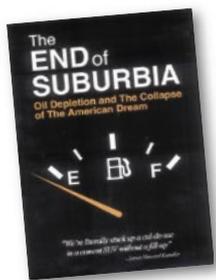


Feeling blue about Climate Change and Peak Oil?
 Rob Hopkins recommends some simple steps
 to help you get ready.

10 THINGS TO DO To Prepare For A Post-carbon Future...

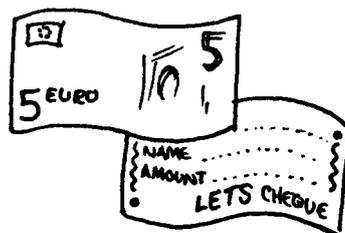


1. ORGANISE A SCREENING OF 'THE END OF SUBURBIA'¹

This excellent film is a brilliant introduction to Peak Oil. Show the film at a local venue, advertise it widely, it can act as a great catalyst for triggering discussion and action around the Peak Oil issue.

2. INSULATE YOUR HOUSE

Imagine heating your home when fuel costs 3-4 times the current price. It is worth taking the time now, while insulation materials are relatively cheap, to make your house as energy efficient as possible, insulating where practical and making the house draught proof.



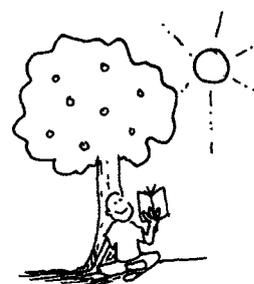
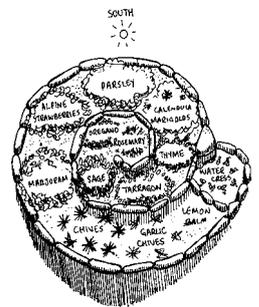
3. GET OUT OF DEBT

When the shortage of oil starts to hit home the economy will enter a very difficult period. It will not be a good time to owe large amounts of money to a bank. Take a look at

your situation, to what extent do you live on credit? If you have a large house could you make do with a smaller one, and reduce your repayments? Make getting out of debt a family priority and use it as an opportunity to simplify your lifestyle.

4. START A GARDEN

We are still in a time when food is artificially cheap. Although it is still not really cost effective to have a food garden, nothing tastes like food you have just grown. Also, this is the time to start learning how to grow food, as it will become a far more pivotal part of our lives in the near future. Who already grows food in your area? Make contact, see what grows for them, swap seeds, learn to make good compost.

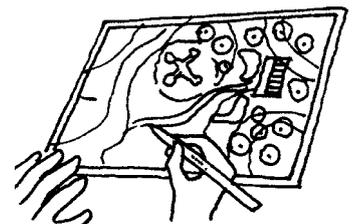


5. BECOME MORE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Nowadays we have become disconnected from the world around us. We know more about what is happening in Nature on the television than on the other side of the garden fence. Challenge yourself to learn the names of the local rivers, of five trees native to your area, the names of 10 'weeds' growing around you and their uses, and what kind of soil you are on. Reconnecting to the natural world around you is a very powerful process.

6. TAKE A PERMACULTURE DESIGN COURSE (PDC)

A PDC is a fantastic opportunity to learn a complete toolkit of practical skills to allow you to design a lower energy lifestyle for you and your family. Inspirational and positive, a design course equips you to start building a lower energy future, safe in the knowledge that it will be far nicer than the present!





7. ASK YOURSELF 'DO I NEED IT?'

When stepping into a shop these days, we are bombarded with subliminal pressure to buy things. Our houses are full of things we no longer need, all of which we had to pay for, and then dispose of. A good discipline to get into before you buy anything is to ask yourself, 'Do I really need this?'

Is it healthy for me, for the planet, for the people who made it? Do I already have something similar that I could make do with instead? Try to keep advertising out of your life as much as possible, it is remarkably efficient at undermining your dedication to living more simply. Probably the best first step is to get rid of the TV!

8. TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR WORK SITUATION

If you live a long way from where you work, maybe it's time to re-examine your work situation. Travelling long distances to work will become less and less feasible. Could you drive to work when petrol costs £2.50/\$5 a litre? £5/\$10 a litre? Is there much point living rurally when all your work is in town? Could you bring your work out to where you are and work from home? What other ideas can you come up with for a lower energy work situation?



9. FORM A COMMUNITY GROUP

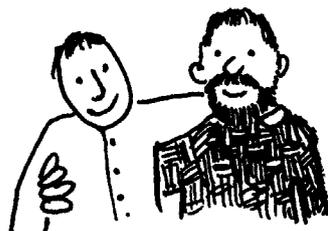
These steps are far more easily taken with others. Seek out others (you probably already know some of them, and some will come to your *End of Suburbia* screening) who are interested in working together to explore how Peak Oil will affect the community. This group can plan awareness raising activities, events, work days on each other's houses and gardens, a book club for reading related books, basically



to inspire each other and support each other through this transitional time. The Community is the Solution.

10. CELEBRATE!

Organise a party to celebrate each step that you take towards being less dependent on oil. It is important that your friends and neighbours get to see how positive the steps you are taking are, and what a good effect they are having on your life. Positivity is infectious!



...and here's a couple of slightly more radical ones!

HALVE YOUR INCOME

As part of your preparation for leaner times it is good to try and live with more realistic expectations. Living with less means you have more time to develop your gardening skills, your building skills, the skills you will need.

PUT A TAXI METER IN YOUR CAR

Buy a proper taxi meter and fix it into your car. Set it to what it would actually cost you to drive if petrol cost three or four times what it currently does. It will act as a very useful tool for developing an awareness of your motor use and how you might set about reducing it 

¹ *The End of Suburbia, Oil Depletion & the Collapse of the American Dream DVD*, price £12.95.

Some Other Sources of Ideas...

- 101 Solutions – The DIY Guide to Climate Change*, The Nature-save Trust, price £3.50.
 - The Energy Saving House*, Thierry Salomon, price 12.00.
 - Go Mad! 500 Daily Ways To Save The Planet*, The Ecologist Team, price £6.99
 - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle*, Nicky Scott, price £3.95.
- All titles available from PM's *Earth Repair Catalogue*.

See page 12 for other Peak Oil Resources including a special DVD offer.

This article was first published in 'Fuelling The Future' Conference Proceedings and Articles, 2005.

Rob Hopkins organised the 'Fuelling The Future – The Challenge And Opportunity Of Peak Oil' conference in Ireland in June 2005. These strategies were printed in the conference booklet as '10 Things To Do When You Get Home'. A second 'Fuelling The Future' conference is planned for 2006. All of the talks from the 2005 conference can be listened to online as mp3 files at: www.fuellingthefuture.org Also available via the website is an excellent two DVD set of all the conference lectures. Rob is now working on a PhD in Energy Descent Planning at Plymouth University.

"Permaculture is a design system for agricultural systems and landscapes... It is a thinking tool. It is also a process for reclaiming our place in nature. Part of the problem in the current psychology that prevails in our culture is that we are separate from nature and not constrained by its limits. Clearly energy peak and descent will smash that mistaken view once and for all. What is also necessary is to realise that we are not some contradiction of nature – a destroyer of it – but that we have a place in it and can reclaim that place."

David Holmgren, speaking at the 'Fuelling the Future' Conference, 2005.