

WHAT IS ZERO WASTE?

Zero Waste is a philosophy and a movement that encourages people to create as close to zero waste as possible in their day-to-day life.

People who follow a Zero Waste lifestyle choose products that are free from plastics and packaging, derived from natural products, reusable, and ultimately biodegradable. Only items that are infinitely recyclable (like glass) or biodegradable have no long-term impacts on the world.

Reducing consumption and refusing items that will ultimately become garbage are the two key principles of the Zero Waste movement.

Before purchasing any item, ask yourself – where will this product ultimately end up? Even some recyclable products (like plastic) may eventually end up in a landfill. In that case, consider looking for lower-impact alternatives.

However, Zero Waste is not an all-or-nothing movement. Start with small, manageable changes. Complete waste elimination is very difficult to achieve. Instead, use the following tips as a guideline to personal waste reduction.



RESOURCES

Zero Waste Home

www.zerowastehome.com

- Maintained by Bea Johnson, founder of the Zero Waste home lifestyle movement
- Tips, tricks, and news, and resources

PAREdown

www.paredownhome.com

- Victoria-based blog and guide to Zero Waste
- Tips, tricks, and personal experiences

The Clean Bin Project

cleanbinproject.com

- Vancouver-based blog (and movie) documenting one household's Zero Waste year.
- Tips, tricks, and personal experiences



REAPS
RECYCLING & ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION PLANNING SOCIETY

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Tips for

ZERO WASTE



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ZERO WASTE ON THE GO

- Keep travel mugs handy! Carry a spare in your car for spur-of-the-moment coffee stops
- Straws are never recyclable, so invest in reusable stainless steel or glass straws. Carry a spare in your purse or bag.
- Pack litter-free lunches: reusable bento-style lunch kits are ideal for zero-waste lunches.
- In addition, look for reusable ziploc replacements, including snack bags, and sandwich wraps. (Available in patterns for the children and young-at-heart adults.)
- Invest in a quality refillable water bottle.

KITCHEN

Kitchen and food waste, on average, make up a large part of the household waste, which makes this one of the easiest and most effective places to adopt Zero Waste strategies.

- Buy bulk instead of prepackaged
- Choose tap water or invest in a water filter instead of bottled water; alternatively, invest in a water dispenser and refill large water bottles at water stations
- Don't throw away food scraps! Produce scraps can be composted, bones and meat scraps can be used for broth, and leftovers can be eaten as lunch the next day.
- Stop using cling wrap and aluminum foil; beeswax clothes are moldable and reusable alternatives
- Instead of dish sponges (which are thrown out when they get too 'grungy'), look for bamboo or wood scrub brushes, which eventually biodegrade
- Opt for reusable clothes and dish towels instead of paper towels
- Make food items that cannot be purchased in bulk or package-free (e.g. condiments, snack foods, baked goods, dairy-free milks)
- Use glass or metal storage containers instead of ziploc bags or plastic containers

SHOPPING

- Bring your own reusable bags for grocery shopping
- Bring your own cloth bags for produce and bulk bin shopping. Cloth bags are a lightweight and reusable alternative to the clear thin plastic bags usually offered at grocery stores.
- Bring your own reusable tupperware containers to fill the deli. Most grocery stores are happy to fill containers with deli meats and cheeses at the deli counter.
- Shop the perimeter of the store. The centre aisles are almost entirely made up of prepackaged goods.

HOUSEHOLD:

- Instead of disposable dryer sheets, use wool dryer balls to combat static
- Minimise your "stuff". Clutter attracts clutter... which ends up in the landfill. If you don't use it, love it, or need it, consider rehoming it.
- DIY cleaners for your house: vinegar, baking soda, and lemon juice work wonders.
- Turn old textiles into cleaning rags.
- Look for second-hand furniture and home décor.
- Opt for natural fibres instead of synthetic for clothing and linens.

BATHROOM:

- Buy package-free toiletries (shampoo and conditioning bars, skincare bars)
- Purchase bamboo toothbrushes and wooden hair brushes with natural fibres instead of plastic
- DIY cleaning: use vinegar on your windows and mirrors, baking soda to scrub your tub, natural disinfectants to sanitise counters and sinks
- Opt for warm water and washcloths to remove makeup instead of making removing wipes or cotton pads
- Use straight razors instead of disposable cartridges
- Consider reusable menstrual products (such as the Diva Cup) instead of disposable products

