

# 6 Podcasts to Help Tackle Your Climate Anxiety

These shows, full of passionate reporting, will leave you better informed and perhaps less prone to doom paralysis.

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Feelings of despair about the climate crisis have become so commonplace that “eco-anxiety” is now an emerging field in psychology, and apocalyptic visions of the near future are reportedly prompting some couples to decide against starting families. Given the drumbeat of troubling climate news, it’s easy to fall into a state of doom paralysis. But these six podcasts — full of smart, passionate reporting about the natural world and our relationship to it — will leave you more informed and perhaps better able to embrace climate optimism.

## ‘Hot Take’

Hosted by the writer Mary Annaïse Heglar and the investigative journalist Amy Westervelt, this is one of the most accessible environmental news podcasts on offer. Even though the updates they’re delivering are often bleak, the hosts’ real-life friendship creates an intimate vibe that helps the bitter pills slip down easy (as does their self-proclaimed penchant for dad jokes). In each episode, Heglar and Westervelt discuss the latest climate headlines and provide irreverent, straight-talking insight into the crisis our planet faces, often joined by guests with expertise in areas like sustainable fashion, environmental legislation and the impact of climate change on Indigenous communities. The show wrapped up its run in December, but there’s a back catalog of more than 70 episodes to delve into.

Starter episode: “Follow the Money, Eat the Rich”

## ‘The Climate Question’

This BBC World Service podcast delivers in-depth climate discussions with a global perspective, exploring the hurdles that stand in the way of a more sustainable future. In each episode, the BBC journalists Kate Lamb and Neal Razzell are joined by a panel of guests, including reporters, lawyers, academics and activists; recent installments have tackled the uneven effects of global warming, the costs and benefits of meat substitutes, and how giving legal rights to rivers, forests and ecosystems may help to combat climate change. The show’s scope is broad enough that even the most eco-savvy listeners are likely to learn something, yet the conversations never feel overwhelmingly dense or complex, with episodes reliably clocking in at under 30 minutes.

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Starter episode: “Could Giving Nature Rights Help Fight Climate Change?”

## ‘Drilled’

This rigorously reported investigative show, also hosted by Amy Westervelt, was originally billed as a limited series when it debuted in 2016, promising to tackle the causes of climate change through the lens of the biggest podcast genre of all — true crime. That first season focused on the origin story of climate denial in the 1980s, with Westervelt exploring how a disinformation campaign “turned America’s individualism on itself and twisted it,” and the integral role Exxon’s efforts to mislead the public played in that. Subsequent seasons of “Drilled” have focused on big oil, fracking, and an Ecuadorean court battle involving Chevron, while a spinoff show, “Damages,” tracks climate lawsuits across the world. It’s all enervating but essential listening.

Starter episode: “The Bell Labs of Energy”

## ‘Outside/In’

Though it’s not specifically about climate change, this New Hampshire Public Radio podcast is a valuable reminder of what’s at stake when we talk about saving the planet. Hosted by Nate Hegyi, an environmental reporter, “Outside/In” is a fun, touching weekly tribute to the joys of the natural world, offering reflections on humans’ relationship to wilderness alongside discussions of environmental news stories. It’s a bright spot in any climate news diet, and sometimes presents deeper explorations of a specific subject, as in the five-part spinoff series “Windfall,” about the birth of offshore wind in the U.S.

Starter episode: “Hot Dam! Climate News That Isn’t Terrible”

## ‘How to Save a Planet’

This upbeat and energizing series from Gimlet Media gathers a crew of self-proclaimed climate nerds to discuss environmental problems and solutions. Hosted by Alex Blumberg, whom podcast fans may know as the former co-host of NPR’s “Planet Money,” “How to Save a Planet” is packed with information and tips; each episode ends with a “call to action,” offering listeners concrete ways to live more greenly. “How to Save a Planet” came to a premature end last fall, as part of a spate of cancellations by Gimlet’s parent company, Spotify. In response to that news, listeners took to Twitter to share the ways in which they had taken action because of the podcast. These testimonials, compiled in a Twitter thread by Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, one of the show’s creators, are an inspiring read.

Starter episode: “What’s Your 2022 Climate Resolution?”

## ‘Outrage + Optimism’

It’s tempting (and perhaps inevitable) to fall into despair when considering all the challenges, but “climate doomism” can prove counterproductive and foster inaction rather than solutions. As the title suggests, this podcast allows space for both, proposing that healthy outrage and a resilient sense of optimism are both essential to reshape the world. The show’s promise to “help you realize that this is the most exciting time in history to be alive” might sound Pollyannaish, except that the hosts are anything but naïve — Christiana Figueres, a former head of the United Nations’ climate agency, oversaw the Paris Agreement on climate change in 2015 with Tom Rivett-Carnac, while Paul Dickinson founded the Carbon Disclosure Project, a nonprofit group focused on corporate transparency — and their focus on positivity is pragmatic. The trio discusses environmental issues and breaking news with guests who have included Greta Thunberg and David Attenborough, and each episode offers a sense of community to anyone grappling with eco-anxiety.

Starter episode: “The Breakthrough Effect”

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