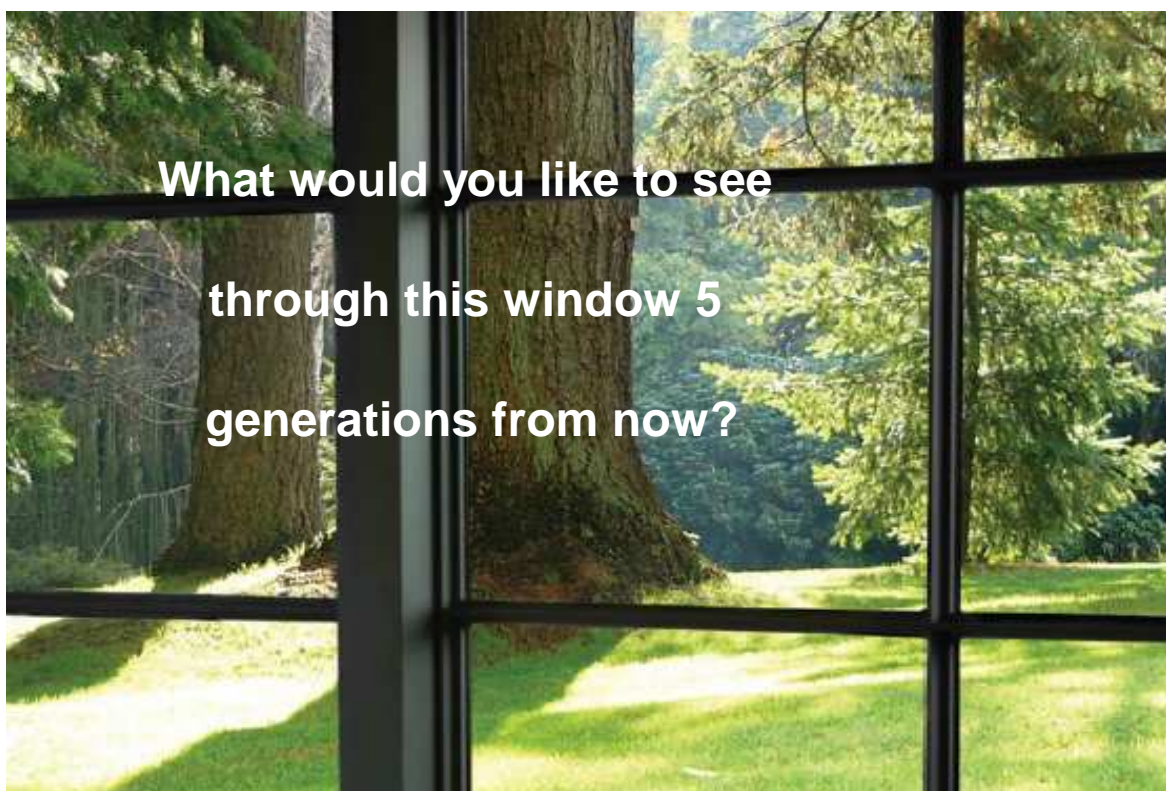
There are those who say it is too late - the damage has already been done. Yes, we have damaged it but we can all start to repair it bit by bit. The 'Power of One' is an excellent example of what can be achieved - if everyone made one small change - the global effect would be measurable. The irony is all the little changes which has such a positive effect on OUR environment actually saves you money.

Producing energy creates CO2 and costs you money. Reduce CO2 emissions and save money.

Make up your own mind - search the web. Gather information from reliable sources and you decide what all the fuss is about.

We have list below some ideas or suggestions you may like to take on board to help you save money on energy and reduce CO2 emissions.

YOU CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE



1. Replace a regular incandescent light bulb with a compact fluorescent light bulb (cfl)

CFL's use 60% less energy than a regular bulb. This simple switch could save about 130Kg of carbon dioxide a year.

2. Keep your heating system appliance well maintained with annual servicing.

By being more efficient it will not only reduce carbon dioxide but also save you money.

3. When purchasing new appliances ensure they are energy efficient.

All new equipment now carries an energy efficiency rating.

4. Do not leave appliances on standby

Use the on/off function on the unit itself. A television that is switched on for 3 hours a day (the average Europeans spend watching TV) and in standby mode during the remaining 21 hours uses about 40% of its energy in standby mode.

5. Insulate your hot water tank and fit a thermostat.

If your hot water tank isn't already insulated then either fit an insulating jacket or fit a new pre insulated tank. This can save a huge amount of CO2 emissions. Also set your thermostat no higher than 50°C.

6. Move your fridge or freezer.

Placing a fridge or freezer in a warm room consumes much more energy. For example a freezer in a utility room with a temperature of 30 - 35°C causes an extra 320Kg of CO2.

7. Defrost old fridges and freezers regularly.

Even better is to replace them with newer models, which all have automatic defrost cycles and are generally up to two times more energy-efficient than their predecessors.

8. Don't let heat escape from your house over a long period.

When airing your house, open the windows for only a few minutes. If you leave a small opening all day long, the energy needed to keep it warm inside during six cold months (10°C or less external temperature) would result in almost 1 ton of CO2 emissions. Alternatively, fit a mechanical ventilation system with heat recovery (like the MTD-ERV 300) which provides ventilation and energy recovery reducing the overall energy output of the home)

9. Replace single glazed windows with double glazing.

Certainly all new homes on the market have double glazed windows. Not all double glazed windows are the same - some of the better ones have low emission glass and are filled with argon gas. Don't always rely on simply the sales brochure look for technical facts - if not available ask your architect to research the product for you.

10. Cover your pots while cooking

Doing so can save a lot of energy needed for preparing the dish. Even better are pressure cookers and steamers (also healthier) - they can save around 70%.

11. Use the washing machine or dishwasher only when they are full.

If you need to use it when it is half full, then use the half-load or economy setting. There is also no need to set the temperatures high. Modern detergents are so efficient that they get clothes and dishes clean at low temperatures.

12. Take a shower instead of a bath.

A shower takes up to four times less energy than a bath. To maximise the energy saving, avoid power showers and use low-flow shower heads.

13. Use less hot water.

It takes a lot of energy to heat water. You can use less hot water by installing a low flow shower head (160Kg of Carbon Dioxide saved per year) and washing clothes in 30°C water (225Kg saved per year) instead of hot.

14. Use a clothesline instead of a dryer whenever possible.

You can save 320Kg of carbon dioxide when you air dry your clothes for 6 months out of a year.

15. Insulate and seal your home.

Properly insulating your walls and ceilings can save 25% of your home heating bill and 900Kg of carbon dioxide. Sealing the house can save another 770Kg of carbon dioxide.

16. Be sure you're recycling at home.

You can save 1,100Kg of carbon dioxide a year by recycling half of the waste your household generates. Local authorities can give you details of recycling centres in your area.

17. Recycle your organic waste.

Around 3% of the greenhouse gas emissions through the methane is released by decomposing bio-degradable waste. By recycling organic waste or composting it if you have a garden, you can help eliminate this problem! Just make sure that you compost it properly, so it decomposes with sufficient oxygen, otherwise your compost will cause methane emissions and smell foul.

18. Choose products that come with little packaging and buy refills when you can.

You will also cut down on waste production and energy use.

19. Reuse your shopping bag.

When shopping, it saves energy and waste to use a reusable bag instead of purchasing a disposable one in each shop. Waste not only discharges CO₂ and methane into the atmosphere, it can also pollute the air, groundwater and soil.

20. Plant a tree.

A single tree will absorb one ton of carbon dioxide over its lifetime. Shade provided by trees reduces energy cooling requirements. You can buy online trees to have planted as gifts, memorials or indeed any occasion. Some of the sites are www.irishoakforests.com / www.nativewoodtrust.ie / www.moortrees.org and www.sustainableharvest.org. There are many more you will find on the web.

21. Switch to green power.

In many areas, you can switch to energy generated by clean, renewable sources such as wind and solar. In Ireland residences and commercial operations can easily switch to Airtricity. Go to www.airtricity.com/ireland for details.

22. Buy Organic foods as much as possible.

Organic soils capture and store carbon dioxide at much higher levels than soils from conventional farms. If the US grew all its corn and soyabeans organically, it would remove 580 billion pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere!

23. Eat less meat.

Methane is the second most significant greenhouse gas and cows are one of the greatest methane emitters. Their grassy diet and multiple stomachs cause them to produce methane, which they exhale with every breath.

24. Reduce the number of miles you drive by walking, biking, carpooling or taking public transit wherever possible.

Avoiding just 10 miles of driving every week would eliminate about 220 Kg of carbon dioxide emissions a year.

25. Start a carpool with coworkers

Sharing a lift with someone just 2 days a week will reduce your carbon dioxide emissions by 720Kg per year. Plus it helps reduce traffic.

26. Don't leave an empty roof rack on your car.

This can increase fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions by 10% due to wind resistance and the extra weight - removing it is a better idea.

27. Check your tyres weekly to make sure they are properly inflated.

Proper inflation can improve fuel efficiency by more than 3%. Every increase in fuel efficiency makes a difference.

28. When it's time for a new car, choose a more fuel efficient vehicle.

You can save 1,350Kg of carbon dioxide every year if your new car gets only 3 miles per gallon more than your current one. You can get up to 60 miles per gallon with a hybrid.

29. Encourage you school or business to reduce emissions.

You can extend your positive influence on global warming well beyond your home by actively encouraging others to take action.

30. Share this list - Set the example