

This week Ireland’s Classic Hits Radio looked at the concept of Climate Anxiety.

**What is climate anxiety?**

Climate anxiety, or eco-anxiety, is distress related to worries about the effects of climate change. It is not a mental illness. Rather, it is anxiety rooted in uncertainty about the future and alerting us to the dangers of a changing climate.

**How best to deal with it**

**1) Take climate action – however small**

Climate anxiety can range all the way from leaving you in ‘eco-paralysis’ – feeling so helpless that you don’t do anything – to actually motivating you to act. “A first step is to invite people to adopt simple, environmentally friendly habits like recycling household waste or cycling more, which help them feel part of the solution.

**2) Get connected – and channel your climate action with a local community**

Taking climate action as part of a larger community can also help you feel both reassured that your action is being amplified, and comforted in the knowledge that you’re not acting alone.

**3) Reconnect with nature**

People should go out and feel nature, to see that it is not all being destroyed and is very much alive. One idea to help with this is to practise slow, mindful walks through a forest guided by nature’s scents, sounds and colours. [Research shows](https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/the-health-benefits-of-trees/) that spending time among the trees can reduce depression and anxiety, and even the occurrence of chronic diseases and cancer.

**4) Be careful who – and what – you listen to**

As you increase your contact with nature, it might be wise to reduce your exposure to news about the climate crisis. The media often focus on the catastrophic impacts of climate change to grab people’s attention, and not on the causes and solutions.

**From a negative to a positive**

By acknowledging our climate anxiety and taking steps to address it, we can turn it into an opportunity to find out what we can do about climate change and actually do it – with the added bonus of feeling more connected to nature and other people.

**For more information:**

[www.spunout.ie/life/climate/how-to-handle-climate-anxiety](http://www.spunout.ie/life/climate/how-to-handle-climate-anxiety)

