



Low Waste Starter Pack

Protecting our environment is becoming more and more crucial to the survival of our planet and thankfully due to a series of high profile initiatives low waste living is getting easier. Although radical change is needed, we advocate that small changes in our consumerism and our attitude to waste can create, and in fact be the catalyst for the bigger changes needed. We want to show how easily changes can be made that benefit the environment and that every single one of us IS in the position to change at least some of our damaging habits and make a difference to the wellbeing of the earth we live on.

We are following #plastic free July and have a 31 day challenge to reduce our environmental impact, we hope to demonstrate how easily changes can be made, provide a real and honest insight into difficulties we may have along the way and support others in there journey to low waste.

Our Low waste starter pack contains 31 daily challenges, information on low waste shopping, eating, support networks and hints and tips on how we can make a BIG difference with small changes.



LETS GET STARTED.....

If you follow any blogs or communities dedicated to zero waste you will see that everyone has a different approach and that is absolutely fine, the aim of the game is to reduce our consumerism and waste. However you choose to do that is your prerogative and 100% supported by us.

We have a certain view, which is what we provide here but we are always open to suggestions and keen to hear of any other ways of reducing our footprint, it can be a minefield so there will always be changes in how we approach low waste living. Try not to get bogged down in all the methods just do what works for you.

LIVE BY THE R'S.....

Here at the Bottle Top we follow the 6 R's and do so in the order below...



1.REMEMBER-

This is perhaps the most important of all the R's, as much as we are showing how easily we can change our habits, we understand that life sometimes throws us a spanner or two and that information is coming at the rate of knots, as a result we don't always follow best laid plans or make the right choices. That is ok. Don't get bogged down with guilt, just stop, take a deep breath and try again.

It will be helpful throughout your journey to have some clear motivations for going low waste have them written down somewhere- perhaps pinned on the fridge, not only will it pick you up on days you feel like you might slip but it will mean you are more likely to continue once July is over.

Here are some examples that may help get you started with your own.

- I love how beautiful the ocean is and the life it holds, by 2050 it is predicted it will have more plastic than fish.
- 2.5 billion coffee cups are thrown away each year, it takes me around 10 minutes to drink a coffee but 30 years for the coffee cup to degrade when I'm done.



2. REFUSE-

Refuse what you don't need. A good example of this is takeaway food, we might order a sausage roll from the bakery that comes in a paper bag, we walk out the door and before we get to the end of the road the sausage roll has been eaten and the bag goes in the bin. What did we need the bag for?

3. REDUCE-

There are lots of ways to reduce what you consume but the biggest way is to use what you already have or use something someone else has. Need an outfit for a night out? Get something from your wardrobe rather than buy new, borrow a dress from a friend if you don't have anything.

If you are tempted by an impulse purchases walk away and come back at another time, if the second time round you still think you need it then go for it. 9 times out of 10 you won't buy it.

There are lots of ways we can reduce what we buy so think of your own and jot them down. The more we get into the habit of exploring other avenues the easier it will become.



4. REUSE-

Reuse, repair or repurpose what you can. Whether you use a dress more than once and wear it in a different way or use reuse a shopping bag. Start getting into the habit of finding alternative uses for the things you already have.

5. RECYCLE-

You will notice this is almost at the bottom of the list. If you have seen the WAR ON PLASTIC episode by the BBC you will understand some of the issues with recycling, if you have not yet seen it, look it up, it's a very easy to digest look at some of the issues we face when it comes to consumerism and recycling.

In a nutshell 90% of what we call "recyclable" is not actually recycled and often ends up in illegal dumpsites in countries like Malaysia. Recycling is very much a last resort due to its ineffectiveness. On a side note did you know that production companies only pay 10% of the cost of dealing with waste? That means 90% is covered by you and me.



6. ROT-

Organic material can be added to a compost bin or worm house.

We recommend finding your own favourite blogs and books to support your low waste journey. You will find lots of complex information regarding low waste living and in particular on how a “proper” compost should be but honestly, it doesn’t need to be complicated at all. If you don’t have room for compost facilities ask around and see if you know anyone who may be able to take your organic waste for you.

All in all what we really want is for you to make changes you will stick too and have an open mind when it comes to your low waste journey. Not everything will work for you and that’s ok, do what you can at your own pace and if you nail them all then even better. If you need a pep talk, some more info or just want to tell us how you are getting on then please feel free to reach out, we would love to hear from you.



31 Days to Low Waste

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	Take stock	Get prepared	Zero waste starter kit	Declutter	Apps	Visit your local market & shop local
Reusable shopping bags	Reusable water bottles	Hashtags, blogs & businesses	Reduce fast food	Go paperless	Meal plan	Write a low waste food shopping list
Go food shopping	Visit a pre loved shop	Save your veggie scraps	Say no to freebies	Repair or repurpose something	Get outside	Reusable wipes & cloths
Make your own	Say no to straws	Swap your toothcare	Save water	Food share	Grow your own	Review your home efficiency
Rent or borrow	Recycle	Review your waste & tell your friends	Choose a Swap			



DAY ONE- TAKE STOCK

Today is all about looking at your day to day life and taking stock of how much waste you actually have and more importantly looking at how you might be able to reduce it. This task is not designed to make you feel guilty but to highlight how much you do consume.

We are not perfect so don't worry if it seems like a lot just know that doing this challenge is the first step to living a better low waste life. Take a note of what surprises you and how you feel about what you have. If you would like, please share your thoughts, pictures and feelings in the dedicated LOW WASTE JULY Facebook group or use the hashtag #TBTlowwastechallenge.

Collect all the single use items from your home and your current rubbish pile and take stock of what you have. Make a note of how many items you have that will soon make their way to the bin and try to identify the biggest area in which you find single use items.

Have a think about alternatives to what you have and write them down.



DAY TWO- GET PREPARED

So yesterday we took a closer look at how much potentially wasteful items we had in the house- today is about getting prepared so we don't need to purchase these kinds of items again.

Have a look at what you found yesterday, is any of it suitable to potentially use again?

Think margarine tubs that can be cleaned and used as a box for snacks or a glass jar that can be repurposed for collecting rice from you nearest bulk buy shop. Shampoo bottles for refills, brown bags for veg and so on. Keep it, clean it and remember to save anything you are still yet to used because further into the challenge we will be doing a low waste food shop and you may need them!



DAY THREE- LOW WASTE STARTER KIT

Get together a small starter kit to make life easier when you are out and about (this is one of the worst times for getting caught out and creating large amounts of unnecessary waste) Our recommendation for a low waste starter kit is as follows:

Reusable water bottle

Reusable Coffee cup

Bees Wax wraps (instead of cling film)

Steel/bamboo/rice husk lunch box

Reusable straw

Reusable shopping bag

Reusable cutlery

Jars

Cloth wipes/napkins/flannels



DAY FOUR- DECLUTTER

Decluttering is important for starting your low waste living so you can identify and redistribute your resources. We need to start looking at the things in our home as resources and not disposable possessions.

Anything that you no longer have a use for or that is sitting in the house and doing nothing may very well be useful to someone else. If its been there for say a year without being used then you can safely say that it is not needed.

Consider starting a group chat with your friends or a monthly meet up and swap your surplus resources, sell it on eBay or do a car boot. Every time we reuse something we are stopping another item entering the cycle.

The other big benefit of decluttering our homes is that we are able to actually see what we own. How many times have you dug out a box from under the bed and found something you forgot you had? If we know we have it we can start thinking of ways to use it and perhaps avoid buying something when we already have suitable options at home.



DAY FIVE- APPS

There is an APP for everything and we have provided a short list of useful APPS below. This list is in no way conclusive so feel free to dig out your own and let us know about your best finds.

PINTREST- I love this one- I could spend hours and hours on Pinterest. Here you will find an array of inspiration and ideas for how to upcycle and repurpose items. There is also plenty information on how you may go about making something yourself and lots of lovely blogs with meal ideas and recipes for not just food but homemade cosmetics and cleaning products.

ReGAIN- Did you know 50 trailers worth of unwanted clothes and accessories end up in landfill every day? That's why retailers like Misguided, Boohoo, Asics, New Balance and Superdry have signed up to reGAIN, an app that offers discounts on new buys in exchange for shoppers shipping them their old items. Clothing will then be reused, recycled, upcycled or used as combustibles for energy production

TOO GOOD TO GO- Active in nine European countries, this app helps to combat the issue of waste by providing a platform for stores to sell their surplus produce at a reduced price - think food delivery with a green discount. Magic bags are an awesome way to save food from going in the bin.



NO WASTE-With a receipt and barcode scanner, expiration reminders and a meal-planning feature, this food inventory app helps you to reduce waste, unnecessary purchases and to save money.

EBAY- eBay probably needs little explanation but deserves a spot on the list, it's a real treasure trove and no doubt if you need it EBAY will have it, make sure you filter your searches for preloved items only.

TAP- Once you pop your location into the TAP app it pops up a map with all your local water refill stations so when you are out and about with your refillable water bottle you can top up so no more buying plastic bottle of water

REFILL- This is another water refill app but this time you get a £5 voucher to use towards a Chillys reusable water bottle. I like to have both as sometimes ne stations pop up on one app and not the other.

OLIO- Olio helps to connect neighbours and local retailers so surplus food can be shared and not disposed of. This also works as a trading platform with other items on offer such as garden tools and kitchen appliances.

SHPOCK- This is an online market place, a little bit like EBAY you will find reams and reams of preloved treasure and the best bit is there is no bidding auctions so you don't have to worry about missing something you have your eye on.



DAY SIX- SHOP LOCAL/VISIT THE MARKET

Shopping locally means not only do you support small business and contribute to your local economy but also it quite often means you cut out the middle man and therefore less road mileage. Another great benefit of shopping small and locally is that you can make requests and get to know your business owners, why not ask your local green grocer to provide unwrapped fruit and veg or if you can return plastic punnets.

If you are local to us at the bottle top we have plenty of unwrapped fresh produce and pantry items, EVEN BETTER today is the monthly Ruddington Market day. Catch it and its wonderful stall holders on The White Horse from 9am-12.30pm. Get chatting to your business owners and tell them what you want from them.



DAY SEVEN- REUSABLE SHOPPING BAGS

As we noted above you do not need to go out a buy a reusable shopping back- its likely you already have one or can make one from material at home, if you don't then ask a friend If they have a spare. If you do go and buy new opt for fabric bags and not plastic bags for life.

Having a few different shapes and sizes will be useful but start simple for now and grow your supply according to your shopping habits. Its tempting to buy a "KIT" but try to resist this until you know what you actually need.

One of the biggest difficulties with shopping bags is being prepared enough to remember to take them out with you. Today we are going to prepare better and what we want you to do is pop your reusable bags in the car ready, by the front door where you are going to see it before you leave the house, pop one in the office at work and in you handbag too, that way you will never get caught out again.



DAY EIGHT- REUSABLE WATERBOTTLES

If you are prone to stocking up on plastic bottled water, then this low waste lifestyle switch will reduce a considerable amount of your waste and save you money. The UK alone uses 7.7 billion plastic water bottles every year. Most of which end up in landfill.

We already have our bottle in our low waste starter kit and you should have the refill APPS and that's all you need to give up plastic water bottles. If you are out and about but the APP has not refill stations listed pop in to a café and ask if they will refill it for you, even better tell them about the app.



DAY NINE- HASHTAGS/BLOGS/BUSINESSES

Surrounding yourself with like minded people and being in the know are the best ways to train yourself to live a low waste life. So get on the laptop and search Instagram for low waste hashtags, businesses and blogs. That way you will not only have a go to place to talk about your journey and ask for information on law waste living but when you switch on your phone your feed will be full of inspiration and motivation for low waste living.

We have some favourites but its all about what works for you. You will find thousands upon thousands of blogs and businesses talking about a whole range of topics, this can be overwhelming so pick your battles and tackle what is important to you right now. Find the blog that is talking about the things you are interested to and you can come back to the others when you move to the next phase of your low waste living.

if hashtags and blogs are not for you don't worry, find a book or a podcast instead (remember to ask around to see if someone has a book they are no longer using before buying a new one)



DAY TEN- REDUCE FAST FOOD

How many times have you walked down the road past discarded takeaway boxes? Think about your last trip to a fast food outlet, your food is usually wrapped in paper with plastic cutlery and a single use cup. Fast food containers account for almost 50% of the litter in our oceans.

Vote with your feet and stop eating there, not only will it reduce waste significantly but it will also be better for your health too!



DAY 11- GO PAPERLESS

Almost all of our bills and receipts can be provided digitally and in fact for some companies you are now charged a fee for paper copies, sometimes you won't know you are being charged. Contact your mailing companies and request them to switch you to paperless billing. If you own a business you can use handy apps to collect all your expense without the need for paper.

At the bottle top we have no paper receipts unless requested and everything you purchase can be emailed to you instead- this facility is available in more and more retail outlets so don't forget to tell the shop assistant you don't need your receipt.



DAY 12- MEAL PLAN

Write a meal plan for your week, include breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks. The benefits of doing this is that we can not only avoid impulse purchases but we know exactly how much of everything we need and no more food going to waste. Also it means that we can plan our shopping trips.

One thing that low waste living means is that we may have to visit multiple shops for what we need, particularly if we are avoiding plastic. By writing a meal plan we know where we need to go and what containers and bags we need to take with us. Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.

The other huge bonus of meal planning is that it saves us money! Research shows that shopping with a set list means we buy less. WINNING!

Get writing your meal plan, why not include a veggie option one evening and share with us what you are cooking, A plant based diet is a good way to reduce your environmental impact but don't worry we aren't saying everyone should suddenly quit animal products but reducing your intake and having a flexible attitude to the food you eat is a fast and effective way of reducing your footprint.

Pinterest is a great place to find meal ideas.



DAY 13- SHOPPING LIST

Yesterday you did the meal plan now write the shopping list- include the weight and amounts of items you need so we don't over buy. You will also need to write down a plan where you are going to buy the items from and what you will need to take with you. Containers for meat, jars for pasta and spices, bags for carrying and so on.

Don't forget to check out your apps to see what is already available in your area.



DAY 14- GO SHOPPING

This is the fun day, it's a great feeling when you do a low waste shop so enjoy it.

There will be some things packaged try not to worry just do your best and check out the packaging for places you can recycle them.

While your out and about keep the conversation going and ask the store owner if they can provide low waste items for you.

Teracycle (online) lists drop off points for usually not yet recycled items, The Bottle Top are currently collecting baby food pouches, crisps packets and confectionary, give them a quick clean, keep the lids on and drop them into the shop. The bonus is everything we successfully recycle equals a donation to charitable causes. If you have something you can recycle then why not sign up to a scheme yourself and collect items in your own community- many of the schemes are free and postage is too!

Don't forget us on your shopping trip, we have a number of plastic free staples, just drop us a message for our current stock holding. **DON'T FORGET YOUR CONTAINERS** and lets us know how your shopping trip went!

TOP TIP- add your products to your no waste app as you go so you never have food going out of date again



DAY15- VISIT A PRELOVED SHOP

Ruddington has an array of charity shops with some lovely preloved items. Check them out and see what you might find. Fast fashion is a huge contributor to waste and emissions so by shopping preloved we are taking items out of production in the first place and out of landfill.

If you are not local don't worry you will find preloved shops on almost any high-street in the country. You don't have to buy a thing if you don't need anything but still take a look. What we want is for you to break the cycle and see what preloved shops have to offer. When you are inside we promise you will love them.

If you are in need of a new outfit or item then ask your family and community first, organise a clothes swap or a toy library. Ruddington has its very own children's clothing library where you can rent preloved children's clothes for a returnable deposit.



DAY 16- SAVE YOUR VEGGIE SCRAPS

Throughout the week, as you prep vegetables, save celery tops, carrot ends (not the leafy green parts— they may lend a bitter flavour), the ends of onions, cauliflower cores, garlic cloves that have begun to dry out, the ends of green beans, tomato cores, squash innards, vegetable peels and so on. Pop them into the freezer and when you have enough make vegetable stock. You will find a recipe in the back of this pack.



DAY 17- SAY NO TO FREEBIES

Whether it's a pen, a party bag or a kids toy if you don't need it say no. If we accept these things we increase the demand for them and more will be made and more will be thrown away. If you need it then cool but if you don't. Politely say no thanks



DAY 18- REPAIR OR REPURPOSE SOMETHING

Got a broken zip on your jacket? Instead of getting a new one find someone who can replace it. Better yet get on the internet and find out how to do it yourself. You tube has a how to video for everything.

Our generation is becoming less handy by the day and this leads to an incredible amount of waste. Fixing something your self gives you great satisfaction.

If you really cant do it then why not find your local repair café- We have a couple In Nottingham and watch this space for one in Ruddington soon.



DAY 19- GO OUTSIDE

Go for a walk, instead of driving to the shop use your feet and a backpack.

Walk along a nature trail and forage for blackberries or stroll along the river. If we are opting to use our feet we are not polluting the air with carbon emissions. If we plan outdoor nature walks to entertain the kids we are not using the copious amounts of electricity and energy we would be in a soft play centre.



DAY 20- REUSABLE WIPES AND CLOTHS

If you have not yet seen it then watch the war on plastic BBC series, It highlights the issues of wipes in particular. Did you know that wipes are made with huge amounts of plastic? NO? I would not be surprised if you didn't know because plastic is not listed as an ingredient on the packaging. SAD BUT TRUE.

You can substitute wipes for cloths and wet bags pretty easily and some companies like cheeky wipes even supply starter packs so you can hit the ground running.

I would suggest you make your own first. You can pretty much make them from any kind of fabric you have but if you don't want to then why not ask a friend or support a small business. Etsy have some wonderful reusable cloths and some companies may even send you samples to try which you like best.



DAY 21- MAKE YOUR OWN

Pick something to make and get cracking, A good suggestion would be a household cleaning product. Back in the day everyone would make their own but we have moved into such a consumerist era that we have forgotten how to,

We have included a recipe for household cleaner but you can find plenty online to suit your needs.

It a great idea to stock up on bicarbonate of soda, citric acid and white vinegar,

Show us your makes in our Facebook group or tag us in your social media posts, we would love to see what you have been up to.



DAY 22- SAY NO TO STRAWS

Easy peasy lemon squeezy. We seem to have forgotten that straws are a luxury, most of us don't need them.

if you are eating out or drinking in the pub, order your drinks and tell your waiter to deliver it straw free. Its great that lots of places now use paper straws, it's a move in the right direction but what we really want is no straws,

That doesn't mean you can use one, just purchase a reusable straw- we recommend bamboo as this is one of the most sustainable materials around, don't forget to pick up a cleaning brush too.

The bottle top has a small selection but you can pick these up from lots of online retailers too,



DAY 23- SWAP YOUR TOOTHCARE

Toothcare is pretty much overrun with plastic and more plastic, from toothbrushes to dental floss. There are however plenty of alternatives available on the market now which is great news. From glass jar pastes and natural fibre floss don't be scared to give it a go.

Our current favourites are dental tabs and bamboo toothbrushes, we stock a small selection in store as a starting point but we recommend you shop around and if you are anything like us we have specific oral care needs.

Check out your toothcare products and have a look at what alternatives you want to try and when your current batch runs out purchases something plastic free.



DAY 24- SAVE WATER

You can save water in lots of ways and we have a few suggestions below but we want to get you thinking about your water use and come up with ways you can reduce the amount you get through. Let's us know your ideas so we can share it with our fellow low wasters!

- take showers not baths
- flush less- did you know each flush uses 10ltr of water?
- wash your clothes less- do you really need to wash every day?
- boil only the water you need for a brew- don't just fill the kettle up
- collect rain water
- turn the tap off during teeth brushing
- wash by hand not by dishwasher (fill the sink up)
- use pasta water for watering your plants
- skip the shower (we don't always need to wash every day)



DAY 25- FOOD SHARE

You have the apps use them. Check out who has what in your area and plan your meals accordingly. Better yet if you have left overs offer them up too. If no one shows an interest on the app share it with your neighbours and friends. If you have a swap group going on then add food too.

Food waste is a major problem in the UK yet the numbers of people going hungry is on the rise, do your bit to change this. A friend of mine without fail every year takes her left over Christmas dinner to the homeless, find ways to use your food so it doesn't end up in the bin.

Make sure you use your no waste app to track the contents of your cupboards.



DAY 26- GROW YOUR OWN

Growing your own food is one of the most rewarding, sustainable ways you can get package free produce into your kitchen and you cant get much more local than your own back yard.

Get your compost going, it doesn't have to be complicated, you will find lots of lovely information on how to layer this and do that but you don't have to be a pro.

almost 2/3 of your household trash can go on a compost and the soil gold it produces will do awesome things to your veg patch. Below is a quick list of what can go in a compost bin:

- cardboard
- clean paper
- coffee grounds
- egg shells
- nutshells
- flowers and plants
- food scraps (stay away from things like bread as it attracts pest)
- teabags



There are lots of places you can get a list of compost friendly items so if you are not sure just give it a quick google.

While you are building your compost you can get planting some seeds, if you aren't a confident grower then start small- chillies are a good option and can be grown on your windowsill.



DAY 27- REVIEW YOUR HOME EFFICIENCY

There are a few things we can do here:

Firstly have look at your energy company and its sustainability ethos, shop around and see if there are any better options out there and if you switch let your old company know why as this may encourage them to up their game.

Secondly most companies offer a range of ways in which you can track you energy usage, opt for apps rather than gadgets where you can. There us nothing like seeing your bill go up to motivate you to reduce your use.

Switch off plugs when they aren't in use, read more books and watch less TV, make use of daylight hours, dry your washing on the line and opt for jumpers and blankets before turning on the heating.

If you have any other energy saving tips, give us a shout we would love to hear about it.



DAY 28- RENT OR BORROW

If you don't have something you need borrow it. Want a new book to read, ask around the office. Going Camping? Borrow a tent

We have so much already in circulation we do not need to buy new items most of the time, If you get yourself organised and plan ahead usually you can source a lend of something from someone. It used to be the norm that you would knock on your neighbours door and ask to borrow a whisk but these days our sense of community had drifted and we seem afraid to ask when in actual fact most of us wouldn't care if the neighbour asked to borrow something. I know I for one would love the opportunity to get to know each other more.



DAY 29- RECYCLE

We put this at the end of the challenge on purpose. Recycling is full of cloak and dagger practices and itself used energy so needs to be the last thing we do, If we reduce our consumerism and reuse what we have the need for recycling will be minute

Think of it this way, if the bath over runs with water and floods the house we don't spoon the water off the floor back into the bath. What we do is switch the tap off. Recycling is no the answer but inevitably we will have waste no matter how hard we try so we should recycle what we can to avoid it going in to landfill.

So look at your waste and sort out your recycling, don't forget TERACYCLE schemes and regain too.



DAY 30- REVIEW

What have we got left in our waste bins and how does that compare to your waste at the beginning of the challenge? Let us know how you got on and tell your friends about the challenge. Feel free to review the challenge on our Facebook page.



DAY 31- CHOOSE A SWAP

Today is the last day and now we hand over to you. What other changes can you make? What waste did you have left at the end of the challenge, take a look and swap one of those things for a low waste alternative.





Make your Own

Basic Shampoo Recipe

Equal parts of water & unscented castile soap (like Dr. Bronners)
a few drops of essential oils

Optional: a few drops of olive oil, tea tree oil

Suggestion: Make in small batches until you find a recipe that works for you.
You can also buy shampoo bars - not DIY, but plastic-free and they work great.



Basic Toothpaste

2/3 c. baking soda

1 - 2 tsp. sea salt

10 - 15 drops of essential oils - some possibilities: peppermint, cinnamon, spearmint

You can use the above as a powder or you can add a little bit of water and make a paste. Have a spoon by the container so you apply to brush with a spoon,



Basic ingredients to clean most things

Distilled white vinegar - buy in a glass jar

Baking soda

Essential oils - tea tree, lavender & lemon

Castille soap

Small rags for clean up instead of paper towels

Small rags instead of sponge (Use a clean rag daily. Have a container in the kitchen to throw rags.)



VEGETABLE STOCK

Ingredients

Vegetable scraps

Water

Salt (optional)

1. Throw the scraps into a large pot and add water. I don't completely cover the scraps with water because after you cook them for a few minutes, they shrink down and become immersed in liquid.
2. Simmer the scraps for about half an hour. You can add salt now but I prefer to make this unsalted and add the salt later to whatever I decide to cook.
3. Strain the scraps. I set a metal colander inside a metal bowl and dump everything into the colander. Lift out the colander and reserve the scraps for the compost pile.
Pour the broth into jars. I have a handy funnel with a strainer in it but it doesn't catch the super fine particles. You can also use cheesecloth.

