

Make the green revolution, your new year's resolution.

Hi 🙌 I'm Marina, an Aquarius who works in TV, and this year I am pledging to try my darned best to help save the Planet. Because if we all make small, easy changes, the collective difference will be HUGE for our divine home we call Earth.

The past year has been so challenging for many, most confined to living and working from home for almost a year now, unable to see their loved ones, and struggling to see the light at the end of the pandemic. Whilst confined, lots of us are using more resources than ever, and as we start a new year, I personally feel it's time for reflection on how our daily behaviours impact the environment around us. Although we can't control the havoc the C word wreaks upon our lives, one helpful thing we can do, is shift our focus outside our immediate situation and do some good, which will make us feel really good in turn. My story begins with a Christmas gift I received. My lovely in-laws gifted me a book, which they sourced from their local eco-shop in Edinburgh, [The Refillery](#). The book is called '[How To Save The World For Free](#)', written by Natalie Fee. What started as bedtime reading, has inspired me to take positive action, and for those who feel overwhelmed with the climate change crisis, and need some tangible tips to start those first steps towards feeling, living, and breathing better - whilst saving the planet...this one's for you.

Here are my learnings and actions so far.

Food consumption 🍎

Food is everything, and the way humans produce, and consume it makes a huge difference on the health of our planet. If we can learn to change our learned habits with a few small steps, we can significantly reduce green-house gas emission, deforestation, ocean pollution and water scarcity worldwide. It sounds scary because it is scary, but there is hope yet! If everyone could reduce their meat and dairy intake, and the quality of all food they buy, we can all help control these escalating issues.

Me? Honestly, coming from a European background where food is such an important part of the culture, and a lifetime of eating absolutely everything, I find it tough to cut all meat, fish and dairy out. However what I am doing, is now only buying organic meat, dairy & veg, and sustainably sourced fish.

Organic produce means more ethical animal welfare practices, no antibiotics, no pesticides, beautiful fields where birds and bees can happily buzz around fresh produce, the whole natural life cycle thrives with organic agriculture. With industrial, modern agriculture...these fields are lifeless. What you have is sad soil, with no life - just a whole load of chemicals and mass produced food on barren wasteland. Not a pretty picture is it when you're tucking into that juicy apple? Let's not destroy our biosphere, the very thing that allows all species to thrive on Earth. For those of you thinking about money, yes, organic is a little more expensive, but as the author says '**you get way more bang for your buck**'.

When it comes to sourcing fresh, organic, produce, instead of heading to your big supermarket chain, why not find your local growing community where you can collect organic, fresh food produce from local farms? Here is the [link to find yours](#).

Shopping & Deliveries 📦

We should all ask ourselves, where is my parcel coming from and how did it get here? Avoid purchasing items from abroad at all to help reduce your carbon footprint and try to help local and small businesses thrive. There are so many great, small eco-friendly businesses knocking about now. Personally I love [Etsy](#), you get a huge variety of green businesses, offering organic everything! You get better quality products, excellent customer service and people who put their heart and soul into what they do. It's a great feeling to know you're supporting a humble, progressive business owner rather than a greedy, unethical web giant...cough [*Amazon](#). It's so convenient, but contributes to the problem unfortunately.

Shopping ethically is better for the environment as more often than not, these companies use sustainable working practices and also treat their employees with safety and care. It's important to think about the entire production chain from production → purchase → delivery, and what impact this chain of processes has on both the environment and humanity. This applies to all commercialised industries we can think of, be it food, retail, energy you name it. Are the working practices fair? Are the company green advocates? Are the products safe and chemical free and not going to pollute our rivers and oceans? It's important to ask ourselves these questions with every decision we make, and understand we are a huge part of the cycle, and we can help change it. One switch I've just made is to use re-usable, non toxic homecare supplies from eco-company [Ocean Saver](#). Their products smell AMAZING, work just as well, and you get to help save the oceans one spray at a time.

Travel 🚗

Being Green will set you free! Try to walk and cycle as much as possible, get that fresh air and exercise at the same time. If everyone did this imagine how much cleaner our air would be? And how much better we'd all feel moving more, and exploring the beauty of the world around us. Fly less often, and if you do, do it economy. Economy flyers take up less space and energy! Reduce your carbon footprint, embrace staycations, and if you must fly offset your CO2 emissions and [plant some trees](#) here.

Steer well away from Diesel cars, they are terrible for creating toxic air pollution, it's a no no! One day I'd love to swap our petrol car for an electric one. That's the aim 😊

Food waste management 🗑️

I have always recycled properly, but I confess I've not been careful with food waste at all - ie: I was wasteful and did not dispose of the food waste properly. Do not try this at home! Apparently a third of ALL world food gets wasted, which is bonkers as so many countries suffer from food poverty. Another important reason why we want to reduce food waste, is because it

releases very high amounts of [greenhouse gases](#) into the atmosphere when it's breaking down, it's totally avoidable.

Ways to be better at this are to plan your meals, batch cook, minimise waste, and be resourceful when you're cooking. Repurpose leftover food, get creative. My husband has been using left over veg to make some delicious soups recently. With efficient planning you can have meals for days, and produce little waste. I've since kitted our home out with a proper food waste caddy, and a pledge to only dispose of food when necessary, otherwise I am enjoying, and grateful for every last morsel on my plate! Eat, don't waste.

Plastic

Oh hell. Plastic is everywhere. Our collective plastic ends up in the most remote, sacred, beautiful parts of the Planet. Plastic sticks around in the environment for ages, threatening wildlife and spreading toxins, and also contributes to global warming (almost all plastics are made from chemicals that come from the production of planet-warming fuels like gas, oil and even coal).

Avoid all plastic packaging where possible when buying products. This is SO hard when most companies still use it in abundance. Little things you can do are to ditch plastic food packaging and buy loose produce instead using brown recycled bags, or bring your own tote bag to lob your shopping into! Swap your plastic toothbrush for a [bamboo toothbrush](#). Almost everything we use, will have a non plastic alternative somewhere, it's about taking the time to research and find it.

Most of the plastic we buy is disposable, so why not rethink the way you consume, and become a restorer instead, reuse items, re-purpose them, and help prevent plastic waste.

Periods

Ladies, menstrual cups and period pants are the future for all women!

They are SO much better for the environment. I gasp when I think about the 20+billions of tampons and sanitary pads sitting in landfills, and bobbing in our precious oceans, never to decompose. (I've seen them myself!) Each pack of regular menstrual pads is made from 90% plastic, and is the equivalent of 4 plastic bags. Yep, it's terrible. Pads and tampons don't break down in our environment, and more often than not they are covered in harmful chemicals to women which go unregulated.

It is difficult to break habits after purchasing these items your entire lives, however there is no denying these are eco-friendly, reusable, and healthier solutions to what is currently on our shop shelves. [menstrual cups link here](#), and [period pants link here](#) to help you join the revolution!

Charity

It only takes giving a little of what you've got, to make a big difference somewhere else. I've been donating to [Greenpeace](#) monthly to help save our oceans. I change which charity I donate to every few months, and last year I donated to [Tree Sisters](#), who pledge to restore the amazon rainforest by planting millions of trees, all to soak up our rapidly increasing CO2 levels. How amazing is that? Actual tree goddesses, helping to restore our planet. And of course Sadeh

Farm has been a huge source of inspiration for my green journey, and is a [great charity to donate to!](#) If you don't donate, please still drop your unwanted things to charity. **Fun fact:** in just the UK almost **7 million tonnes** of CO2 emissions were avoided between 2015-16, simply by people diverting clothes from the landfill and straight to charity shops instead. So before you chuck that old sweater out, march yourself to your local charity shop and reduce your carbon footprint whilst supporting a worthy cause.

Energy 🔥

Go green. Fossil fuels are a big part of the problem.

I have made excuses, but this month we are doing the switch to a green supplier. Reduce your bills, AND use renewable energy resources...[take your pick from this list](#), there are now quite a few suppliers to choose from.

Until you switch, you can still do small things to make a difference eg: turn off any electricity you're not using, have a 'socket sundown' every evening before bed, and switch off all the power sockets. Even easier than that, don't keep any power on during the day that isn't being used, be resourceful with energy.

Washing machines and tumble dryers are not great for the environment, our dryer has conveniently broken down just recently, in perfect time to scrap it and not use one at all.

Here are some learned tips to help you use your machines more efficiently:

- Wash clothes on cool settings where possible, if not wash on 30-40C max, they wash just as good and you save power & energy.
- Avoid using the dryer at all in spring/summer months.
- In winter, use high spin on your washing machine instead, to reduce water in clothes so they'll dry easier. We hang everything up at the moment however we do plan to buy a heated rail, which still uses energy but is much more energy efficient than a dryer.
- Our laundry machines suck up so many microfibres/plastics from our clothes which cannot break down, and end up back in our oceans. Our marine life eats the microplastics thinking they're food and it does not end well for anyone. Guess who ends up eating those fish again!? Yes you. [Here's a small guide](#) to selecting the most efficient type of washing machine for future purchases.

This is one big cycle we can all help to break with small, easy steps.

We will rely more and more on our oceans to give us drinking water in the not-too-distant future due to climate change induced global water shortages, so we want it to be pure!

That leads me to Water 💧

Only use as much as you need. Only boil the amount you'll need for a cuppa in your kettle. Save energy, save water! I have been trigger happy with our kettle and taps, so I'm consciously only using as much as I need now.

Water poverty is real, luckily in the UK we haven't experienced it yet, but as our water resource diminishes, we might in the next few years. Many countries are experiencing this already as a

result of erratic weather, induced by climate change. So think twice before you keep the tap turned on as you brush your teeth! Be resourceful.

There are a few topics I am yet to cover for eg: Finances and Banking, however we can't tackle everything at once. Believe it or not I haven't even finished the book yet, I am still learning more each day. Every night when I turn a new chapter in bed, I am truly alarmed and quite shocked, reading the facts out to my husband who is learning with me. However instead of panic consuming me, I think right, what can I personally do? This book has made me realise the problems our Planet is facing are avoidable, and the changes we can make are totally achievable. If each person reading this book has the same lightbulb moment, imagine the difference we could make together? We are forces for change, so let's start now.