



#52WeeklyActions to Save the Planet

We all want to do our share to help the planet but when it comes to integrating more eco-friendly habits into our lives, it often seems very overwhelming to get started. So, for this New Year, we're offering Mother Earth a gift and doing you a favour by making this easy to implement!

How does it work? We've compiled a list of 52 simple weekly gestures that you can do to help the environment and we will help you implement them one at a time, week-over-week throughout the year!

To make implementation even easier – join our Facebook Group for weekly updates and tips:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/52weeklyactions/>

And make sure to share your success and tips using the hashtag

#52weeklyactions

Thank you for caring & see you on the greener side!
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AWARENESS

#1. Spreading the word

Let's get started to an important but very, very easy step - share this and help us build awareness! Engage your relatives, your friends, your community, your neighbours, your colleagues...And use the hashtag **#52weeeklyactions** to spread the word so we can change the world together!

#2. Reducing over recycling

Most are surprised to hear that recycling often pollutes just about as much as throwing stuff away. It may sound like it's ok but it is diverting us from actually reducing our consumption by having us not feel guilty as we "recycle". Think of paper for example and the amount of chemicals that are released in water as the paper is made into a paste and bleached to be recycled... So this week, our focus is on being aware that one of the key actions we need to take is to focus first on REDUCING our usage of materials. Start small, for example by picking items in the supermarket which require less packaging and re-use as much as you can before buying new.

#3. Did you know?

Most countries also recycle the following: mobile phones, old medications, glasses (prescription and non-prescription), nylon stockings, corks, crayons, markers, stylos and other plastic pens, ink cartridges, CDs/DVDs, and much more! Shops/brands also do recycling campaigns and collect items for charities. Take a few minutes to research what is collected near you and ideally add the info to your recycling box.

#4. Recycle or dispose properly of other articles

Batteries, light bulbs, electronics, chemicals, aerosols, etc. need to be disposed of differently either because of their nature and inherent risks (e.g. batteries) or some can be reused in some ways like electronics parts. To make this easier for you, have a box in your storage area where you can collect all of those and once or twice per year, you can bring them to the appropriate disposal service. If you receive leaflets from your municipality about what items can be recycled and where to take them – it's always a good idea to tape it on the box or nearby.



REDUCE

#5. Use less soap products

Most products, especially the pumps and tubes such as hand soap dispensers and toothpaste tubes are specifically designed to pour much more than needed. So, be mindful when using hand soap, toothpaste, shampoo, shower gel or other. The less you use, the less goes into water / nature and the less plastic bottles/tube you end up using and throwing away at the end of the day!

#6. Limit your online purchases

As practical or cheaper as it is, shipping from online shops uses a lot of packaging material and international transportation contributes to increasing CO2 emissions. As much as possible, support your local shops by buying from them! And if you do buy online, avoid single item purchases.

#7. Use refills

Buy refillable pouches for your household soaps (e.g. hand soap, shower gel and household cleaning products) instead of a dispenser bottle or even better switch to a soap bar when possible.

#8. Save on packaging

Where possible bulk can help saving packaging. In particular, this is easily done with non-perishable products. Look at the zero-waste options nearby and contact the Zero-Waste association of your country for tips and addresses.

#9. Refuse

Say no to brochures or any paper, free gifts or others that you know will end up in the bin. It is especially relevant during corporate events, sales and promotions...for which branding is important. How many free pens do we receive but never use?! And if you do not have this "no advertising sticker on your mailbox, now would be a good time to add it!



REUSE & RECYCLE

#10. Recycle fabrics

Put a bag or box in your laundry room to collect old fabrics and clothes instead of throwing them away. There are an increasing number of places where fabrics are collected to be recycled. Look for the specific bins that collect fabrics in your neighbourhood. Do not hesitate also to contact your local church or associations that will share/donate clothes.

#11. Reuse-recycle metal hangers

Bring your metal hangers back to the dry cleaner or recycle them with other metals.

#12. Buy second hand

Give a second life to items by focusing on purchasing second-hand products. In return make sure you also donate and/or resell what you no longer need

#13. Fix, repurpose & reuse

Try prolonging the lifecycle of your products by having them fixed instead of getting rid of them and find creative ways to reuse and repurpose them (Pinterest can be a good source of ideas for repurposing). Also, check out local "repair cafés" and learn new skills while fixing your products!



BATHROOM

#14. Ditch the disposables

Reduce waste by replacing cotton pads used for make-up removal with reusable sponges and fabric pads (you can find them in zero-waste shops or you can make them yourself with old fabric). Replace tampons for menstrual cups and disposable pads for reusable underwear options, purchase a razor with a replaceable blade instead of disposable razors, purchase monthly contact lenses instead of dailies, etc.

#15. Ditch plastic

Replace plastic based items with items made of biodegradable materials. For example choose ear swabs which are cotton based (e.g. without a plastic stem), use bamboo toothbrushes and also look for silk dental floss or at least for dental floss with the least packaging.

Even better opt for plastic free options such as shampoo in the form of a soap bar. Also, ditch the fancy disposable dispensers bottles, miniatures and samples as much as possible as they are not recyclable.

#16. Check the chemicals in your products

A lot of products used daily contain chemicals that are known to be toxic and harmful to humans and when released in nature through water they are also toxic for the environment. Parabens, phthalates, toluene (listed as benzene, methylbenzene, phenylmethane and toluol), triclosan (found in antibacterial products). In addition, scrub salts and any soap or gel containing beads or pearls are very harmful to the environment and should be avoided.



FOOD & GROCERIES

#17. Replace bottled water with a reusable bottle

Tap water is in many places of very good quality and can be used instead of bottled water. If judged necessary, favour a water filter before resorting to bottled water.

#18. Ditch the Nespresso and capsules

Yes, they are "recyclable" but recycling such products pollutes just as much as throwing them away. The material needed to create the million capsules used daily also generates a huge demand on natural resources. Traditional coffee beans have a MUCH lower impact on the environment. And while you are at it, choose for fair trade coffee!

#19. Choose local versus imported products

Buy local products as much as possible as the transport component of imported products is a huge pollution factor.

#20. Reduce your meat consumption

Producing meat is considerably more polluting than alternative non-meat options. We're not saying everyone should become vegetarian but rather we suggest to eat meat in a more sustainable way. For example, eat vegetarian food more often (why not have a meatless day per week?), choose meat from smaller animals / animals with a lower CO2 footprint, choose meals that require smaller amounts of meat, purchase meat from local farms rather than big retailers.

#21. Choose sustainable fishery products

When buying fish, focus on buying fish from sustainable fisheries.

#22. Ditch single use items

Always keep a reusable water bottle or mug instead of buying disposable ones. Use it for instance if you order a take-away coffee, as styrofoam or paper cups used in coffees cannot be recycled.



#23. Choose for recyclable packaging

When faced with various options at the grocery store, choose the one that comes in a container that is recyclable (e.g. favour a glass jar over a plastic one) and pick the one that has the least "container material". Do this first for your most frequent grocery items such as milk, yoghurt, jams, fruits and vegetables.

#24. Ditch the small plastic bags

Replace the plastic bags used for fruits and veggies with washable / reusable veggie bags (laundry bags are often cheaper, easier to find and do a great job!) alternatively, you can use a large bag or basket for all your fruits and veggies and stick the price tags on it.

#25. Choose for less packaging

Choose for products that use the less packaging, especially fruits and vegetables that do not come in plastic containers or that are not wrapped in plastic.

#26. Ditch the straw

Ask for your drinks without a straw or bring your own reusable straw made out of glass or metal.

#27. Buy loose leaf tea

And avoid all teas using excessive individual packaging and while you're at it, make sure the tea leaves come from a fair trade producer!



KITCHEN

#28. Ditch the paper towels, napkins & wet wipes

Replace paper towels, wet wipes and any disposable kitchen sponges and clothes with actual clothes towels that you wash and reuse.

#29. Bulk clean your fruits & veggies

Do so in a filled sink to reduce water and time!

#30. Super easy bio-cleaner

Refill an empty spray bottle with vinegar + water + lemon juice – this is great to clean greasy surfaces in the kitchen.

#31. Run your dishwasher full

Hand wash the larger kitchen items such as pots and pans instead of running the dishwasher half full.

#32. Reuse sponges & towels

Many sponges, scrubs and so-called disposable towels can be cleaned and reused as opposed to being thrown away quickly. Kitchen sponges that start fading off can also be repurposed (e.g. for cleaning shoes, floors, toilets, etc.) considerably extending their lifecycle.

#33. Vinegar as calc dissolvent

Use vinegar instead of more damaging chemical products to dissolve calc.

#34. Ditch the cling wrap

Use storage containers with a lid instead of plastic film to store or wrap food or buy a beeswax film (shower caps are also great to cover bowls and plates and can easily be reused).

#35. Size matters

You can save a lot of energy simply by choosing the right pans. Reduce the cooking time by putting a lid on when boiling water and choose the right plate. When the size of the pan is much smaller than the heated field, you waste a lot of energy.



OUTDOORS & TRAVELING

#36. Carry a set of reusable cutlery

There are good, affordable, reusable ones now on the market in metal and even in wood. When camping/grilling, bring your own cutlery set from home that can be washed and reused. Easily available in camping stores, zero-waste shops and retailers .

#37. Think of your CO2 footprint

Flying is convenient for us, but not for the environment... When planning your travels, think of ways you can reduce your flights or select alternative modes of transportation. There's are also many organisations where you can compensate your Co2 travel foot print, for example myclimate.org.

#39. Choose drought resistant outdoor plants

Choose for plants that need less water to reduce the need for watering, cover the ground of your garden with rocks or woods chips or vegetation to keep the moist.

#40. Water plants in the evening

Daytime sun will dry the water meaning you will need to water more / more often for plants to absorb the same amount. Watering in the evening means your plants have all night to absorb the water.

#41. Harvest water

Use water harvesting leaving buckets under the rain to collect water for your plants.

#41. Don't cut the lawn too short

The shorter the grass, the less it will retain water and the more you will need to water it!



HOME & ENERGY

#42. Unplug unused appliances and/or switch them off at night

Even if they are unused, plugged appliances can consume large amounts of power. In particular, switch-off your wifi router at night (or put it on a timer) – this is also MUCH better from a health perspective!

#43. Check your water boiler temperature

Many boilers are set to a very high temperature which consumes energy uselessly (e.g. if your hot water tap at home is always burning hot, it may be a good idea to reduce your boiler temperature).

#44. Go paperless wherever you can

Bank statement, plane tickets, monthly statements, etc. Visit your bank website as well as all your services suppliers from insurance to healthcare, etc. and choose for email communication and e-statements.

#45. Lights

Take advantage of natural light as long as possible and turn off the light when you leave the room. When possible, change your bulbs into LEDs which will help you reduce your energy consumption

#46 Climatisation / HVAC

Reduce climatisation in rooms that you use less or during periods when you are not at home and considerably reduce it when you are away on holidays. Set your HVAC into a reasonable temperature: increasing/decreasing it by a few degrees will help you save electricity.

#47. No advertising

If you do not yet have a no advertising/flyers sticker on your door or mailbox – NOW is the time to get one!



CHRISTMAS & PARTY IDEAS

#48. Ditch the wrapping paper and ribbons!

Most wrapping paper can't be recycled due to the shiny finish. Make sure you buy non-glitzy wrapping paper that can be recycled. If you can't go without wrapping your gifts in some way, use gift bags or boxes which you can reuse and make sure to have a box or bag to collect them during the party for reuse. Ribbons and bows can also be collected and reused. Alternatively, you can use newspapers to wrap your gifts. You can also wrap gifts in pillow cases and/or children size bed sheets (they are also generally colourful). Use a fabric ribbon that you can reuse.

#49. Reduce the decoration

Less is more; party decoration is certainly fun, but buying new items every time you have a ball is not necessary, especially for annual festivities such as Christmas, Halloween or NYE. Dive into your local second hand store, buy durable decoration and reuse, reuse, reuse. For smaller gatherings, focus on natural eye-catchers (forests are the perfect place to find seasonal decoration) and stay away from cheap plastic knick knock you'll only use once, like balloons. One or two stunning eye catchers have a bigger impact than tons of small, cheap items so less is more in this case.

#50. Ditch the Christmas tree

"But they're recycled!"

Growing Christmas trees means that proper forest is cut to make room for the trees, fertilisers and chemicals as well as considerable amounts of water are used to grow the trees. Many options are available to "adopt/rent" a tree that can be returned to its producer in order to be replanted for a year until the next Holidays. You could also create your own using home-made decorations - get inspired online and let your creative spirit take the lead!

#51. Focus on gifts involving less waste and plastic

Where possible steer clear of gifts involving a lot of packaging, plastic toys and anything that requires the use of batteries (especially for kids toys). To further reduce waste, also investigate second hand options for your gifts.

#52. Focus on gifts that are not material

For example activities, services or time together such as cinema tickets, a museum pass, etc. You can also ask people to donate money to a cause, charity or project on your behalf instead of receiving presents that you do not need / do not want. Reversely, you can donate money on behalf of people - this is especially ideal for people for whom you would normally give smaller gifts. Either way, focusing on donations is also likely to inspire other people to do the same and create a ripple effect!