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Global Warming

If global warming is a preventable problem with many solutions that are easy to do in our everyday lives, then why is it still a major issue?

Power plants, cars, semi trucks, boats, houses, schools, businesses, factories, airplanes and other things that require the burning of fossil fuels or other nonrenewable resources, along with the utter destruction of our forests, are major contributors to global warming.

The burning of fossil fuels, along with deforestation, is creating what is called the Greenhouse Effect. There are two types of Greenhouse Effect: natural and man-made. In order for life on earth to exist, we need warmth and energy from the sun. Carbon dioxide and other gases help to trap the solar heat in the atmosphere. This natural Greenhouse effect keeps warmth in and makes the Earth habitable by keeping temperatures balanced.

The man-made Greenhouse Effect is, in essence, creating a down comforter over our Earth that is creating an imbalance in temperature. Imagine that you are in your bed going to sleep on a warm, balmy night and then someone throws a comforter on you. You'd mostly likely be warm beyond comfort, maybe even sweating. This is what we are doing to the Earth. By burning fossil fuels, we are creating a lot more carbon dioxide and it's getting trapped by the ozone layer and it just keeps building up, which blocks the naturally occurring heat from escaping.

Another major issue is that the rain forest in South America, along with forests around the world, are being chopped down for building materials and to create pastures for cattle. The

rain forest is often referred to as "The Lungs of the Earth" because of its amazing ability to process CO₂, which cleanses the air, and provides oxygen for us humans to breathe. The rain forest once covered 14% of our Earth; it has now been chopped down to 6% and experts estimate that, we are logging it at a rate of 200,000 square miles a year. At the rate we are logging it, the final 6% will be gone within the next 40 years.¹ This would be a devastating blow to our atmosphere, which in turn will affect our daily living conditions.

In addition to having poor air quality, humans will have to live with more severe weather. For example, the number of Category 4 and 5 hurricanes has almost doubled in the last 30 years. Heat waves are happening more often and more intense and droughts and wildfires are happening more often. The melting of ice will lead to rising sea levels, which will flood coastlines.²

The fact is that we will run out of oil and other fossil fuels, and when we do, we will lose the major sources of fuel that power our cars, homes, businesses, and factories. If we don't expand alternative renewable resources then what will the world run on? We need to put more effort into converting and creating cars, homes, businesses and anything that runs on fossil fuels to renewable resources.

If you take a second to think about how many problems oil has caused in the world, you would realize that it has done us more harm than good. It is a major contributor to global warming, there is a war being fought over oil which costs America around \$40 billion a month to fight and has taken 4,294 American lives.³ If America wasn't fighting this "War on Terror," (a cover name for what is really a battle for control of oil) then we could be using that money to create a more clean and green nation. Since the war started, it has cost \$856 billion and the total is rising every second.⁴ Think of all the wasted time, resources and lives needed to fight a war

over oil and oil is only a temporary solution.

We must turn away from fossil fueled power plants and cars and turn towards wind, solar, hydro, geothermal and other sustainable resources if we want to continue with our way of life. Two of the major challenges of alternative energy are cost and availability. For most people, it's not that they don't want to switch to renewable resources, it's that they can't afford to or it's not available. The government has created tax credits for things such as energy efficient windows, water heaters and hybrid cars, but there is a long way to go. More tax credits are needed to encourage people to do things like install solar panels, which are really expensive right now. President Obama wants to create a new power grid so we can develop alternative energy which is a step in the right direction.

There are many things you can do in your daily life to make a positive impact on global warming, such as replacing regular incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs, which use 60% less energy. You can ride your bike or use public transportation instead of drive. You can unplug appliances like computers, TVs and cell phone chargers when you're not using them. Having an appliance on stand by can use up to 40% of the energy it takes when its on . Wrapping your water heater with an insulation blanket can save 1,000 pounds of carbon dioxide pollution a year. Replacing single pane windows with double pane windows reduces the need for heaters. Using clotheslines instead of dryers can save 1,400 pounds of carbon dioxide pollution a year. Reusable shopping bags and water bottles reduce waste. Keeping your tires properly inflated and your car in tune increases gas mileage.⁵ Recycle!

The truth is, that scientists are using computer models to create possible scenarios, but we really don't know what could happen if we continue living our lives off of nonrenewable resources. The repercussions of our actions could be dire. The time for change is now!

1 Rain forest Facts" <http://www.rain-tree.com/facts.htm>)

2 [Http://www.climatecrisis.net](http://www.climatecrisis.net)

3 [Http://www.anti-war.com](http://www.anti-war.com)

4 [Http://costofwar.com](http://costofwar.com)

5 [Http://globalwarming-facts.info](http://globalwarming-facts.info)