

6 Ways to use Less Plastic and Save Money

Small changes to the way you consume can have a huge impact on the environment and your wallet

Plastic is ubiquitous and while it's an exceedingly useful material, it's now taking its toll on the environment, on animals and on humans too. Plastic breaks down into micro pieces as it degrades and these pieces find their way into everything in the food chain from [plankton](#) to [whales](#). Not only do animals eat plastic and get caught up in it, plastic is harmful to humans too.

Plastics pose a direct toxicity threat from [lead, cadmium, and mercury](#). Plastic is made from known carcinogens such as [Diethylhexyl phthalate \(DEHP\) and BPA](#) and is directly linked to cancers, birth defects, immune system problems, and childhood developmental issues. Curtailing the amount of plastic you consume will help reduce your impact on planet while saving money too.

Don't Suck

Americans use [500 million plastic straws every day](#). Yup, every day! Straws take [around 400 years](#) to decompose and can't be recycled which means that every straw ever produced is still around. Ditch those straws to save money or, if you must, opt for reusable metal, bamboo or paper ones.

Battle of the Bag

Canadians use between 9 and 15-billion plastic bags every year. Plastic bags are a petroleum product, so the embodied petroleum in [8.7 plastic shopping bags is enough to drive 1km](#). Since most stores charge for plastic bags, you will save money when you make your own shopping bags ([get the tutorial here](#)) or buy reusable bags.

Buy in Bulk

Most bulk-food stores allow you to bring your own containers. This means you aren't racking up all that plastic packaging and you're saving money by buying in bulk. [Use reusable glass containers](#) which will help to keep your food fresh for longer so that there's less waste and that means you save more.

Eat Less Take Out

Your take-out meals produce a lot of waste. Forgoing take-out meals means you save money and the environment too. Stock your office kitchen with cutlery and condiments so that, even when you do get take-out, you can ask the restaurant not to include plastic flatware and those little packets of ketchup and mustard.

If you are having food delivered to your home, be sure to tell the restaurant that you don't need cutlery or condiments.

Stop Drinking Bottled Water

[65 Million water bottles](#) end up in the landfill annually. There is [no evidence to suggest](#) that bottled water is safer than tap water. Bottled water plants are only inspected once every three years while municipal water is inspected both before and after treatment. Since bottled water is [240 to 10,000 times](#) more expensive than municipal water, you can save by turning on the tap. If you are concerned about the quality of your tap water, invest in a water filter rather than bottled water.

Quick-Fixes

- Store leftovers in plastic containers or use beeswax paper rather than plastic wrap to save money and use less plastic.
- Unless you're buying a bunch of small individual fruits or veggies like peas or beans, don't use those plastic bags in the veggie aisle. Just go without or invest in reusable mesh bags for your produce.
- Buy a reusable coffee mug and save as most coffee shops give a discount for refills.
- Do you shave? Ditch the disposables and get a razor with disposable blades.

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Source URL (modified on 09/07/2017 - 09:51):

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