



There is little doubt that the planet is warming. Over the last century, the planet's temperature has risen by around 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit (1 degree Celsius). The warmest since the mid 1800's was the 1990s and since then only 1998 has broken this record. The hottest years recorded were 1997, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2003. In fact, 14 of the hottest years on record have been in the last 15 years.

The United Nations panel on climate change projects that the global temperatures will rise 3-10 degrees Fahrenheit by the century's end – enough to have the polar caps all but melted. If the ice caps melt, a vast majority of our countries' borders will be under water.

Monuments and great buildings, as well as homes and lives will be under water, including New York City.

So now we know what some of the causes are for global warming, how can we as individuals do our part to help save the planet?

The answer is simpler than you may think. You don't have to go miles away from home to protest, or spend masses of money. If you try to follow the few simple steps that I shall now give you, you will have started to help us all.

Firstly, plant a tree. This could be easier than it sounds. Join or help out a local wildlife group and ask to plant a tree. Trees, when fully grown, will help keep the planet cooler. On the same point, you could protest against the demolition of the rainforests. This is the same principle, we need the trees to cool our planet and yet they are chopping them down to create roads or homes.

Something as simple as walking instead of taking the car will help reduce pollution. As well as stopping pollution, you are giving yourself exercise, something important for our bodies. So, the next time you get into your car, or your motorbike, think – do I have to make this journey by vehicle or can I walk?

When you are at home, and you're getting a little cold. Put a jumper on and do not adjust the heating. The extra heat produced by our homes also affects the planet. So, try wearing an extra layer in winter.

If possible, buy your fruit and vegetables from local suppliers. And try to avoid imported goods. The more foreign food that we import the more pollution from aeroplanes and boats it will create.

Keeping to the speed limit can also help the environment. The more you speed the more petrol you are going to use, making the pollution higher. Also, SUV's make about six times their own weight in CO₂ each year. A small efficient diesel car covering the same distance not only uses much less fuel; it makes two thirds less.

If possible use solar energy, after all it is free; all you need to buy is the equipment. You can get much of your hot water and heating from the sun and even generate electricity.

Reduce, reuse and recycle. Only buy what you need; don't stock the cupboards with things you may or may not use. Reuse whatever you can, like containers and paper, and recycle what you cannot reuse. It really is as simple as that.

Finally turning off unused sources of power such as televisions and heaters will help the environment, as well as save you money.

If everybody stuck to these rules, we would be doing a great thing by protecting the earth. So please take into consideration what I have said, and try to do your part. After all, it will be our next generation that will feel the effects.