



PERSONAL ENERGY DESCENT PLAN

v1.1

When confronted with the implications of the decline of global oil supplies, it can initially be terrifying to any individual. With the foreknowledge of this scenario, you can take steps to minimise your exposure to the problems that will come.

PowerSwitch has put together this Personal Energy Descent Plan to help you develop your own approach for preparing for the oil and gas decline. We have kept it simple, enough to give you ideas and directions on what to do with your knowledge of Peak Oil. You can't expect yourself to implement this all in a hurry, but you will be at an advantage by preparing early. It will not be easy, but it will be rewarding.

A lot of this will involve measures not absolutely necessary now, but which will get you ready for when it is. You may even wonder why you should start 'doing without', especially since any pressure you relieve off the system will be used up by others. It is all about preparing yourself and your expectations.

This is all presented as a list but an entire book on this subject can be written. No such specific book exists yet, but the good thing is that there are many books out there that cover the different aspects of this plan.

There are many people taking the Energy Descent Road, willing to offer help and advice. You may find them in your family, your local community or even on the Internet in places such as the PowerSwitch forum.

We wish you all the best for your Energy Descent Future. We welcome all your feedback on this EDP at info@powerswitch.org.uk.

BOOKS & LINKS

Internet:

Transition Culture

<http://transitionculture.org>

Beyond Peak

<http://www.beyondpeak.com>

Community Solution

<http://www.communitysolution.org>

PostCarbon Institute

<http://www.postcarbon.org>

Permaculture

<http://www.permaculture.org.uk>

Kinsale Energy Descent Plan

http://transitionculture.org/?page_id=104

Action for Sustainable Living

<http://afsl.org.uk>

Downsizer

<http://www.downsizer.net/>

Energy Saving Trust

<http://www.est.org.uk/>

PowerSwitch Forums

<http://www.powerswitch.org.uk/forum/>

Books:

Here are some books to get you started:

Powerdown by R Heinberg

Save Cash and Save The Planet by Smith & Baird

The Earth Care Manual by P Whitefield

The Oil Factor by Leeb & Leeb

Making the Best of Basics by J Stevens

The Lazy Kitchen Gardener by J Yeoman

Saving the Planet Without Costing the Earth by D McCarthy

Ship Captain's Medical Guide

The Complete Book of Self Sufficiency by John Seymour

Go M.A.D by Bourne & Jones

TRANSPORT

Our dependence on transport to get products to us, or us to work, cannot be underestimated.

Live closer to work

This can reduce car usage and give you more travel options such as public transport or a bike. Reducing your commuting is something many people are already keen to do.

Reduce car use

Beyond work, find ways to reduce your general car usage. For every journey, think “do I need to drive or am I just taking the easy option?”

Use alternatives to cars, consider sharing or converting to biofuels

You may need transport, but do you need a car? Mopeds are much more fuel-efficient, for example. A bicycle is even better.

Buy a bicycle

Bicycling is great fun and great exercise, and automatically gives you more oil-free transport options.

Avoid flying

Avoid flying, or fly while you still can? The price of flights will go sky high after Peak Oil. Do you really need to fly to go on holiday or business? There are other options. You may holiday more locally, and international business can be conducted via telephone or videoconference.

SUSTENANCE

You can eat very well without being so dependent on oil.

Buy local food in local shops

Local food from local shops reduces food miles, thus oil usage, and encourages the growth of the local economy. Also try to buy organic as organic food is less dependent on fossil fuels.

Use a delivery box scheme

If you cannot get local organic food from local shops, you may want to investigate food box schemes such as Abel & Cole or Riverford.

Grow your own

Growing your own food (organically) is rewarding and nourishing. If you don't have a garden, get an allotment. It is practically a free lunch.

Keep a stock of essentials – flour, veg oil, water etc

It is obvious, but the basics are essential.

Buy local food in season and learn to cook the seasonal food

Don't just buy local food, but local food that is in season.

Compost food or get a wormery

Why throw so much organic matter in the bin when you can compost it and use it to grow better food? Without artificial fertiliser, this is an essential way to nourish the soil.

Take a Permaculture course

Learning Permaculture will give you plenty of knowledge about how to make the most of your land and how to live a more sustainable life. There are many weekend courses. It is easy to learn the basics, and beyond that, the learning never stops.

Reduce food waste

Britons, on average, throw away 30% of the food they buy. Reducing food waste will save you money.

Avoid ready meals

Learn how to cook again. Ready Meals, especially with all their packaging, are very oil-intensive. They won't be here for ever. And anyone can cook better than the food you get in ready meals.

Cook efficiently

Don't just learn how to cook, learn how to cook efficiently, using as little energy as possible. If you feel experimental enough, learn how to prepare 'raw food' meals.

Reduce meat and dairy

If you use a piece of land to grow crops rather than raise animals, you can feed more people.

Learn effective nutrition

It isn't just how much you eat, but what you eat, that is important. Learn about what you need to eat, and where to get it.

Eat communally

Group cooking and eating is more efficient and builds a sense of community.

Store water

Water is absolutely essential and we always assume it will be provided for us, but there may be situations when that is not true.

Reduce water use

The water industry is very energy-intensive. Smarter usage of water saves oil usage.

HEALTH & HYGIENE

With the future of a health service uncertain, your best option, more than ever, is to strive to minimise your need to use a health service altogether.

Keep fit, walk and cycle

However you do it, keep fit.

Watch what you eat

Diet is a key impact on your health and can reduce health problems such as cancer, heart disease and much more.

Go on a First Aid Course

First Aid is a very useful skill to have.

Stock water purification tablets

In an emergency, these could be a lifesaver.

Use non-petrochemical hygiene products

This encourages the growth of petrochemical free industries.

MONEY & WORK

Energy decline leads to economic decline and therefore personal financial insecurity. This is very important to prepare for.

Get rid of, or reduce, debt

Rising energy prices will create inflation throughout the system, increasing pressure for interest rate rises, so clearing debt now makes more sense than ever. In addition, you don't know what will happen to your employment.

Reduce expenditure on consumer goods

Do you need it? Is it essential? Put your money towards preparing for the future.

Earn money to save/invest now

After the peak it will be harder to earn the same level of money, so earn as much as you can now and use it towards your Energy Descent Plan. Don't rush out of your current job.

Re-skill yourself

Assess your job and skills – have you got the skills that will be useful in a Post Peak world? If not, get those skills. If you have an idea for a business that will be useful, start planning for it now.

Have a Peak Oil saving/investment plan

If you have money to invest, talk to an Independent Financial Adviser about Peak Oil and how you'd like

to invest your money. Seek local ethical investment opportunities.

Talk to colleagues about Peak Oil

Work is a great place to inform other people about Peak Oil and it could even help your business prepare a Business Energy Descent Plan.

HOUSING

Our homes are central to our lives – it is your biggest and most important investment. Money spent now on improving your house will save you money in the long run. It will also get more expensive to improve your house's efficiency in the future, and you may have less money to do it.

Invest in making housing durable and energy-efficient

Whether it is Double Glazing or Combined Heating Power, there are many things you can do to make your home more durable and energy-efficient.

Consider a post-peak housing plan

Take account of Electricity, Heating, Size, Water, Location and Durability.

Buy local, second-hand furniture

Cheaper, less energy needed, and minimises waste.

Take a course in DIY

It'll make you useful in your home and the community.

Use energy-efficient appliances

Saves money and energy. Even better, don't use appliances – you probably don't need most of them. Get rid of high-energy appliances – just stop using them unless it is an essential.

Store water and essential food

The government recommends you have 3 weeks worth of food and water stored for yourself and your family in case of a crisis. After Peak Oil, that could happen at almost any moment due to international tensions.

Switch to a renewable energy supplier

It is so easy that there is no excuse not to. Try Ecotricity or GoodEnergy.

Minimise TV in your life

Be the master of TV, not the slave! “Why Don't You Just Switch Off Your Television Set And Go Out And Do Something Less Boring Instead?”

PERSONAL LEISURE AND CONSUMER GOODS

For many, happiness comes from consumption of products. Consumption will decline but your happiness and enjoyment of life does not have to.

Reduce, reuse, repair, and recycle – in that order

Reduce what you use, reuse what you use, repair what you use, recycle what you use. Throw away your throwaway lifestyle.

Buy second-hand

Help other people reuse and recycle their goods.

Buy durable items

If it lasts longer it will minimise waste. Buy good quality goods, even if it costs a little more.

Get spares for essential items

Supplies of essential items might be disrupted in future (spare parts for bikes, etc.).

Reject consumption as leisure

Find ways to enjoy yourself that aren't based on excessive consumption. Sports, skills-learning, and communal activities are all good options.

Learn to slow down

We try to fit so much into our lives. It stresses us out. Learn to slow down and do things at a more leisurely pace.

Turn your electricity off once a month to see how it feels

Can you get by for a day with _no_ electricity? Try it once a month as preparation.

Holiday in the UK or travel efficiently (boat and bike)

Holidays are an important form of leisure but a relatively recent luxury. They're not necessarily going to disappear but they are going to be much more localised. Begin enjoying holidays closer to home.

COMMUNITY

A person is not an island unto themselves. Your life consists of a system of interdependencies that will become more visible in a world of energy decline. Strength will come from community.

Form or join a local sustainability group

Join with others on their own Energy Descent, help each other and work towards creating a Community Energy Descent Plan. Identify community needs.

Get in touch with your local government

Work on local government to 'future-proof' your local area. Local government is still a good way of organising local communities.

Get to know your neighbours

They are your immediate community.

Get to know about local existing groups

There will be other local groups who can provide a means of networking and leisure.

Use local businesses

With corporations destroying many local businesses, you can save these essential community shops by using them – even if they are more expensive.

Organise events and workshops

You have the knowledge. Educate others.

Organise local energy schemes

A community can work together to develop its own local energy options, such as wind power. It may not give you all the power you need, but it'll give you options.

Buy local food

So important that we're saying it again.

AWARENESS

The more people that are aware of what lies ahead, the more chance we have of working together to mitigate the problems, especially on a local level. To do this, YOU need to raise awareness.

Contact MPs and local councillors

Persuade those who have more power than you to raise awareness and make wider changes.

Get schools, businesses and local groups involved

Education, Education, Education (about Peak Oil).

Leafleting/Door-to-Door campaigning

Leafleting your neighbourhood with information is a good first step.

Email your address book

Cheap and effective method for raising awareness. Email with regular updates. There'll be more people interested than you think. When you send letters to people, include a leaflet about the subject.

Join or form a local awareness-raising group

Together you can work out other ways to raise awareness. Plan how you're going to do it.

www.PowerSwitch.Org.Uk