

10 Things You Shouldn't Do To Tackle Climate Change

1. **Don't waste your time on short wave radiation levels and solar cycles.** Your time is precious. The climate is changing fast, it's very serious, and we're responsible. If someone wants to argue arcane facts or even against humans' principal role, move on. Life is short. Our window is closing. Your time is better spent on helping to engage the savable. That's not elitism; it's fact.
2. **Don't despair (any more than you must).** A "denier" (whose numbers shrink every day) argues to do nothing. A "doomer," consumed by despair, argues that it's too late, then does nothing. Inertia is the enemy, and both these views harbor the enemy. It is easier to adopt one or the other mindset, because living is then easier; you've excused yourself from the need to act. Resist the fetal position. As Michael Mann says, "There is urgency but we have agency." When you start acting, you often realize that you can and want to do more. Your actions matter.
3. **Don't allow yourself to be shamed.** If you're reading this, your carbon footprint is bigger than that of billions of people on the planet. We live in a wealthy country with a legacy of high carbon emissions, which we are trying to reduce while taking a global leadership role. But you don't have to live your life in a dark, cold cave to have moral credibility. Working on reducing your personal impact while helping others learn what needs to be done is nothing to be ashamed of.
4. **Don't ever forget those coming behind us.** Indigenous Americans embody a belief that "We do not inherit Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children." You may think things won't get THAT bad while you're still vertical. But get outside of yourself. What we do today will ENORMOUSLY impact little ones and souls yet unborn. It helps if you talk to youngsters about climate change, especially if you're past 40. And youngsters, please don't miss a chance to talk to oldsters to help them "get it."
5. **Don't play the blame game.** It's tempting, given how much time we've squandered. So much blame to go around. Countries blame countries, corporations and consumers blame each other, one generation blames another, and of course Red and Blue can blame each other endlessly, all while we squander more time. Blame leads to retribution, not solution. While acknowledging how we got where we are is important to seeing the path forward, it is that present and future action that will determine our viability as a species.

6. **Don't panic.** It won't help to run around like Chicken Little. If you've learned enough about climate science to be panicky, then you need to be talking to people. Talking about it is the single most important thing you can do, with as many people as possible, as soon as possible. When you talk about what people notice, what you're doing, what can be done, you help move us forward and also calm your own nerves.

7. **Don't look for a silver bullet.** It's been almost twenty years since Bill McKibben's op-ed suggested that silver buckshot is a better model for acting on climate. No one thing, group, technology or idea will save us. We need lots of buckshot. And don't think that just switching to biodegradable K-cups covers your responsibility for providing buckshot. Keep moving from where you are toward where we need to be.

8. **Don't fall for greenwashing.** When corporations hide harmful practices behind slick PR depictions of environmental leadership, they're guilty of "greenwashing." Don't bite. Behavior has to significantly change in three pillars of our civilization: governments, corporations and individuals. We're fortunate to live in a political system that allows us to impact the first, put consumer-based pressure on the second, and freely join with like-minded members of the third.

9. **Don't delude yourself.** To make things better, or at least keep from getting worse, will be VERY hard. Probably the hardest thing the human race has had to tackle in our geologically miniscule history. But it CAN still be done.

10. **Don't loosen your bond with nature.** This work will tire our bodies and try our souls. You can rejuvenate a weary body and spirit when you surround yourself with the natural world. Don't forget to experience as much of what we're working to preserve as your time and resources allow. "In every walk with nature, one receives far more than s/he seeks." John Muir