

Simple Changes You Can Make to Reduce Waste

Make a meal plan - In addition to material waste, [food waste is a huge problem in American households](#). However, it's entirely preventable if you follow one simple rule: only buy groceries that you know will be eaten. It sounds like a no-brainer, but you'd be surprised at how much food is regularly thrown into the garbage in America.

Start relying on reusable containers - By storing food properly, [reusable containers extend produce life and keep things fresh for as long as possible](#). Invest in some quality airtight containers for things like baking ingredients, cereals, and other things that can stale quickly.

Start composting - Every day, half of what gets thrown into the trash could actually be turned into nutrient-dense [organic compost](#), which is basically nature's fertilizer. Your excess food won't go to waste, your garden will be full of nutrients and you can feel better about your impact on the planet. Win, win, win!

eco-cycle, zero waste video series – [Why Compost?](#)

Reduce food going to the landfill by composting. Compost isn't dirt, or soil, or mulch! It is a nutrient-rich soil amendment that plays a vital role in the health of ecosystems because it provides nutrients to soils. Eco-Cycle partners with the *Denver Compost Challenge* to explain the vital role of compost in creating a thriving ecosystem and balanced climate on Earth. This zero waste video series is also offered in Spanish.



Check this out and dig a little deeper... [“The Soil Story”](#) by *Kiss the Ground*

Stop using disposable plates and plastic forks, knives & spoons - Even if washing the dishes is the least thing you like to do, the waste created by paper plates and [plastic utensils aren't worth it](#). Stop resorting to paper and plastic and use the dishes and cutlery you already have.

Earth911 - [Clean Your Whole House with Vinegar, Baking Soda and Lemon](#)



Want to reduce the number of cleaning products you bring into your home with products you already have? People have been cleaning with household staples like vinegar, baking soda and lemons (or lemon juice) for a long time, and these items are safe and effective. If you clean with these natural cleaners, you may buy less, spend less money and have fewer harsh chemicals to worry about.

At the very least, stop buying plastic water bottles and single-serve food in plastic, please - Water bottles, paper coffee cups and individual servings are a huge waste of materials. There are a variety of [durable water bottle](#) and cute [coffee thermos](#) so you can take your beverages wherever you please. If you like flavored water, [infused water bottles](#) are all the rave. Instead of buying individual (single-use plastic) servings of something you love, buy the bigger container and make individual servings for you and your family with the reusable containers tip from above. You'll find yourself feeling a lot more hydrated and a lot less wasteful.

Most importantly and before recycling pick-up resumes, get to know the rules of recycling - Don't be confused or intimidated by the complicated symbols, sorting rules or [Wish-cycling](#). Navigating the recycling system is actually quite simple once you do a little research. Since recycling standards vary from place to place, find out [what can and cannot be recycled in Oberlin here](#). Still have questions, email: Recycling@cityofoberlin.com.