Waste Prevention

ReUse

Recycling & Composting

Zero-Waste Lifestyle Choices

When we throw garbage away, our trash leaves our lives. But do you ever consider where it goes?

Most often, our garbage gets buried in the Earth at a distant landfill. At every step of an object's lifecycle, from manufacturing, to transport, and to final disposal, our trash creates toxic pollution and uses valuable natural resources and energy.

Waste Prevention, stopping waste before it ever becomes garbage, is the best way to slow this pollution and preserve Earth's natural resources. Zero-Waste is a waste prevention lifestyle.

Stay connected on Facebook
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Tweet us how you
#SayNoToGarbage
@ScnctdyRecycles

More Resources available at
cceschenectady.org/recycling

Questions?
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20 Easy Ways You Can Start Saying NO to Garbage

A Zero-Waste Guide for Families
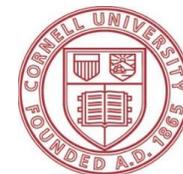
Start Small. Think Big.

1. **Join a community materials exchange.** There are apps online and groups on social media that share old, unwanted items for free! Or start a group of your own by asking your Facebook friends to share their unwanted items.

2. **Choose to use cloth grocery bags.** 160,000 plastic bags are used globally every second. It takes 500 years for a plastic bag to break down in the environment. (theworldcounts.com)

3. **Recycle household film plastics.** Grocery stores accept plastic bags and other film plastics for recycling (bread bags, cereal bags, frozen food bags, shrink wrap plastic etc. can be recycled if brought to a grocery store).

4. **Choose to use a refillable water bottle.** The average American uses over 140 disposable water bottles per year and only recycles less than 50 of them. (banthebottle.net)

5. **Make purchases with future waste in mind.** 31% of what's in the average American garbage can is packaging. Choose to purchase products that come in recyclable packing whenever possible. (center.sustainability.duke.edu)

6. **Choose to use a refillable coffee mug.** If you buy one disposable To-Go cup every day, it adds up to 23 pounds of garbage per year. The Average American office worker uses 500 disposable cups of coffee every year. (carryyourcup.org)

7. **Pack waste-free lunches.** The lunch box is a source of unnecessary waste. Why make trash when you can re-use durable food-ware containers?

8. **Compost food scraps and other biomass.** Food scraps make up about 15% of the solid waste stream and causes the greenhouse gas methane in landfills. Combined with yard waste and some paper products, nearly 50% of the waste stream could be composted into humus-rich soils. It's easy to compost! (epa.gov)

9. **Choose to use cloth instead of disposable paper products.** If every U.S. household used just one less 70 sheet roll of paper towels, it would save 544,000 trees each year. If every U.S. household used 3 less rolls per year, it would prevent 120,000 tons of garbage. Re-use old towels and rags for house cleaning. (thepaperlessproject.com)

10. **Ask your family to stop gift-wrapping on birthdays & holidays.** Even though most wrapping paper is recyclable, the majority of it isn't getting recycled. Gift bags are more sustainable because they can be re-used. There are also cloth options for wrapping gifts that can then be re-used. Ask Google!

11. **Recycle textiles.** 1.4 billion pounds of recoverable fabric and textiles are being thrown away every year in New York alone. You can recycle old towels, linens, throw rugs, purses, and blankets at any clothing and shoe drop off bin. Fabrics can be stained, ripped, missing buttons, etc. (nysar3.org)

12. **Save glass jars.** Re-using clean glass jars (from salsa, spaghetti sauce, etc.) is great for storage and replacing zip-lock bags.

13. **Learn a few recipes for homemade *eco-friendly* cleaners.** It is easy and inexpensive to make effective anti-bacterial household cleaners from products so safe you could eat them! Ask Google! Making green cleaners reduces your household hazardous waste.

14. **Buy in bulk.** Purchasing foods and other goods in large quantities not only saves money on the unit-pricing, but it also reduces the amount of packaging waste. Some stores offer bulk purchasing for rice, cereal, nuts, etc. Avoid purchasing individually wrapped items!

15. **Fix it!** Before trashing something that's broken, try to repair it. There are internet video tutorials for everything now-a-days!

16. **Make donations.** One man's trash is another man's treasure. Habitat for Humanity picks up large furniture, Cabinets, doors, windows, building materials toilets, sinks, etc. for free! The Home Furnishing Program accepts home goods, furniture, and similar donations. Local church groups are another great resource for giving a second life to another family in need.

17. **Close the loop.** Buy recycled products

18. **Be a green party host.** When hosting big parties, use real silverware, plates, glasses, etc. Make finger foods or snacks that don't create garbage. Avoid decorations that are disposable (balloons, confetti, table décor).Make communal family style choice for beverages. Inform your guests of your recycling and composting practices.

19. **Lead by example.** Share your success. Inspire your friends and coworkers to Re-Use and Recycle.

20. **Pick up litter and remove visible recycling from trash bins in public spaces.**

Find more waste reduction ideas by reading "Rethinking Our Waste" the monthly e-magazine published on the CCE Schenectady Webpage under the Recycling tab.