

How to live a greener life

DAILY EXPRESS CRUSADE GREEN BRITAIN NEEDS YOU



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HOW TO CLEAN UP YOUR ACT ON TRANSPORT

From getting a car on subscription to home swap holidays, the smartest ways to drive down your carbon footprint

TRANSPORT is the biggest source of damaging carbon emissions in the UK and we can all play a part to drive down those figures. What's more, if we fix that problem, we also fix the problem of air pollution, which is a major killer, so it is a win-win situation.

The recent fuel crisis was a costly reminder of the extent of our reliance on petrol. But the Covid lockdowns had already shown us what the world could be like without so many gas-belching vehicles.

We not only got used to our daily exercise, and rediscovered the joys of walking, but our town and city centres were free of traffic and fumes, so we have seen how much better life would be if we used cars as we should. Here's how we can clean up our transport act.

CAR SHARING

We only use our cars, on average, for less than five per cent of the day and only drive about eight or nine miles, with many trips of less than three miles. So why can't we make those journeys walking or cycling, or by using public transport?

We would feel better, be fitter, lose some of the calories we put on during lockdown and save money. Jumping into the car is just a habit we need to get out of.

Public transport is a better option, if possible, or lift sharing. With regular Covid testing we know when we should not be sharing, but otherwise you can keep the windows open, or keep masks on, or both.

And if you do need to use a car, you don't have to buy one. You can rent or lease one. There are subscription schemes available, where you pay by the month. And signing up for car-sharing, especially if you live in a city, could stop you paying a fortune for an asset that starts depreciating in value the moment you drive it out of the showroom.

ELECTRIC CARS

The thing we're trying to cut is emissions, and in cars the killer data is the number of grams of CO2 per kilometre. If it's over 100, then don't touch that car with a barge pole. It's going to cost you a fortune in petrol, harm the environment and you may not be able to drive it where you want to go because every city has its own policy to deal with air pollution.

Let's dispel some myths: There is no such thing as a self-charging hybrid car. If there is not an electrical plug to charge a battery it is purely a fossil-fuel car with a little battery.

Second, electric vehicles (EVs) are not only for the rich. They start at £20,000, when you take into account the grant of up to £2,500 for cars under £35,000. Bear in mind that the Government could end those grants at any

time, so if you are thinking about buying you should get on with it.

The cost of a new electric car is becoming comparable to a petrol or diesel car. It's also perfectly possible to buy second hand, plus the RAC has just launched an EV leasing service and others will follow.

The tax is cheaper, for a superior car, and the maintenance cost, for servicing or MoTs, will be minimal because you have hardly any moving parts such as an internal combustion engine or a gearbox. The crucial thing,



BUS LANE GAINS: Public transport provides a much greener alternative to the car, left, while electric bikes, main, are an affordable way to get exercise in the great outdoors



ON TRACK: If you do want to go abroad on holiday, taking the train to Europe is the greenest way to go

people getting out and about on electric bikes. They can cost well under £1,000 new and take the strain out of cycling.

Electric scooters are also popular, however they are still illegal in this country unless they are part of a trial scheme. Hopefully, the Government will sort that out soon, and make it illegal to ride them without a helmet.

GOT TO FLY?

Google has just produced a new tool to help you find the cleanest airline but none of them will be as green as going by rail. If you have to fly, try to make it short-haul and try to make it direct. The further you fly, the more fuel will be burned.

If you care about the climate, don't fly first class even if you can afford it. It's the equivalent of about four economy seats.

But why fly anyway? Britain is so beautiful. We have got the biggest coastline in Europe, we have got the woods, the wetlands, the mountains, the lakes, the national parks, the islands...there is so much to explore.

The prices of many holidays went up in the summer because of demand for staycations, but now you can get amazing deals on top hotels in city centres if you shop around because there are fewer foreign travellers and conferences.

If you want to go abroad, take the train to Europe. Check out just a few of the options on the Eurostar website.

And wherever you're going, consider house-swapping. It's like AirBNB – but without paying.

● Consumer adviser Angela Terry is founder of the www.onehome.org.uk website.

however, is that electricity works out at about 5p a mile whereas petrol was around 15p a mile and has gone up considerably because of the petrol crisis.

We are all used to plugging in our mobile phones to charge them and an electric car is exactly the same. Sixty per cent of car owners have a drive so they can get an external socket to charge their car.

The issue of street charging does need sorting. It can be difficult to plan a long journey and you can't always rely on the

charger you planned to use being operational. Also, different chargers need different apps. But the zap map app enables drivers to locate and update EV charge points and they are starting to work towards a one-app-fits-all system.

And electric vehicles are still difficult for flat dwellers. But change is happening really rapidly because the public has cottoned on to how much better electric cars are. Last week the Government committed an additional £620million to EV charging infrastructure. I

met a company car driver the other day who charged his car at work and calculated that he was saving £6,000 a year.

GREENER DRIVING

If none of the above works for you, you can still reduce your old car's emissions.

Make it as aero-dynamic as possible. Remove everything you don't need from the boot, take off the roof box, wind up the windows, and make sure your tyres are at the correct pressure. Avoiding peak traffic times, if

possible, helps too, and will save you money, time and blood pressure points.

The key thing, however, is accelerating. The faster you go, the more fuel you burn and the more emissions you create, so slow down. You really don't need to get to the next set of red lights 10 seconds sooner.

BUSES

We use buses far more often than we use trains and yet no one ever talks about them. They are often funded by local authorities

whose finances have been slashed, so they need your support, for the sake of people who can't afford cars or taxis.

And if you are worried about timetables and routes, there are many apps now to give you real-time information on what is available, when and where.

ELECTRIC BICYCLES

I saw a brilliant sticker the other day saying, "My second car is an electric bicycle." It fills my heart with joy to see so many older

THE 10 MOST AFFORDABLE ELECTRIC VEHICLES FOR 2021

You don't have to be a lottery winner to drive an electric car. These 10 are great value. All prices include any available government grant.



1 RENAULT TWIZY, £11,995
What do the experts say?
"While the measly 17bhp and woeful top speed of 50mph may put a lot of people off, Renault claims it costs just £1 to fully charge, putting a lot of people on." – Auto Express



2 SEAT MII ELECTRIC, FROM £20,300
What do the experts say?
"The Mii Electric is pleasant enough to drive, has a good range, and is an excellent introduction to EV ownership." – Car Magazine



3 FIAT 500, FROM £20,495
What do the experts say?
"It's impossibly cute to look at, perfect for the city and manages to bring the Fiat 500 kicking and screaming into the electric car era." – Parkers Car Price Guide



4 VW E-UP, FROM £20,695
What do the experts say?
"The e-Up is good to drive, has a decent range, and is an excellent introduction to EV ownership that comes highly recommended." – Parkers Car Price Guide



5 SMART EQ FORTWO, FROM £21,345
What do the experts say?
"Although it's small, the mini EV still gives you a lot of style and car for the money." – Car Magazine



6 MG 5 EV, FROM £24,495
What do the experts say?
"It's a roomy five-door estate and as such currently has no rivals in the UK's electric car market at this price point. You get bags of equipment for your money." – Parkers Car Price Guide



7 MINI ELECTRIC, FROM £25,500
What do the experts say?
"You don't buy a MINI hatchback for its overwhelming practicality, but the Electric model could be ideal urban transport." – Auto Express



8 PEUGEOT E-208, FROM £26,725
What do the experts say?
"The French electric supermini has great handling coupled with a fine continental interior, and finishes the job with a range of 211 miles – one of the higher numbers on this list." – Car Magazine



9 RENAULT ZOE, FROM £29,179
What do the experts say?
"It's practical, fun, good-looking and simple to drive – no wonder it's even more popular now than when it was launched." – Parkers Car Price Guide



10 HONDA E, FROM £30,160
What do the experts say?
"The E feels plush, composed and easy to operate, with medium-paced steering but a tight turning circle, and moderate but responsive performance." – Autocar

● Source: OneHome.org.uk, information for guidance only