

Reduce Plastic – 11 Tips



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A friend recently told me that she wished we could recycle more plastic. I think that is the cry of many householders in the UK! My friend is often left with plastic containers, trays, packaging and carrier bags that she cannot get rid of and she feels guilty about.

I shared with her some of the ways in which we have managed to reduce our consumption of plastic over the course of our zero waste challenge.

They require simple lifestyle changes and some forward planning, so why not commit to doing just one a week?

1- Hang loose

Buy loose fruit and vegetables from a farm shop, farmers market or supermarket rather than ones pre packed in plastic. The advantage of this is you can choose just the amount of food you need which might result in less food waste too.

The other idea is to sign up for a vegetable box scheme. You don't even need to leave your home and you'll get a fresh supply of local, seasonal goods delivered to your door.

2- DIY

Why not start to grow some of your own fruit and vegetables? You don't need a huge garden or a lot of time to be a little

self-sufficient. Tomatoes and strawberries which often come in non-recyclable plastic boxes, can be grown in hanging baskets. Salad leaves can be grown in window boxes and herbs will enjoy a sunny kitchen windowsill.

3- Go to your local

If you buy meat from a local butcher, you'll be able to buy products like bacon, sausages and other meats wrapped in a thin plastic bag. This is much less packaging than supermarkets who use a thick plastic or polystyrene tray covered in shrink wrap.

4- Bake your own

By making your own bread you'll reduce on the amount of plastic packaging you send to the landfill each week. If you think you don't have time, think again! With a bread maker, all you do is add the ingredients, switch the machine on and leave. You can put it on before you go to bed and wake up to fresh bread in the morning.

5- Get a delivery

Support your local economy by asking your milkman to deliver milk to your door. Glass bottles can be cleaned and reused by the dairy which saves on plastic bottles. Some milkmen will deliver fruit juice in glass bottles too.

6- Get a refill

Some companies such as Ecover offer a refill system. You take along your empty bottles and get them refilled for a reduced fee. Search the [Ecover database](#) for details of your nearest refill stockist,

7- Ditch the plastic bag

Over a million plastic bags are consumed per minute worldwide.

Treat yourself to a fabulous reusable bag from [onya bags](#) (and see our [Discount promotion](#)) or a funky one from [Doy](#). Doy's bags are made from recycled tetrapaks. If you like sewing then visit the [Morsbag](#) site for instructions on making your own reusable bags.

8- Don't suffocate it!

If you have leftovers to store, don't cover them in cling film. Use a dish covered with a plate or reusable storage container with a lid instead.

9- Re-use

If you take sandwiches to school or work then don't buy special plastic sandwich bags. Look for ways to re-use things in your home. The inner wax wrapping from breakfast cereals, old bread bags, grease proof paper, old foil or paper bags can all be used.

10- Leave your litter.

You are entitled to leave any unnecessary packaging at the supermarket checkout. So if you have the confidence to do it, then make a statement to leave excess packaging at the till for the company to dispose of.

11- Be a savvy shopper

Instead of products such as mustard, honey, salad dressing and tomato ketchup sold in squeezable bottles, choose glass packaging instead. Many of these plastic containers cannot be recycled, plus you get loads left in the container that you cannot get to, resulting in food waste!