

All the Ways to Reduce Waste in Your Home

Tired of hauling bags upon bags of trash to the curb every week? Becoming familiar with ways to reduce waste in your home can help your family save money as well as make a positive impact on the environment.



Why It's Beneficial to Reduce Waste at Home

Let's be honest: taking out the trash probably isn't your favorite chore – and when you're creating needless waste, it can make trash day even more undesirable. But waste reduction at home doesn't just make trash day less of a hassle: it also trains you to become a more mindful consumer, which can result in serious dollars saved.

Before you start your waste minimization journey, it's a good idea to take stock of how many bags of trash you throw out in a typical week, and make a mental note about the kinds of things that are going into your trash can. Do you have lots of food waste? Toss tons of plastic cups? Forget about things until they're expired? Whatever your bad trash habits are, vowing to create less waste will make you hyper-aware of the products – and

thus, money – you're throwing away, and give you helpful insight into how you can buy less and save more.

Easy Ways to Reduce Waste at Home

If you're a newcomer to waste reduction, you might assume it's something that will require a huge overhaul of your daily life. Luckily, reducing your household waste is actually easier than you might imagine. Here are some ideas for how you can reduce waste at home without totally disrupting your lifestyle.

Ditch Plastic Bags

Do you have a seemingly endless supply of plastic shopping bags stuffed away in a cabinet somewhere? Instead of continuing to accumulate pointless plastic bags, reduce waste by making a habit of taking a few reusable tote bags with you on your grocery runs.

Recycle Whenever Possible

Instead of tossing everything into one waste bin, start separating recyclable items from your regular trash. Invest in a second trash can and line it with [Glad® Recycling Tall Kitchen Drawstring Bags](#) – just be sure to check your local city or community guidelines to see how your recyclables need to be bagged and thrown out. You can even post a list of [recyclable items](#) (like plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and newspapers) above your recycling bin so everyone in your household can easily reference it.

Cut Back on Disposable Items

It might be tempting to buy disposable or single-use items for the sake of convenience, but they create tons of needless waste. Kick the habit of buying single-use things and invest in products with a longer lifespan in order to reduce waste. Below are some examples of disposable or single-use products that you might consider phasing out of your shopping list.

- Coffee pods
- Plastic tooth flossers
- Disposable razors
- Toothpicks
- Cotton balls
- Makeup remover wipes

How to Reduce Food Waste on a Daily Basis

Think about how many food scraps and leftovers you throw out on a weekly basis... then imagine how much money you'd save if you learned how to reduce food waste. Below is a step-by-step guide for food waste reduction that can help your household to save money and create less trash.

Step 1: Shop Smarter



One easy way to cut back on food waste is by taking a little extra time to plan each grocery shopping trip before you leave. When making your grocery list, don't simply write down the items you need: the [EPA suggests](#) making notes about what each item is for and the amount you'll need. You can also keep a running list of any household staple food items that you'll want to purchase on a recurring basis.

Next, remember to double-check your fridge/pantry for items on your shopping list before heading out of the house. It's a win-win: you won't waste money on duplicate items that might go to waste, and you can save on storage space as well.

And finally, note that it's best to avoid buying food products in bulk, unless you know for sure you'll use it all up before it goes bad (e.g. non-perishables like granola bars or peanut butter).

Step 2: Befriend Your Freezer



Freezers aren't just for keeping your favorite ice cream cold – they're also a powerful tool for food waste minimization. If you aren't sure you'll be able to eat something before it goes bad (like bread or meat), simply place it into a [Glad® Freezer Zipper Gallon Bag](#) and stow it in your freezer for later use. You can also prep whole meals, freeze them, and thaw them later when you're ready to eat them. For more handy food storage tips, check out some of [Glad's Protection Pointers](#).

Step 3: Start a Compost Bin



Instead of sending your coffee grounds, eggshells, and stale bread to a landfill, make a fun family project out of [building a compost bin](#) and learning [what is and is not compostable](#). Added bonus: [according to the EPA](#), you can also use your homemade compost as a natural fertilizer to help your lawn flourish.

If you don't have a need for your own compost heap, you can also put your compostable materials into [Glad® Kitchen Compostable Bags](#) and drop it off at a local composting site.

Step 4: Give to Those in Need



If you want to avoid wasting food and also give back to your community, you can take any uncooked, pre-packaged food products and donate them to a local food pantry or other charity that can distribute them to those in need.

Can You Reduce Waste in the Workplace, Too?

Your waste reduction efforts don't have to be confined to your home – you can also extend those waste minimizing habits into your workplace as well. Here are a few simple ways you can change your routine and reduce waste at work.

Bring Your Own Lunch

Instead of buying takeout every day and accumulating heaps of plastic to-go containers, meal prep at home and bring your lunch in a reusable lunchbox or storage container whenever possible. Or, if you do plan to buy lunch, make sure to keep an extra set of silverware at your desk so you don't have to ask for plasticware from the restaurant.

Invest in a Reusable Water Bottle

Staying hydrated while you work is crucial – but that doesn't mean you need to create unnecessary waste by buying plastic water bottles every day. Quench your thirst with a reusable water bottle that you keep handy at your desk.

Ditch Your Daily Coffee Run

If you're in need of caffeine, make a pot of coffee at home and then bring enough to get you through the workday in a thermos that will keep it hot. Or, if you still want to enjoy a latte every now and then, you can simply bring your own mug to the coffee shop so they don't have to waste a disposable cup.

How Waste Reduction Benefits the Planet



Aside from the personal benefits of wasting less, there's one very important, positive side effect of waste reduction: protecting the environment. According to [2015 data from the EPA](#), the average American produces 4.48 pounds of waste per day – and with all of our individual waste combined, that amounts to about 262.4 million tons of trash per year. All that waste then makes its way into landfills, where, during decomposition or incineration, it releases harmful greenhouse gases and toxins, which contribute to things like groundwater/air pollution and global climate change. All of that can significantly impact humans, other species, and entire ecosystems.

While it might be easier to simply ignore how much waste we produce, the truth is that it's on all of us as individuals to learn methods of waste minimization to help protect the planet from the debilitating effects of climate change. Although you may not think you can make a difference just by slightly altering your lifestyle, the truth is that every decision – no matter how small – that results in the reduction of waste can have a positive effect.

By buying less, recycling more, and learning how to reduce waste at home, you can lower your carbon footprint and help do your part to make the planet a healthier place for current and future generations.