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Can Living Sustainably Improve Your Mental Health

We live in a warming world. Research shows that our emissions are causing droughts, rising sea levels, worsening weather events and melting the ice-caps. This will make life in the future harder. Climate change will likely cause refugee crises, wipe out entire ecosystems and hasten disastrous weather events like hurricanes — it's only natural to feel overwhelmed by this reality.

In recent years, healthcare professionals have even coined the term “[climate anxiety](#)” to describe the mixture of hopelessness and stress we feel in the face of climate change.

However, the reality is that you can make changes to your lifestyle that will help fight the climate crisis, improve your local ecosystem and reduce your climate anxiety.

Here are a few ways you can live sustainably and improve your mental health.

Renewables in Your Home

Our homes are major sources of carbon emissions. Whenever we turn on the heating, cook up a meal, or flush our toilets, we are drawing from a supply of energy — most of which is unrenowable. The good news is that the UK government has committed to lowering carbon

usage, and we have already recorded a single day where all of our energy was sourced sustainably.

However, if you're sick of waiting for large energy firms to catch up to the demand for renewable energy, you can cut them out and source your own renewable energy within your own home.

Here are a few options that you can look into

- Solar panels
- Household-scale wind turbines
- Clean energy providers
- Micro hydropower systems
- Geothermal heat pumps

Not all of these renewable energy solutions will be appropriate for you. However, [renewable energy engineers](#) are constantly striving to discover new, alternative solutions to our energy crisis. You can utilize these innovations to reduce your carbon footprint and mitigate any feelings of guilt you might have.

Your Own Green Space

Green spaces are great for your mental health and are also good for the environment. Not only do gardens suck up small amounts of carbon, but they also play a vital role for local ecosystems in our increasingly urbanized country. So, when you're stressing about sustainability, consider the following options for your backyard:

- **Insect Refuge:** Insects like bees are on the decline. This is a disaster for our ecosystems, as many of our green spaces need a healthy bee population to function. You can provide a refuge for bees and other insects by allowing wildflowers to grow in your lawn and by making "bee hotels" from leftover wood and cork.
- **Landscaping:** If you want to make a major commitment to sustainability, [you should consider landscaping your garden](#) using sustainable practices. Landscaping keeps your soil healthy, and rain gardens can help you reduce water usage at home.
- **Food for Birds:** Human development has made it harder for birds to find the food they need. You can help them out by placing small quantities of fruit, nuts, and seeds out in your garden — not too much, though, as birds shouldn't become dependant upon our feeders
- **Cool Off:** Every year seems to bring record temperatures. Animals can't adapt quickly enough to climate-change-driven temperature changes, so we should give them a space to cool off in the summer months. You can provide small water bowls and should keep foliage as shade for wild animals.

You don't need to redesign your entire garden to help your local ecosystem. Instead, small changes like putting out limited food for birds or allowing wildflowers to grow in your garden can help the insects, birds, and mammals that make up our ecosystems.

Taking Care of Community

Connecting with your local community is a great way to make your commitments to climate change meaningful — socialization is also a great way to boost your mental health. You should be able to find established communities of climate-conscious people online through google searches or Facebook groups.

If you can't find a group online, you can consider creating your own sustainability group in your local area. If you do, you can consider the following events and climate efforts:

- Fundraisers: tackling climate change takes money. You can choose to support non-profits like Greenpeace and the Rainforest Foundation through fundraising.
- Community Gardens: you can help people reconnect with their environment by creating and supporting community gardens and allotments.
- Climate Advocacy: if you enjoy campaigning, you can advocate for climate-conscious policies by spreading the word about climate change through newsletters and by amplifying the voice of activists.

If you're planning to start a climate-advocacy group, you should seriously consider contacting a climate expert first. Depending on the work you plan on doing, they will be able to advise best practices and can ensure that you don't do anything that might inadvertently harm climate-change efforts (or your mental health!).

Conclusion

Ultimately, change must be driven by collaboration between governments. That can leave many regular folks feeling overwhelmed and powerless. However, by reconnecting with your local ecosystem and seeking out community support, you can regain a sense of control, boost your mental health and will make a positive difference in your area.