

Plastic Reduction: Commitment to the cause

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During the month of Plastic Free July we encourage everyone to be more intentional about the amount of plastic (especially single use plastic) that goes into their everyday lives. Below is an outline for some of the things we are currently doing in an effort to reduce the amount of plastics we are adding to the environment. Plastic is not inherently evil and there are many great uses for it. However, the disposable nature of our current culture is far from sustainable and putting a huge strain on our waste management systems as well as the health of our planet. So, before you head home and toss every piece of plastic you have in the recycling bin, take stock of what you have and how it can still serve a purpose for you. If you have a closet full of plastic grocery bags, reuse them! Reuse them dozens or hundreds of times before they break down and need to be recycled properly. Old leftover food containers that are sitting in your cupboard can find a second, third, or fourth life if given the chance. Take the time this month to explore alternatives to what have been your normal ways of doing things. DIY instead of buy. Visit a resale shop. Check the aisle for a different brand that is plastic free in packaging. You do not have to be perfectly 100% plastic free (I know I'm not), but do try to make the effort to change a few products, habits, and behaviors and look towards a future with less plastic. Have fun with it! You can do it! If you have questions we are here to help where we can.



- Grocery Shopping- BYOC-Bring your own container!
 - Reusable bags
 - Large tote bags
 - Great for carrying large amounts of items
 - Insulated bag (meat, cheese, cold items)
 - Make your own out of old t-shirts
 - [DIY T-shirt Bag Video](#)
 - Why switch? Eliminates countless plastic bags from the checkout line.
 - Reusable fine mesh produce bags
 - Excellent for all sorts of fruits and vegetables
 - Strive for package free produce
 - Bulk whole carrots, mushrooms, and many other options are available. You need only look for them.
 - Only limited by your imagination: See Bulk and Bakery uses
 - [Amazon: Brotrade product Info](#)
 - Why switch? Eliminates all those plastic bags for individual produce items and plastic packaging



- DIY upcycled produce bags
 - Use an old pillowcase, shoelace, and some sewing skills
 - [DIY produce bag instructions](#)
- Bulk aisle
 - Huge range of staple or specialty items
 - Dry goods, grains, nuts, candy, snacks, spices, peanut butter, etc.
 - How it works: Use a container. Fill it to desired amount. Weigh it. Label it.
 - Why switch? Avoid so many individually packaged items.





- Containers
 - Fine mesh produce bag or cotton sack
 - Excellent for grains, nuts, and snack mix
 - Buy in this, and store in another container at home
 - Mason jars
 - Excellent for dry goods and powders
 - Pre-weigh to avoid paying for heavy container
 - Whole Foods, Sprouts
 - Can often find mason jars in thrift shops for cheap. No need to buy brand new ones.

- Reuse old containers
 - Bulk aisle provided- usually plastic bag or small plastic container
 - Place new sticker over the previous one over and over again
 - Can easily reuse the original plastic container dozens of times, saving that many other single use bags/containers.



- Other food item containers (yogurt, cottage cheese, etc)
- Why switch? Bringing your own container is an easy way to eliminate single use plastic waste.
- Deli (lunch meat and cheese)
 - Bring your own food storage container large enough for your order
 - Wrap in butcher paper if you don't have your container with you
 - Why switch? Prevents single use plastic bag use. Note: Insist. Insist. Insist. The workers may have never done this any other way. Ask them to do it this new way. Then explain why. If they need to get their manager, so be it. Explain again and insist again.





- Meat
 - Own container/ Wrap in butcher paper
 - Even your sustainable seafood!



- Bakery
 - Fresh baked loaves of bread, bagels, rolls, etc.
 - Fine mesh produce bag, cotton sack, or other reusable bag
 - Move to a plastic bag that can be washed and reused as your bread bag at home for each new loaf.
 - Why switch? Prepackaged bread comes in one, sometimes two plastic bags.



- Look for products that are plastic free in packaging (Glass, canned, cardboard, etc)
- Visit a local farmer's market
 - [Houston Farmers Markets](#)
- Food Prep
 - What do you consistently buy almost every time you visit the grocery store that is ALWAYS wrapped in plastic? See if you can make it yourself!!!
 - "Milk"
 - Nut or oat milk made at home
 - [Almond Cow product info](#)



- Food processor/blender recipes
- [Oat milk recipe](#)
- [Almond milk recipe](#)
- Hummus
 - Staple food item made from scratch
 - [Hummus recipe](#)



- Bread
 - Baking your own favorite style of bread
 - [Bread recipes](#)
- Food Storage
 - Glass and Silicone storage containers
 - Why switch? Last longer, no petrochemical leaching.
 - [Silicone bag product info](#)
 - [Pyrex container product info](#)
 - DIY Wax fabric wraps
 - [DIY wax fabric wrap video](#)
 - Why switch? Takes the place of plastic wrap or cling wrap to cover food items.
 - Reuse what you have!!!!
 - Save glass jars like from olive oil, jelly, and salsa to use in other ways similar to mason jars
- Laundry
 - Laundry Paste - handmade soap bar that you dissolve in water in whatever container you like
 - "Tangie Waste Free Products" [Tangie waste free product info](#)
 - Why switch? Natural products (no harsh chemicals), zero plastic packaging in product and in shipping, supporting small businesses

- Wool dryer balls - Reduces static and fluffs up clothes, can add essential oil scents to make everything smell nice
 - [Wool dryer ball product info](#)
 - Why switch? Dryer sheets have palm oil and other unnecessary chemicals, zero packaging past first buy and reusable
- On the go
 - Reusable water bottle/mug
 - Stay hydrated and fill it with your favorite beverage, even at cafés and restaurants
 - Food storage containers (like Rubbermade or Tupperware)
 - Keep one or two in your car and use in the place of to-go boxes
 - Reusable and easy to carry around with you
 - Drinking straw - Silicone, metal, glass
 - Keep one in the car and one in purse/bag/locker
 - Utensils - metal, bamboo/wood
 - Keep fork/knife/spoon/chopsticks in car and one in purse/bag/locker
 - Why switch? Eliminates some of the most common single use plastic items
- Bathroom
 - Bar shampoo and conditioner
 - Last a long time and can get different ones based on hair type. Keep in a metal, silicone, or wood dish
 - There are a lot of brands so look for small companies to support, minimal packaging, and good conservation message
 - [Ethique product info](#)



- Homemade shampoo
 - Reused spray bottle with apple cider vinegar, honey and water
 - [Hair treatment recipes](#)
- Bar soap

- Last a long time and can get different ones based on skin type. Keep in a metal, silicone, or wood dish
- There are a lot of brands so look for small companies to support, minimal packaging, and business conservation message
- [Chagrin Valley product info](#)
- Deodorant
 - Paste deodorant in a glass container is easy to apply and plastic free
 - Schmidt's has a recycling club where you can return 5 empty jars and get 1 free: [Schmidt's product info](#)
 - Chagrin Valley has baking soda free jars for people with sensitivities: [Chagrin Valley product info](#)



- Lotion bar
 - Last a long time and comes in a lot of varieties. Keep in metal, silicone, or wood dish
- Coffee body scrub
 - Homemade with used coffee grounds, coconut oil, and preferred essential oils
 - [Body scrub recipe](#)
- Face scrub
 - Homemade with baking soda, water, and preferred essential oils



- Razor
 - Safety razor with metal reusable blades
 - Blades can be used for a long time and then recycled when dull
 - Great for all purposes from face to legs



- Toothbrush
 - Biodegradable bamboo toothbrush
- Toothpaste
 - Experimented with various tooth tablets like Bite and ChewTab, both good
 - [Wel Dental](#)
 - [Bite](#)



- Homemade toothpaste
 - Coconut oil, baking soda, and preferred essential oils
 - [Homemade toothpaste directions](#)

- Handkerchief
 - Easy to wash
 - Why switch? Why waste trees and plastic packaging to blow your nose on a huge tissue that you barely use before throwing away (unless you are sick, then use recycled tissues)
- Recycled toilet paper
 - “Who Gives A Crap” also makes other recycled paper products like paper towels and tissues.
 - Shipped in cardboard box
 - Wrapped in recycled paper, not plastic
 - [Who Gives A Crap product info](#)



We hope you find this resource helpful, at least enough to jumpstart your motivation for Plastic Free July. Many of you may be doing some of these things already. Perhaps you have another solution on common problem. So, please feel free to share some of your own tips and tricks to help stay plastic free during this month and beyond. Best of luck for PFJ!