



## 21 WAYS to REDUCE in 2021!

1. **Bring your own bags.** Put some bags in your car, backpack, handbag, or coat pocket to help you remember. Americans use 100 billion plastic bags a year; declining a few bags each shopping trip would make a big impact!
2. **Shop locally.** Local shops often use a lot less plastic and road miles to package and transport their goods, as their supply chain is a lot shorter, greener, and less wasteful. This helps you to avoid wasting energy and oil. AND you are supporting your local economy!
3. **Carry a water bottle with you.** Single-use plastic bottles are a poor use of the Earth's limited oil resources, especially when we can reuse better quality bottles over and over. Plus, whenever you drink out of a plastic bottle, you risk ingesting the chemicals used to make the bottles as these toxins can leach into the water over time.
4. **Carry a reusable coffee cup or thermos.** Okay, you might need a bigger bag if you can pledge to do everything on this list. Some people may choose either a bottle or a reusable coffee cup, depending on their thirst or caffeine cravings, but it's worth having a sustainable option in order to avoid contributing to the 16 billion disposable coffee cups thrown away each year.
5. **Say no to single-use cutlery.** When ordering food to go, request no utensils. You probably have plenty of plastic forks and spoons already, in addition to your daily cutlery. If you host guests, use what you have instead of buying more throwaway plastics.
6. **Talk to the staff.** This one might take a bit of courage, but each time you receive a straw in your drink without asking you first, suggest that they change their policy to opt-in, instead of opt-out – this will encourage waste reduction and only requires staff to ask one simple question.
7. **Say no to receipts.** It's quite frustrating for a lot of resourceful and eco-friendly shoppers that they receive a paper receipt each time they make a purchase. Refuse the receipt and try to cut down the 10 million trees and 21 billion gallons of water used each year in the US.
8. **Reduce non-recyclable paper waste.** Things like paper towels and napkins cannot be recycled. Store your paper towels out of sight and reach for cloth instead. Cut up an old t-shirt for a reusable towel. Use washable cloth napkins instead of purchasing disposable napkins. Save money while reducing your waste!
9. **Reduce and reuse packaging in your home.** When purchasing household products, choose items sold in cardboard or glass over plastic. While a lot of plastic containers can be recycled, plastics often end up in a landfill or as litter. Plastics never really goes away; instead they break down into smaller pieces polluting our land and water. If you do buy food in plastic containers, reuse them for food storage. Glass jars from things like jelly and pasta sauce can also make great storage options.

10. **Embrace minimalism.** The less you buy, the less you have to waste, and so waste reduction wins! Declutter your stuff, donate what you can, upcycle other things, and try to make sure that you maximize the use of everything you own.
11. **Repair instead of Replace.** Before throwing out that broken device, see if it can be repaired. Google, YouTube, or an electronics repair shop may be able to fix the problem. Save money, conserve resources, and save time by repairing electronics. This can also be a learning experience for your young ones.
12. **Say no to 'Fast Fashion'.** Cheap clothing shops contribute to the fact that fashion is the second-most polluting industry in the world. Exploitative farming techniques, dyes, and toxic synthetic fabrics are just a few reasons why you should say no, the other reason is that better quality clothing lasts longer and creates less waste. Waste reduction is the goal, right?
13. **Take advantage of thrift shops.** Thrift shops offer some of the best finds from the second-hand clothing world. If these clothes have all survived this long already, it's likely that they are good quality and will last you even longer.
14. **Repair your clothes.** If you get holes in your clothes, try to mend them with a needle and thread. If your shoes break, have them repaired. Don't be so quick to chuck away clothes without trying to fix them first. Google and YouTube solutions for your damaged clothes, as it's likely you already have the solution around your home.
15. **Cook with fresh produce.** Packaged fruit and vegetables travel from around the world, expending vast amounts of oil, energy, and water. If you buy loose and fresh veggies, your cooking will be much more resourceful.
16. **Plan your food shopping.** Make a list, check it twice. To reduce your food waste, you simply need to buy what you need and avoid spontaneous purchases. If you have plans to go out for dinner, make sure to buy one less meal for the fridge.
17. **Reduce your meat intake.** Eating fewer meals with meat each week can have a huge impact on our individual health and the health of the planet. If everyone in the country reduced their consumption of beef, pork, and poultry by a quarter and substituted plant proteins, we'd save about 82 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions per year.
18. **Say no to microwave meals.** You know those meals that arrive in black plastic trays and take your dinner from frozen to piping in a matter of minutes? Well, they're tough to recycle, and they generate three types of waste, the cardboard box, the plastic tray, and the clear film lid.
19. **Compost your food waste.** If you have space, create a compost pile in your yard. All of those vegetable peels and other food wastes that you create in your kitchen can be recycled right at home (<https://www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home>). If you don't have the space, you can subscribe to curbside composting service. [Perennial City Composting](#) is a good option.
20. **Make pledges with a friend.** All the ideas are going to be much easier and more achievable if you pick a partner to do them with. Housemates, family members, friends, or colleagues at work would likely be glad to make some changes to help make the world a bit less wasteful. Having a partner to keep you accountable is a great technique.
21. **Continue the good work you've been doing.** If you've already removed straws, single-use plastic bags, and plastic bottles from your day-to-day life, have a pat on the back and then pledge to continue your work into 2021.