

15 WAYS TO LIVE MORE SUSTAINABLY

EASY ACTIONS
FREE HACKS
SAVE MONEY

SAVING GREEN

PFORWORDS

USE WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE

The best thing you can do for your wallet and the planet is to lessen your consumption. And the best way to do that is to use what you already have at home.

GLASS JARS

Have you recently bough spaghetti sauce, peanut butter, or pickles lately? Are they in glass jars? Because if so, you can clean them out after you've polished them off and then have yourself a multi-purpose container.

Glass jars are great for being water bottles, holding snacks, being a travel compost bin, carting your lunch to work, bringing home leftovers after going out to eat, etc. You can also find them on the cheap from thrift stores. I normally can buy them for \$0.40

CLOTHS

Having cloths on hand can be incredibly useful. They can serve as napkins, rags (instead of paper towels), hankies, and dust wipes. Rather than buy new cloths, I encourage you to make your own by cutting up old t-shirts, towels, and sheets.

FORKS AND KNIVES

You can avoid using single use plastic utensils when eating out by using reusable ones. There is no need to buy a bamboo set or any other 'instagram worthy' utensils for this purpose. Instead, just use the ones you already have at home, or shop your thrift store to get a pair for less than \$1.

USE WHATEVER ELSE YOU HAVE

Have a bunch of plastic containers? Keep using them until they break.

Have a large stash of plastic bags? Bring them with you to the store to keep reusing them or upcycle them in some kind of project.

Moral of the story: don't go running out to replace items you already have.

CONSERVE YOUR WATER

Clean water is a valuable resource that isn't treated as such in a lot of developed countries. Change that by using your water carefully and making it last.

TAKE SHORTER SHOWERS

The average American shower water usage is 17.2 gallons with the average shower length being 8.2 minutes. That means on average, one minute in the shower will waste 2.09 gallons of water! And that doesn't even account for how much electricity is used to heat up the water in the first place. An easy way to save water and save money on your water bill is to cut down on how long you're in the shower for. Even shortening a shower by one minute can save gallons of shower water usage.

SAVE YOUR SHOWER WATER

Not the water that you used to actually shower- but the water that was wasted when it the water temperature was heating up.

Use a bucket to collect the water and then use that to water plants, wash your car, do your dishes, etc.

MAKE YOUR TOILET MORE WATER EFFICIENT

You don't need to splurge on a new low flow toilet to make it more water efficient. Instead, you can put an inch or two of sand or pebbles inside each of two plastic bottles. Fill the bottles with water, screw the lids on, and put them in your toilet tank, safely away from the operating mechanisms. But be sure at least three gallons of water remain in the tank so it will flush properly.

ONLY USE THE CLOTHES WASHER WHEN IT'S FULL

Don't waste your time, water, and money by doing a small load of laundry. Instead, wait until you have enough to fill up the washing machine and use it then.

SAY 'NO' TO FREE SINGLE USE ITEMS

It seems like we are inundated with a bunch of free goodies companies are trying to push on us. Easy way to avoid sending those products to the landfill?
Say no.

BYE BYE SAMPLES

This one can seem tough if you're in the a grocery store, hungry, and spot a free sample booth. But most of the time, those samples are provided in a little plastic cup or on a plastic. Is the small bite of food really worth having that plastic on the earth for hundreds of years wreaking havoc on the ecosystem? No. So avoid the sample tables unless they're provided them sans packaging. Sometimes, I also ask them to make a new sample and just place it in my hand, which works too!

CONFERENCE FREEBIES HAVE TO GO

If you attend a lot of conferences for work like I do, you're no stranger to the company freebies. Every booth will try to push pens, hand sanitizers, and other odd items that have the company's name scribbled on it. And really, how many more pens does a person really need? Not many. So avoid these and save yourself from throwing these branded trinkets in the landfill.

AVOID SINGLE SAUCE PACKETS

Takeout and delivery is tricky because it can seem tricky to avoid the plastic packaging. (Tip: for pickup, call ahead and ask for them to put your meals onto a plate so that you can bring your own container and scoop it into it when you get there.) But even if you want to still get takeout the 'normal' way, you can still lessen your footprint by avoiding the single use sauce packets. Instead, bring your own bottles of hot sauces, salt, etc. Those bigger bottles use less overall packaging, and often come in glass containers.

PARTICIPATE IN THE SHARING ECONOMY

Leverage your surrounding community to help promote the circular and sharing economy.

LIBRARY

Why spend money and resources to buy a new book when there's probably a well stocked public library near you? Beyond books, libraries have a ton of other resources, including ebooks, movies, magazines, digital newspaper subscriptions, and even movie and t.v. streaming services!

USE YOUR APPS

Use technology for good! Leverage websites and apps to connect you with your neighbors if you're trying to find a certain item, or if you're trying to get rid of something. In the US, some of my favorite apps for this are Freecycle, Facebook Marketplace, Nextdoor, and Reddit!

Check out this article for 15 sharing economy apps.

HOST A SWAP NIGHT

This is a great idea to get some new items in your life while also hanging out with friends and family. Host a Swap Night for books or clothes and have everyone bring a couple items. Everyone will hopefully walk away with something new to them!

I made a blog post on different zero waste party ideas, check it out here!

PHONE A FRIEND

If you ever find yourself needing an item you don't have, ask your friends and family if they have it so you can borrow it. I've asked friends to borrow their baking mixers and power drills. It saves me from buying a somewhat expensive new good. I'll return the item in pristine condition, with a plate of cookies or another treat to show my appreciation.

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