



PERSONAL WASTE AUDIT



BUY IN BULK

BEFORE YOU THROW SOMETHING AWAY, ASK YOURSELF IF THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE YOU CAN USE IT FOR

General Tips

STRIVE FOR LOW WASTE, BUT IT'S OKAY NOT TO BE PERFECT

MAKE AND DO THINGS YOURSELF

Here are some tips for specific instances:



To-Go Food

- Save sauce packets and refuse them when offered
- Learn how to compost your food scraps with a free seminar provided by the City of San Diego
- Meal prep to avoid ordering takeout



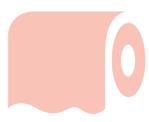
Plastic

- Recycle plastic film at retail stores
- Other uses for plastic film are: picking up after small dogs, crafting, and shipping packages



Packaging

- Find zero waste options for your favorite snacks. For example, instead of eating chips, eat carrots or other veggies
- Making your own snacks, like granola, may require more effort, but will yield a larger result



Paper

- Instead of paper towels, turn old t-shirts into rags



Refills

- Soda Stream refills and recycling at Target and Bed, Bath, and Beyond
- Look for dental floss refills



Prolonging Food Life

- Freeze juice and fruit into ice cubes to spice up your drinks

How to conduct your own personal waste audit:

What is a personal waste audit?

A personal waste audit answers the question: How much waste do I produce at home and on the go? Tracking the types and amount of waste you produce over a period of time—a week, a month, or longer—will quickly make you aware of what you're throwing out!

What kind of items do I include?

Include items that you discard as trash, recycle, or compost from the bathroom, bedroom, and kitchen.

How long should I track?

Aim to track your waste for one week. If you track for fewer days, that's okay! Of course, you're welcome to extend your audit for longer. (You may be surprised by items that sneak into your waste bin after additional days of tracking.)



How do I conduct my personal waste audit?

In this audit, we're aiming to track what (type of items) and how much. For this second measurement, counting the number of each item is easiest, though some sustainability educators measure waste by volume or weight. Experiment with this, if you like.

There are two main approaches to carryout your survey:

- 1) Track as you go. Keep pen and paper near the waste bins in your home. When you put something in the bin, list the item and keep a running tally. Easy, right?! A separate tracking page can be kept in your car, bag, or desk to record waste disposed of "on the go." Alternatively, if you take your mobile phone everywhere, you might prefer to use your device for tracking. But, make sure you record all the waste!
- 2) Track by diving in. Prefer to do your tallying all at once? Or want to find out how much waste is generated by your entire family? This is another great approach. At the end of the day, sort the contents of your waste bins by placing similar items into piles on spread-out newspaper. Then categorize, count, and record the items you find. Repeat each day.

I have my data. Now what?

Well done! Do you notice any patterns? What types of waste were most prevalent? Were there any items that surprised you? What space poses the greatest challenge? Why do you think that is?

