

# How Low Can You Go?

## Zero Waste At Home, School, Work & On The Go

Check off actions you already practice. Draw a line through the impossible and circle a few you are willing to take on. Set a goal, make a plan and go for it! Don't expect perfection and don't give-up. Revisit in a few weeks and pick a few more. For background information and links visit [www.zerowasteusa.org](http://www.zerowasteusa.org). Prepared by Zero Waste Action.

### 1. AT HOME

#### REDUCE, REFUSE, REUSE AND RECYCLE

- ☐ Study your city's waste reduction, recycling and organics lists carefully. Avoid wishful recycling!
- ☐ Repair rather than replace.
- ☐ Offer unwanted items to friends/neighbors.
- ☐ Donate only items accepted by donation program.
- ☐ Return dry cleaners hangers, florist vases & refillables.
- ☐ Borrow books and movies from the library and friends.
- ☐ Stop unsolicited mail and catalogs.

#### LIVE GREEN

- ☐ Buy less, use it up, wear it out, make it do, do without.
- ☐ Choose reusables, avoid disposables - straws, bags, containers, packaging and household products.
- ☐ Look for recycled content and locally made goods.
- ☐ Buy in bulk; avoid overly packaged goods.
- ☐ Share, borrow or rent party equipment and tools.
- ☐ Select natural fabrics; consider used clothing.
- ☐ Instead of sugary sodas, flavor water w/ lemon or mint.
- ☐ Use DIY non-toxic cleaning supplies - i.e., vinegar, baking soda, castile soap, borax and essential oils.
- ☐ Avoid lining waste baskets with plastic; try paper.

#### WASTE LESS FOOD

- ☐ Plan meals, use a list, eat at home, cook fresh.
- ☐ Before shopping, inventory refrigerator and pantry.
- ☐ Grow your own - sprouts, veggies, herbs, flowers.
- ☐ Place fresh stemmed items in shallow water in frig.
- ☐ Crisp limp vegetables in ice water or make soup.
- ☐ Don't store bananas w/ apples, avocados, melons.
- ☐ Keep potatoes in a cool, dark place away from onions. Add an apple to avoid early sprouting.
- ☐ Freeze veggie scraps for stock and surplus fruit for smoothies.
- ☐ Got surplus? Can, dehydrate or keep in cool dark spot.
- ☐ Donate extras to gleaners, food banks and soup kitchens. Learn about local food system; teach others.

#### SEPARATE ORGANICS

- ☐ Remove twist ties and plastic produce labels.
- ☐ Place yard debris and, if allowed, food scraps, food soiled paper, paper towels & napkins, in organics cart.
- ☐ Line food scraps container with newspaper. Keep container in frig. Freeze big items until collection day.
- ☐ Set up a your own home composting system. Learn the rules in advance. Worms may be less work.

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### 2. AT HOME

#### SELF/FAMILY CARE

- ☐ Make your own masks, scrubs, moisturizers, make-up.
- ☐ Use handkerchiefs and cotton swabs with paper sticks.
- ☐ Buy quality products in reusable nontoxic containers.
- ☐ Experiment with bar shampoo, bamboo toothbrushes...
- ☐ Try reusable towels, cloth diapers, menstrual products.

#### PET CARE

- ☐ Pick up pet waste with used plastic bags. Try cutting the sealed edge of air filled packing bags.
- ☐ Use a natural cat litter - pine pellets, wheat, paper...
- ☐ Fleas? Try diatomaceous earth after a bath.
- ☐ DIY natural pet food and treats.

### 3. AT SCHOOL & WORK

- ☐ Form a Green Team with clear mission and tasks.
- ☐ Include food service and custodial staff in your efforts.
- ☐ Monitor bins; fine tune bin size and pick-up frequency.
- ☐ Install trash and recycling stations with clear signage.
- ☐ Train all involved to reduce, refuse, reuse, recycle, rot.
- ☐ Organize a book, magazine and music exchange.
- ☐ Create a reuse closet for office supplies and tools.

- ☐ Repair electronics and refill toner cartridges.
- ☐ Utilize reusable transport packaging.
- ☐ Hold Zero Waste meeting and events.
- ☐ Review the [How Low Can You Go Business Checklist](#).

### 4. ON THE GO

- ☐ Create a system to manage your to-go reusables - handkerchief, napkin, cup, utensils, to-go-containers.
- ☐ Pack waste-free meals and snacks.
- ☐ Use a thermos for hot or cold food.
- ☐ Carry bags and gloves to pick-up trash.
- ☐ No trash or recycling bins? Haul your trash home.

#### AT EVENTS, BEACH AND PARK

- ☐ Bring reusable or recyclable picnic supplies.
- ☐ Plan for leftovers; bring extra containers.
- ☐ Leave no trace; pick up after yourself, kids and pets.
- ☐ Do not release balloons or fishing line.

#### TRAVELING

- ☐ Pack just what you need. Try e-books and e-music.
- ☐ Bring your own toiletries, mesh bags and headphones.
- ☐ Flying? Bring an empty water bottle and snacks.

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