

#MAKEITAHABIT

A 30-DAY ROADMAP TO ZERO WASTE



What is Zero Waste?

In short, Zero Waste is a holistic way of thinking that views materials as resources within a circular, closed-loop system.

As officially defined by the Zero Waste International Alliance (ZWIA), Zero Waste is “The conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials without burning and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health.”



Instructions

This 30-day roadmap was developed to provide simple, actionable ways for you to get started on your Zero Waste journey from home. While Great Forest works to help businesses nationwide reduce waste and increase sustainability, we firmly believe that good zero waste habits and climate action starts at home. Each action within the roadmap can be completed independently of the other actions, we recommend following the order laid out to help reinforce Zero Waste-inspired themes that build on each other.

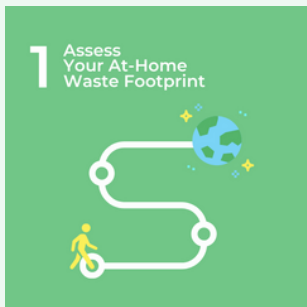
Each action comes with a short description, simple tip(s), and resources for you to get started right away.

The Great Forest consultant team had a fun time creating this toolkit and hope you will enjoy following along with us. The key is to get creative and involve your family, friends, and neighbors whenever possible!



#MAKEITAHABIT

3 Organize Your Reusable Grocery Bags 	4 Learn Food Preservation Techniques 	5 Unsubscribe From Junk Mail 	6 Reduce Your Consumption of Disposables 	7 Make a Zero Waste-Inspired Window Sign 	1 Assess Your At-Home Waste Footprint 	2 Familiarize Yourself with Local Recycling Laws 
10 Start a Garden 	11 Learn About the "Fast Fashion" Supply Chain 	12 Go Paperless 	13 Refuse Paper Towels 	14 Store Plastic Film for Reuse and Recycling 	8 Set a Food Waste Goal 	9 Get Cooking! 
17 Get Active! Walk, Bike, or Run 	18 Learn About the Environmental Impact of Plastic 	19 Download the Earth Challenge 2020 App 	20 Make Your Own All-Purpose Cleaner 	21 Conduct a Plastics Audit 	15 Take Stock of Your Wardrobe 	16 Host a (Virtual) Yard Sale 
24 Make Homemade Beeswax Food Wraps 	25 Learn the Meaning of Expiration Dates 	26 Rethink Your Coffee Routine 	27 Start a Neighborhood Garden Exchange 	28 Learn About the Economy of Glass Recycling 	22 Take Stock of Your Old Electronics 	23 Repair Something! 
					29 Reuse Empty Jars and Other Food Containers 	30 Join or Donate to an Environmental Conservation Organization 




Take stock of your Zero Waste journey.


Assess your at-home waste footprint. Determining the amount of waste you produce through your daily routine is the first step to fixing it. This is one of those things you can't "un-know" once you know. A Great Forest analysis of over 100 commercial waste audits conducted nationwide revealed that 77% of whatmost businesses send to the landfill is not actually trash at all, but is made up of organics (34%), paper (23%), glass/metal/plastic (19%), and e-waste (1%). What are you sending to the landfill from home?

What are you doing to reduce, reuse, and/or recycle these common household items?

1. Common recyclables: paper, cardboard, glass, metal, rigid plastics, and beverage cartons
2. Non rigid-plastic: Including plastic bags and packaging film
3. Organics: Including food scraps, egg shells, coffee grounds, soiled paper, yard waste
4. Electronics: Including cables, cords, and small appliances
5. Household Hazardous Waste: Including light bulbs, batteries, and paint
6. Clothing/Textiles



Ask yourself the following questions when taking stock of your common household items:

- Do you have a designated bin for these materials?
 - Do you have a clear understanding of what's accepted in your recycling program?
 - Do you have reusable shopping bags?
 - Do you separate your food waste for composting?
- 



Get informed about recycling.

Familiarize yourself with local recycling laws. What is accepted in your at-home recycling bin? Whoever provides your recycling service can provide that information. Look to your local government's website, or to building management if your recycling is privately hauled.

TIPS:

Post the list of accepted materials on your fridge for reference.

The chasing arrows symbol on plastic does not imply that the item is actually recyclable in your jurisdiction, but rather indicates the type of plastic. Ensure that the number/type of plastic is accepted prior to disposing.

3 Organize Your Reusable Grocery Bags



TIPS:

Place the bag(s) back in its proper spot as soon as you get home to reinforce the habit.

Many areas around the country charge small fees to give out bags.

Organize your entryway.

Collect all your reusable grocery bags and decide on a convenient location to store them. Maybe that's a basket in your entryway, hooks in the mud room, or the back seat of your car -- whichever area you're most likely to pass on your way out the door and will help remind you to bring your own bags (BYOB).



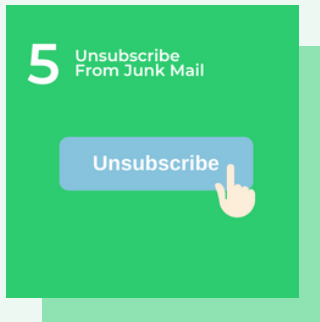
RESOURCE:

Check out this [Britannica](#) definition of "Food preservation".

Get informed about food waste.

Get inspired by your grandparents and learn food preservation techniques such as canning, pickling, drying, and freezing to enjoy fruits and vegetables year-round and minimize your food waste.

#MAKEITAHABIT
#30DAYSTOZEROWASTE



RESOURCE:

Learn how to unsubscribe from junk mail through this [Ecocycle](#) article.

Opt out of junk mail.

Many of us get mail we don't want, and that ends up in our recycling bins just as soon as we open it. It's time to save some trees and get your name off that mailing list once and for all. Opting out of the printed phone directory is also worth looking into.

“

There is no such thing as
"Away". When we throw
anything away it must go
somewhere.

ANNIE LEONARD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GREENPEACE USA



6

Reduce Your
Consumption of
Disposables



Plan to reduce your consumption of disposables.

Make a list of single-use items you regularly consume and research reusable options.

TIPS:

- If you haven't already, invest in a reusable water bottle and travel coffee mug, which will have the added benefit of holding your preferred temperature.
- Say No to Plastic Cutlery: Request restaurants to hold the utensils when ordering take-out or delivery. Many food delivery services also give you the option to click a checkbox during checkout for no plastic utensils or napkins. If there's no checkbox, you can add your request in the order instructions.
- Ditch the Plastic Straws: Americans use nearly 500 million plastic straws every day. Refuse straws entirely, or replace plastic straws with a reusable stainless steel, silicone, or bamboo options.

#MAKEITAHABIT
#30DAYSTOZEROWASTE



TIP:

If you have kids, get the family involved!

DIY window sign.

Use the cardboard, poster board, or paper you have lying around to make a statement and inspire your neighbors!

Don't forget to use the hashtags
#MakeItAHabit #ZeroWasteLiving.

RESOURCE:

Get ideas from these [eco-inspired quotes](#).

8 Set a Food
Waste Goal



Take stock of your kitchen.

Without the oxygen it needs, organic matter does not decompose properly at landfills, and produces methane gas in the process.

RESOURCES:

[20 Vegetables You Can Re-Grow From Scraps](#)

[10 Ways to Regrow Food in Water](#)

TIPS:

- Only buy produce with an intended purpose, and prep your vegetables for easy snacking.
- When you buy new food from the store, bring all the older items in your cupboards and fridge to the front.
- Freeze scraps to make vegetable stock -now you have the time to do it!
- Regrow vegetable scraps like green onions, leeks, romaine lettuce, mint, basil, cilantro, avocado seed. Get creative!

#MAKEITAHABIT
#30DAYSTOZEROWASTE



TIP:

Look for recipes by ingredient type to find new ideas.

Get creative and get cooking!

Make a new dish using only what you already have on hand. Cooking your own meals cuts back on the waste produced by takeout bags, containers, and plastic cutlery.

RESOURCES:

- [Recipes by Ingredient](#)
- [Recipes and Tips for Quarantine Cooking](#)

10 Start a Garden



DIY garden.

It's never been easier (or more fun) to grow your own veggies! Start a garden in your backyard, join a community garden, or even something as simple as growing an herb garden on your windowsill is a great start.

TIP:

If you can't grow it yourself, choose local. Buying produce farmed near your home typically gives you access to higher quality food than you find at a grocery store. You may even find yourself getting to know the farmers directly and learning more about the food, all while supporting small business.



#30DAYSTOZEROWASTE

11 Learn About the "Fast Fashion" Supply Chain



TIP:

Look for eco-friendly brands that work to create clothing with minimal impact.

Get informed about fast fashion.

According to the National Geographic, it takes 2,700 liters of water to make just one cotton shirt. That's enough water for one person to drink for 2 1/2 years.

RESOURCES:

- [The Economic, Social, and Environmental Impacts of "Fast Fashion"](#)
- [A Guide Towards a Circular Fashion Industry](#)

#MAKEITAHABIT
#30DAYSTOZEROWASTE



Opt in to going paperless.

If you don't already, transition to electronic statements and pay your bills online.

TIP:

Don't forget to make use of electronic tickets for events and travel. Most places don't require physical copies anymore.

#MAKEITAHABIT
#30DAYSTOZEROWASTE

13 Refuse Paper Towels



TIP:

Invest in cloth napkins if you don't already have them!

Plan to refuse.

Refuse paper towels for the entire day. Use cloth towels instead! It's certainly cheaper to hold onto a few cloth towels than to go through a new roll of paper towels every week.

14 Store Plastic Film for Reuse and Recycling



TIP:

Having a designated storage location will make reuse and taking back to the grocery store for recycling easier.

Organize.

Set aside space to store plastic bags and packaging film. Store clean plastic film in a small bin or start a 'bag of bags' under your sink or in a closet.

RESOURCE:

[Great Forest: Can I Recycle Plastic Bags?](#)

#MAKEITAHABIT
#30DAYSTOZEROWASTE

15 Take Stock of
Your Wardrobe



TIP:

Shop second-hand when you're in the market for a new piece.

Take stock of your wardrobe.

Staying at home allows us to take stock of what we already have, what we don't need more of, and what items can be set aside for consignment or donation. You might be surprised to find what you still have crammed in the back of your closet. Knowing what you already have can prevent you from making impulse or unnecessary purchases in the future, thus reducing your consumer footprint in the long-run.

#MAKEITAHABIT
#30DAYSTOZEROWASTE

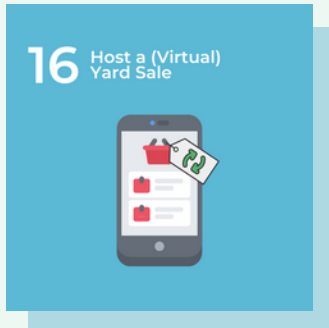
“

You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference and you have to decide what kind of a difference you want to make.

JANE GOODALL

PRIMATOLOGIST & ANTHROPOLOGIST





Host a (virtual) yard sale.

RESOURCES:

- [Poshmark](#)
- [ThredUP](#)
- [Green Drop](#)

Take advantage of your time at home by listing clothing and household items on online consignment shops. You can also schedule pick ups with various charitable organizations.

17 Get Active!
Walk, Bike, or Run



Get back to nature.

If it's available to you, get outside for a walk, bike, or run. The simplest way to appreciate the Earth is to explore it. Find your nearest park or hiking trail and just walk.

TIPS:

- Keep your phone away for a bit and enjoy your surroundings.
- When you can't get outside, enjoy the parks from home.

RESOURCE:

[8 Ways You Can Enjoy NYC Parks From Home](#)

#MAKEITAHABIT
#30DAYSTOZEROWASTE

18

Learn About the
Environmental
Impact of Plastic



RESOURCE:

Learn more about the impact of plastic pollution through the [World Wildlife Fund](#).

Get informed about plastics.

Every year, an estimated 8 million metric tons of plastic enter our oceans —that's one dump truck load every minute. Lessen your footprint by getting informed about the effects of plastic, and reducing your individual consumption.

#MAKEITAHABIT
#30DAYSTOZEROWASTE

It's projected that by 2050, the total amount of plastic waste in the oceans will weigh more than all fish, and 99% of seabirds will have ingested plastics.





19 Download the Earth
Challenge 2020 App



NOTE:

When plastic waste is not managed responsibly, the waste leaks into the environment and degrades. The resulting small pieces of plastic are called microplastics, which contaminate the water we drink, food we eat, and the air we breathe.

Get involved in understanding plastic pollution.

Download the [Earth Challenge 2020 app](#). Click the Plastic Pollution icon and learn how you can use the plastics widget to find and photograph plastic pollution. By using the widget to identify the location and type of plastic, you help collect and integrate billions of observations that can provide valuable insight to create policy change.

#MAKEITAHABIT
#30DAYSTOZEROWASTE

20 Make Your Own
All-Purpose Cleaner



TIP:

Reuse existing spray bottles in your home to store natural cleaning solutions.

DIY cleaning solutions.

Make your own all-purpose cleaner to protect your health, the environment, and your wallet. Plus, many natural cleaning solutions include ingredients like vinegar and baking soda, which you likely already have on hand!

RESOURCES:

- [66 All-Natural Cleaning Solutions That Really Work](#)
- [How to Make \(and Use\) a Disinfectant Against Coronavirus](#)

“

The world is big and I want to
have a good look at it before it
gets dark.

JOHN MUIR

"FATHER OF THE NATIONAL PARKS"

21 Conduct a Plastics Audit



TIP:

Ask restaurants to skip the plastic utensils with your delivery or pickup orders.

Conduct a plastic audit.

Plastics are a huge part of our daily lives, but there are a number of great alternatives to help lower our impact.

Count how many plastic containers, wraps, bottles and bags you purchase for your kitchen and bathroom. Once you have conducted a plastics audit, research products that have more sustainable packaging for your next grocery shop or online order!

22 Take Stock of Your
Old Electronics



Take stock of your old electronics.

Spring cleaning! Collect all those old chargers, broken cords, and outdated cables and mark them for proper disposal. Many local government provide drop-off locations for household electronics and other potentially hazardous waste.

TIPS:

- Try reusable batteries.
- Many stores like Best Buy and Staples that sell electronics are required to provide take-back programs.

RESOURCE:

[Fact Sheet: E-Waste and Universal Waste](#)

#MAKEITAHABIT
#30DAYSTOZEROWASTE



Repair something.



TIPS:

- Use online tutorials for guidance.
- If you can't repair it yourself, apps like [TaskRabbit](#) make it possible to salvage your malfunctioning products more affordably.
- Buy less, buy well, and buy to last.

Do you have a button that recently fell off, or a newfound rip in your favorite jeans? Take out that lesser-used sewing kit, and extend the life cycle of your things.

#MAKEITAHABIT
#30DAYSTOZEROWASTE



DIY beeswax food wraps.

Do you have leftover fabric at home?
Upcycle your fabric scraps to make
homemade food wraps.

RESOURCE:

[How to Make DIY Beeswax Food Wraps for a Plastic-Free Kitchen](#)

25 Learn the Meaning
of Expiration Dates



Get informed about labels.

How many times have you looked at a bottle of juice or a carton of eggs with dismay because you noted the food was past its use-by date? There's a lot of confusion around the meanings of these dates, which leads to serious food waste.

TIPS:

- Use-by, best-by, and sell-by dates reference product quality rather than safety, and they are established by the food manufacturers, not a public health agency.
- Don't be afraid to consume foods that are past these dates; if you're concerned, a quick look and smell is usually all you need to determine whether it's good to eat.

RESOURCE:

[The Food Expiration Dates You Should Actually Follow](#)

#MAKEITAHABIT
#30DAYSTOZEROWASTE



#MAKEITAHABIT

26 Rethink Your Coffee Routine



Rethink your coffee routine.

Transition away from disposable coffee pods and invest in refillable options. In the meantime, opt for recycling through send-back programs offered by companies like Terracycle, Nespresso, and Flavia.

TIPS:

- When you're in the market for a new coffee machine, opt for options that minimize waste.
- When you get back to office, bring a mug from home.
- Keep a reusable travel mug for when you're on the go.

27 Start a Neighborhood Garden Exchange



TIPS:

- Post on neighborhood apps like Facebook, [Nextdoor](#) or [OfferUp](#).
- To ensure safe physical distancing, exchange seeds, wood and dirt by leaving them in front of homes, or set up times to exchange safely.

Get back to nature.

Rachel Carson's 1962 book [Silent Spring](#) inspired the grassroots environmental movement that led to the creation of the EPA. In honor of Carson's birthday, start a neighborhood garden exchange.

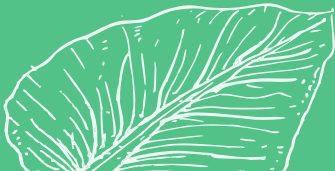
Exchange items like seeds, repurposed wood (for building raised garden beds), and soil.

#MAKEITAHABIT
#30DAYSTOZEROWASTE



Only within the moment of time represented by the present century has one species – man – acquired significant power to alter the nature of the world.

RACHEL CARSON
AUTHOR, SILENT SPRING





Get informed about glass recycling.

RESOURCES:

[How to Recycle Glass](#)

[The Glass Recycling Problem](#)

TIPS:

- Since many communities are no longer picking up glass for curbside collection, search for your closest drop-off center to continue recycling.
- If you can recycle glass in your community, recycle glass bottles and jars only. Ceramics, drinkware, and window glass are not accepted in your bin.

29

Reuse Empty Jars
and Other Food
Containers



TIPS:

- Jars can become drinking glasses or even small serving bowls.
- Larger containers can be used to store other items like loose change or things that might just be sitting in your junk drawer.

Get creative about repurposing.

Repurpose empty jars and other food
containers to extend their lifecycle.

#MAKEITAHABIT
#30DAYSTOZEROWASTE



RESOURCE:

[Earth Day Network Pledge to Vote Earth](#)

Pledge to vote earth.

Join or donate to an environmental organization to help bring awareness to pressing environmental issues.

The Environmental Defense Fund, the Natural Resource Defense Council, and the Sierra Club Foundation are powerful organizations all committed to a range of categories of conservation.

At Great Forest, a portion of our profits support our sister non-profit Pure Earth, which works to save lives by addressing our worldwide air pollution problem.

#MAKEITAHABIT
#30DAYSTOZEROWASTE

“

We don't need a handful of people doing zero waste perfectly. We need millions of people doing it imperfectly.

ANNE-MARIE BONNEAU
FOUNDER, THE ZERO-WASTE CHEF BLOG



RESOURCES:

Get Involved

- [Earth Challenge 2020](#)
- [Remote/Virtual volunteering opportunities through VolunteerMatch](#)

Get Informed

- [Great Forest Sustainability 101](#)
- Climate Solutions: [The Project Drawdown](#)
- EPP: [US EPA Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Program](#)
- Waste 360: [50 Years of Earth Day Infographic](#)
- [Foodprint](#)
- [NYC Crash Course on Climate Change](#)
- [Earth 911](#)



Donation/Reuse

- [Materials for the Arts](#)
- [Big Reuse](#)
- [Green Drop](#)
- [Habitat for Humanity ReStore](#)
- [donateNYC](#)

Food Recovery

- [Food Recovery Network](#)
- [Food for All](#)
- [Olio](#)
- [YourLocal](#)
- [goMkt](#)
- [Gebni](#)

Get Back to Nature

- [The Art of Noticing](#) by Rob Walker
- [8 Ways You Can Enjoy NYC Parks From Home](#)



Find us on
Social Media



LINKEDIN



FACEBOOK



INSTAGRAM

MAILING ADDRESS

2014 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10035

WEBSITE

www.greatforest.com

EMAIL ADDRESS

recycling@greatforest.com

PHONE NUMBER

(212) 779-4757

**Contact
Info**

