

Living With Less Plastic

[JOAG Tip of the Month](#)

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Look around, plastic is everywhere. The problem with plastic is that it never truly goes away. It takes a long time break down and can contain dangerous chemicals. Making small changes in your daily use can add up to big impacts on our planet and our health!

Why reduce plastic?

- In the USA, < 8% of post-consumer plastic is recycled.¹
- Plastic is usually not recycled more than once; rather it is “downcycled” into fibers used for textiles, carpet or fleece.²
- 8 million metric tons of plastic waste go into the ocean every year.¹
- By 2050, it is expected there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish.¹
- Plastic broken down into small particles pollute our water supply and enter our food chain.³
- Most single use plastic contains chemicals which can disrupt hormone balance in the body. Some has been linked to certain types of cancers, infertility and neurological disorders.³

¹ <https://www.azulitaproject.org/>;

² <https://earth911.com/business-policy/how-many-times-recycled/>

³ <http://environment.yale.edu/magazine/fall2009/the-problem-with-plastics/>;

⁴ <https://www.mnn.com/lifestyle/responsible-living/stories/16-simple-ways-reduce-plastic-waste>; <https://wellnessmama.com/58889/plastic-water-bottle-alternatives/>;

Ways to reduce plastic:⁴

- ♦ **Say NO to single-use straws.** Stop sucking and start sipping! Plastic straws cannot be recycled. Ask your server or drive through attendant not to bring you one. If you can't do without one, purchase a reusable one made of glass or stainless steel.
- ♦ **Use your own shopping bags.** Keep them in your car or office. Don't have one? [Learn to make your own](#) out of an old t-shirt.
- ♦ **Bring your own coffee mug and ditch the K-cup.**
- ♦ **Carry a reusable water bottle.** Help the planet and your wallet!
- ♦ **Switch bathroom soap bottles for bars.**
- ♦ **Switch to a bamboo toothbrush; bamboo is *trendy*!**
- ♦ **Stop with single use cutlery and eat-in more often.** Cooking at home cuts out the need for disposable cutlery. If you get take out, ask for no plastic cutlery and use your own at home.
- ♦ **Skip produce bags and plastic baggies.** Go the extra mile and get some cotton produce bags when you shop, or [make your own](#)! Alternatives for plastic storage can be glass mason jars or stainless steel containers.
- ♦ **Inspire others and support a plastic free movement!** Spread the word to your friends, family, peers. Give reusable gear as gifts! Some organizations that work to reduce plastic and protect the environment include:

[Plastic Pollution Coalition](#)

[Plastic Tides](#)

[Save the Waves Coalition](#)

[The Surfrider Foundation](#)

