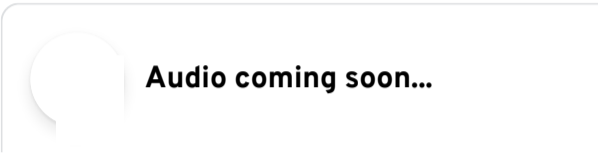




- [How to Recycle](#)
- [Where to Recycle](#)

Inspire & Motivate Living & Well-Being



Reading time: 3 mins

Earth Action: Take a Seat



By **Gemma Alexander**

MAR 24, 2023 [earth action](#), [nature](#), [productivity culture](#), [stillness](#)



Earth911 is honoring the 52 years of Earth Day with 52 [Actions for the Earth](#). Each week through Earth Day 2023, we will share an action you can take to [invest in the Earth](#) and make your own life more sustainable. Ironically, an intense focus on productivity leads to a lot of waste. The constant hustle creates diminishing returns as exhausted workers become ever more inefficient, pouring more energy and resources into marginal increases in output. This week, give yourself and the planet a chance to recharge. Take action for the Earth by sitting still.

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Action: Take a Seat

Toxic Productivity

Despite the popularity of [productivity-focused TED Talks](#) and entire sections in the bookstore dedicated to motivational memoirs and how-to books by CEOs (or their ghostwriters), there is growing awareness of the [harm of hustle culture](#). Nowadays, we don't even [slow down on vacation](#). The emphasis on output at all costs leads to burnout and isolation for people who sacrifice their time and relationships in favor of "results."

The drawbacks extend beyond human sacrifices to the environment as well. Traditional attitudes pit the environment against economics – environmental protections are viewed as a [burden on economic activity](#), raising costs without increasing output. The goal of maximizing output goes unquestioned, despite ample evidence that there can be too much of a good thing.

Slowing Down

There's a reason the word "slow" is linked to so many environmental movements. Speed comes with an environmental cost. Air freight produces [12.5 times more](#) carbon emissions than shipping. Slow food emphasizes quality over quantity and encourages [agricultural practices](#) that restore the Earth while feeding its people. Instead of billions served or calories per dollar, slow food thinks in terms of relationships and health. [Slow fashion](#) eschews novelty in favor of respect for the materials, workers, and artists that create the clothes we wear. It encourages people to value what they already own and express themselves through carefully selected pieces rather than chasing trends.

No matter what field you work in, it's easy to get overwhelmed with deadlines and to-do lists. But slowing down and giving yourself time to observe the big picture is necessary to make sure you're not losing track of what's really important.

Take a Seat

Any artist will tell you that stillness is required for creative thinking. Whether you contemplate the view or your life, sitting still could give you ideas for solving environmental or other problems. This week, give yourself permission to take a seat. Find a pleasant place to sit outside and commit to sitting there for one hour. Set an alarm so you're not tempted to check your phone. Don't set goals or rules for yourself. Just look around and observe the area around you. Is this environment healthy? How does it make you feel? What species can you see? Could you do something to make your view – or another place – a better habitat?

It's okay if your mind wanders away from the nature in front of you and on to mundane topics. If you don't learn anything about the local environment. You might surprise yourself in those moments of stillness by discovering insights and possibilities that you've overlooked in your daily hustle. But don't worry if nothing bubbles up – simply existing outdoors and observing nature without a measurable objective has intrinsic value.