

YOUR GUIDE TO BECOMING AN
ACTIVIST
TO HELP SAVE
THE LIVING WORLD

Practical steps and ideas to start your **journey** as an **activist** to help save the **living world** and create a more safe, just and **thriving future** for all of **life on earth.**



Collective action is how we make change

The climate crisis is largely a political issue. The climate crisis can be solved if we have the right policy to keep fossil fuels in the ground and protect nature. However politics is failing us, it's failing the planet, and it's failing the next generations that will inhabit our one incredible earth. But just like politics failed those who grew massive movements of the past, and succeeded in their endeavours, so too must we continue to build our movement to pressure governments to take the necessary action to halt the climate and ecological crisis.

We can do it. Just like the movements of the past: voting rights for women, the movement to end apartheid, marriage equality, who succeeded by getting organised, shifting public opinion and changing politics, we must be organised to shift public opinion and change politics. And we are, the climate and environmental movement has grown immensely in the past few years, and it continues to grow. More and more people are waking up every day to the need to act fast to protect our only home in the universe.



Image: Mitch Anderson



Image: Dolores Ochoa

While some may feel helpless at the prospect of our government being controlled by billionaires, big corporations and the media, by getting organised, we are strength in numbers, and we can be unstoppable. Politicians blow like flags in the wind, following public opinion. By getting organised, we can shift public opinion and put the climate and ecological crises front and centre. Governments may be influenced by big corporations and the media, but only if the pressure they exert exceeds the pressure coming from society.

Sometimes, the target is a destructive corporation or industry. An oil company, a mining company, a logging company, or a fast fashion brand. By coming together, we can build campaigns that hold these destructive corporations accountable, strip them of any social license, lower their share price and put them into a position where they have to cooperate with the demands of the public. However, while our policies are still failing us, we may forever be battling with these corporations and their earth-destroying endeavours.

So getting organised is very important. It's how we bring about effective change, and it's how we'll halt the climate and ecological crisis. That's why we need many many more people organising together, and taking action to save our one and only planet.



Image: Bob Brown Foundation

So you want to become an activist?

So you want to become an activist? Awesome! We need more people like you. But where on earth do you start? With an issue as large and complex as the climate crisis, it can feel totally overwhelming to know where to start, what to do, and feel like what you are going to do will make an impact.

In this guide, we'll go into how to take the first step into activism and where to start, how to find and join environmental and climate groups involved with activism, and how to start your own group. We'll also talk about how to stay motivated and inspired to stick it out for the long haul and help you find areas where you can make a difference, because if you want to, and you are committed, you will make a difference.

The first thing to know is that there is no one thing, one person, one idea or one action that will save us. We need absolutely all of it. We need frontline activists, artists, spreadsheet gurus, maths wizards, photographers and videographers, storytellers, scientists, gardeners, radical thinkers, social media influencers, authors, creative thinkers, adventurers, nature lovers... you get the gist! Everyone has a role to play, and everyone has so much to offer the movement. It's important that we utilise the skills and knowledge we have, and contribute that to the movement.



Image: Pexels/Vincent.M.A. Janssen

Write down your skills, what you enjoy doing and what work needs doing

We all have different skills from one another. Recognising and utilising these skills is so important for your contribution to the climate movement. We don't just have to do something because someone else is doing it. We need to be different, challenge new ideas, try new things, see what works and see what doesn't. Here's some questions that will help prompt you to figure out where you fit into the picture:

1. What are your skills/what are you good at?

So first, write down all of your skills, absolutely everything. It could be writing, reading, communicating with people, event organising, science, maths, gardening, you might be handy with tools, running, cycling, singing, playing guitar, the list is endless, and every one of these skills can contribute to a better world. I truly believe that when each of us realises our potential, and use those skills for good, is when we can make some incredible things happen.

2. What do you enjoy doing/what satisfies you?

Next, we need to do things that bring us joy. Whilst the climate and environmental crises can be heavy and difficult to grasp, the work we do to create a better world can bring us so much joy, fulfilment and belonging. It's important to pursue work and areas that bring us joy and satisfaction, so we can stay motivated to continue our climate activism for the long run, because it's important that we do. Doing work we don't enjoy or that leaves us feeling dissatisfied will mean we either don't stay with it or will leave us feeling burnt out.

3. What work needs doing?

Time is running out with the need to take serious climate action, so we need to consider how we can best spend our time doing the work that is most urgent to have the biggest impact. Without a doubt, some of the most important and urgent issues are ending new licences for coal, oil and gas, ending native forest logging, and drastically reducing animal agriculture. More broadly speaking, we need a system change, to put us back into balance with the living world, so we need to think about the work that will help bring about that system change. Encouraging people to use metal straws and tote bags won't create systemic change, but organising with others, in campaigns that are actually aimed at changing our systems, such as creating better public transport systems or building publicly owned renewable energy cooperatives will.

Combining your answers to these questions will help guide you into an area where you can thrive, feel satisfied and know that you're doing important work for a better future. These are the prompts created by Ayana Elizabeth Johnson in her 'Climate Action Venn Diagram', to help answer the common question "What can I do to help address the climate crisis?" [You can read more about the Climate Action Venn Diagram by clicking here.](#)



Ayana Elizabeth Johnson

Here's my own story (Mitch from the Earthly Team). I grew up being interested in photography and videography, so I started to pursue this as a hobby and I developed my skills with a camera as well as photography and graphic design software. I also used to work in eco-tourism, where part of my role was speaking to the customers and leading tours. When I knew I needed to become more active, I approached a local group campaigning to stop new offshore gas exploration. I offered my (very minimal) skills in graphic design and web design which led to me making a new logo and updating the website. From there, I became actively involved, organising events and rallies in my hometown, speaking in public, speaking to the media, creating awareness videos, flyers, and documents and helping to grow the movement in my local area. I started by offering the skills I had, which led to me becoming an active participant in the campaign, all because I designed a (poor-quality) logo.



Image: Otway Coastal Environment Action Network (OCEAN)

There are so many different roles to fill in the movement, from the person organising a march to the person handing out flyers in the street, the person who writes books about the climate, the person covering the climate issues in the media, the person who is transforming their village or town to be more sustainable, the person restoring degraded land and the person who is a voice for the climate in politics. The roles are endless, but every single role matters and there is a role there for you.

*Tip: Try to focus on **what you can do**, and **what change you can make**, rather than thinking only about the change that still needs to happen. Shifting your mindset like this can help you move forward with strength, knowing **you are making a difference**, rather than feeling like the climate crisis is too big to solve.*

Get involved with a local climate or environment group

The one thing that is absolutely needed is for people everywhere to come together and take action. There are so many incredible climate/environment groups at almost every corner of the globe, from local grassroots groups, to global advocacy networks, who are mobilising people to end the destruction of the living world and bring about a brighter future for our planet. One thing you can do, is get involved with one of these groups, which is both good for the climate and good for your mental health. It's an incredible feeling being surrounded by like minded people who are also out to create positive change.

Since getting involved in the environmental and climate movement, I feel like I have found my people. Through working in this field in both a volunteer and paid capacity, I have met hundreds and hundreds of incredible individuals who share the same vision for a better world. If we want to create hope for the future, we also need to build strong communities around the prospect of saving the living world and building a better world for people and the planet. Humans are social beings, it's vital that we are surrounded by like minded individuals who can give us hope for a better world.



Image: South Australian Grassroots Ecosystem (SAGE)

Depending on where you are, there are many different groups. You can find a groups in your local area by searching on Instagram, Facebook and the internet. Use key words such as 'climate' 'environment' 'action' as well as the name of your local area.

Different groups focus on different issues and have different strategies. For example, **Extinction Rebellion** are a decentralised climate action group, who are calling on governments to end fossil fuel expansion and reduce emissions to net zero by 2025. They do this by using non violent direct action and civil resistance to put more pressure on leaders and decision makers to make change.

Market Forces are focused on shifting investments away from fossil fuels. One of the ways they do this is by encouraging people to switch their super fund or bank to one that doesn't invest in or lend to fossil fuels.

Transition Towns are focused on the transitioning side of the movement, with local groups based all over the world focused on creating the vision for the future in their towns, and working to rebuild their towns with the vision of the future in mind.

Organising is a game-changer in the fight against climate change. It strengthens our collective voice, fosters solidarity, and drives meaningful change from the ground up. Whether you're joining an existing group or starting your own, there's so much power in organising!

*Tip: When reaching out to a local group, be sure to **let them know what skills you have and how you might be able to help.** This will help the group to know where you can fit within their campaign.*



Start your own group

If you can't find a local group that you resonate with, start your own! Whether it's to stop the expansion of a local coal mine, encourage people to ride their bikes more often or help transition your town to be more sustainable, you can start your own group and bring people together to support it. You might consider yourself more of a leader, this way you will be able to bring your own ideas for change to life by advocating and organising however you want! Just don't forget though, it's critical to have people join your group or campaign, because collective action is what's needed to make change,

If you're starting your own group, first ask yourself, what's the objective? Is it to mobilise support against a proposed coal mine or offshore oil field? Build awareness on the climate crisis? Grow support for clean energy technology and public transport in your town? You want to have a clear idea of why you are starting a new group.

Find some like minded people who will want to join you in your endeavour to get a new group or campaign off the ground. If you're doing it all by yourself, it can be difficult to sustain the energy to keep it going. But by finding people who are just as passionate as you, you can share the work load and share the energy to grow the support, build your campaign and help make a difference in the world.



You can use different methods to grow the support for your new group or campaign. There are loads of ways to alert people about your newly founded group, or campaign, which include:

- Social media. Instagram, facebook, X (twitter), threads. Any platform you can use to spread the word online. Start a new page for your group or campaign, and share it around.
- Posters and flyers. Put up posters around town, or hand out flyers. This will help bring along the people who aren't on social media!
- Reach out to other local grassroots groups for support. Community groups are always keen to help support other groups and initiatives if it aligns with them, so find and reach out to other groups to see if they want to support you!

*Tip: When reaching out to people for support, **be clear on what your group will look like, what you are aiming to achieve, and how you will be aiming to make change.** Be sure to have a clear vision in your head, so when you invite others to be involved, they may be more likely to join because they know what they are getting involved with, what they may be doing and the change they will be helping to create.*



Image: Rising Tide

The importance of nurturing community, having joy, creating hope and maintaining momentum

Building joy, care, and community into our climate activism is key to keeping our movement alive and thriving. Activism can be heavy, and it can be easy to feel overwhelmed and burn out. By creating a culture of support and care, we not only lift each other up during tough times but also make the work we're doing much more rewarding. Celebrating our victories, no matter how small, and sharing moments of joy — like a fun rally or a community potluck — helps to remind us of why we're fighting, that there are people around who also care just like you, and that we can make a difference! It turns the struggle into something we can enjoy and be proud of, making it easier to stick together through the hard days.

As the climate crisis escalates, strength in communities will be our backbone. When local groups are tightly knit, they can respond quickly to challenges and adapt to the changes around them. Communities that support one another can better navigate the ups and downs of climate impacts, whether it's organising a response to a natural disaster or advocating for local policies. Plus, there's strength in numbers; a united front can push for the changes we need in a way that isolated individuals can't. By fostering connections and building resilience, we're not just preparing for future challenges — we're also creating a powerful force for change.

And let's not forget that joy and connection are contagious. When people see our passion and camaraderie, they want to join in. A lively protest, a community event, or a shared moment of laughter can spark interest and inspire others to get involved. This is crucial right now; we need to expand our movement and invite in new voices and perspectives. By focusing on joy and community, we can create an inviting atmosphere that encourages others to step up and take action with us. Together, we can turn our collective enthusiasm into a powerful wave of change.

To summarise

1. Figure out what you're good at, where you can have influence and what you enjoy doing. That is the best place to start your activism journey.
2. Get involved with a local climate/environmental group. Join and support any campaigns that may be happening locally.
3. Start your own group, if you feel there is a gap, and you can bring people together.
4. Be sure to focus on the joy and community side of activism. This movement lives and grows on community, connection and support.

We hope this guide will help to point you in the right direction on your journey of activism. Just remember, try not to isolate yourself, the most important thing in creating change is collective action.

With love and gratitude,
The Earthly Team

Ps. If you found this guide useful, please share it with someone who you think may also get some valuable information out of it!

