

How to Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Litter causes a lot of negative impacts to the natural environment. Our discarded items increase the amount of waste in landfills causing them to grow and take up more space. And if materials are not taken to landfill ending up in the natural environment they can cause a lot of harm to wildlife.

Each item that we throw away is made up of different materials which do not degrade or take a very long time to degrade. The diagram shows how long certain items take to degrade.



If everyone practised the three R's of recycling - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle - there would be much less waste in the whole world and less negative impacts on nature!

It is important that the three Rs are followed in the order they are written - reducing is better than reusing, reusing is better than recycling and recycling is better than not doing anything to help nature!



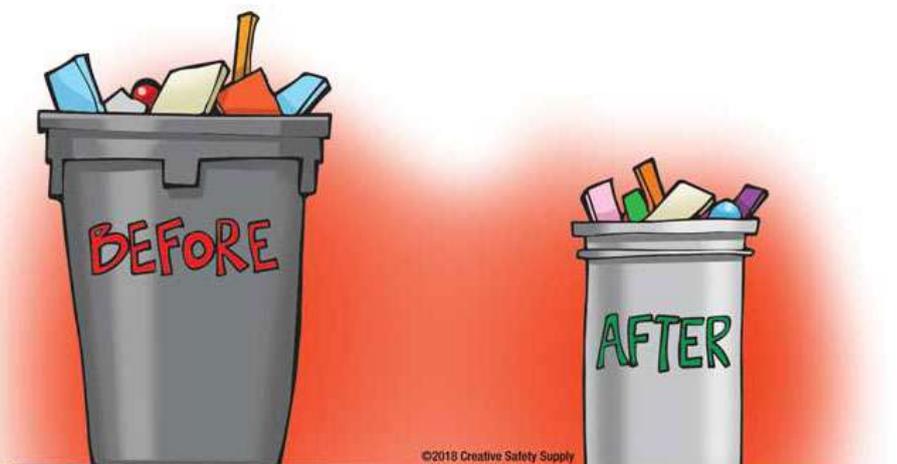
How to Reduce:

This is the most effective of the three Rs. It takes some extra thinking and planning but it is very rewarding when you see your amount of rubbish decrease and when it saves you money!

- ❖ **Buy less stuff** - try and appreciate the things you already have and ask yourself whether you really need more. Instead of buying something new all the time, try to use what you already have. This also helps you and your loved ones to save money!
- ❖ **Stop using single use plastic items** like plastic cutlery, cups, plates and straws.
- ❖ Reduce the amount of **disposable items** you buy and try to buy items you can reuse after their initial use. They may be more expensive initially but you will save money in the long term by not having to replace these items.
- ❖ **Say no to plastic or paper bags** when you can. Take a reusable bag when you go shopping or carry small amounts of items in your hands.
- ❖ **Buy products in bulk** if you can, such as shampoo, laundry detergent, cat litter, pet food, and other household items.
- ❖ Get creative when making food. **Use what you already have** instead of buying new ingredients. Learn how to cook from scratch.
- ❖ **Reduce the amounts you use** - always ask yourself if you can use less of an item (eg. toilet paper, napkins).
- ❖ **Try to use less items that have plastic packaging**, especially when you are given a choice.
- ❖ Stick a sign on your letter box saying '**NO JUNK MAIL**'.
- ❖ When something breaks **try to fix it** or find out if it can be fixed by a professional before throwing it away.

If you have a garden/ outside space:

- ❖ Try to **grow your own food** like your fresh herbs, lettuce, and rocket. This reduces packaging bought from the supermarket.
- ❖ If you have a garden **start a compost bin** for vegetable peelings and dried leaves. This turns into a rich soil that can be put on plants to help them grow.



How to Reuse:

Reuse items as much as you can. By getting a little creative, you can find a use for just about anything!

- ❖ **Buy a reusable flask** to drink from. You could potentially reduce 1460 plastic bottles per year from going to waste¹! Make sure it is 100% stainless steel as this does not rust and therefore lasts longer.
- ❖ When you go food shopping take **reusable shopping bags**. This can help reduce a potential of 208 plastic bags per year²!
- ❖ When you have no choice (you may have forgotten to take reusable shopping bags) **reuse plastic bags** as much as possible! They can be used as garbage can liners, carrying your lunch and for many other things.
- ❖ If you read books try to **buy second hand books** from charity shops or online book stores.
- ❖ **Buy clothes and other items from charity shops** - lots of surprises can be found at charity shops including cheap vintage clothing!
- ❖ **Encourage reusing** by passing on things that you have stopped using to someone else that could find a use for them (eg. books, toys, clothes, stationary, school materials).
- ❖ Wash and **reuse take away food containers** to save left overs in the fridge.
- ❖ **Reuse old envelopes** for writing shopping lists
- ❖ **Reuse glass jam jars** as containers or even cups or ask your local fruit and vegetable shop if they would like you to collect them for their local jams.
- ❖ Be careful when unwrapping gifts and **reuse that same wrapping paper!**
- ❖ Use discarded items in **art & crafts** projects and to create artistic masterpieces!
- ❖ **Donate** old items to charity shops or carry out a car boot or garage sale and make some money! After all "One Person's Treasure is Person's Man's Treasure!".



¹ Based on drinking four 500ml plastic bottles per day.

² Based on using 4 plastic bags per week.

How to Recycle:

Recycling simply involves having separate bins at home, school or your work place for different forms of litter and putting them outside on the appropriate day for collection. Some items may need to be taken to a Civic Amenity site.

In Malta we separate our waste into:

Mixed Waste (Black Lid Bin - Black Bag)		
❖ Adhesive tape	❖ Foil coated packets	❖ Toothpaste tubes
❖ Soiled aluminium foil	❖ Hair (human & animal)	❖ Toothpicks
❖ Baking paper	❖ Ice lolly sticks	❖ Used cleaning materials
❖ Broken ceramics / pyrex	❖ Labels	❖ Used rubber gloves
❖ Dirty food wrappers	❖ Old shoes	❖ Used sponges
❖ Candles	❖ Photographs	❖ Used floor cloths
❖ CDs	❖ Plant pots (if broken)	❖ Wax paper
❖ Cellophane	❖ Polystyrene	❖ Wooden skewers
❖ Cigarette butts & ashes	❖ Sanitary items	❖ Wet wipes
❖ Dirty-take away boxes	❖ Small broken mirrors	
❖ Dust	❖ Stickers	
Mixed Recyclables (Green Lid Bin - Green/Grey Bag)		
❖ Aluminium trays & foil (clean)	❖ Magazines	❖ Plastic containers
❖ Beverage cans	❖ Plastic bottles	❖ Plastic food packets
❖ Cardboard	❖ Margarine tubs (clean)	❖ Plastic bottles
❖ Carton food boxes (clean)	❖ Metal caps	❖ Shampoo bottles (empty)
❖ Cooking oil bottles	❖ Milk and Juice cartons	❖ Shower gel bottles (empty)
❖ Cosmetic containers (clean)	❖ Newspapers	❖ Spray cans (empty)
❖ Detergent bottles (empty container)	❖ Notebooks	❖ Take-away boxes (clean)
❖ Detergent boxes	❖ Paper	❖ Toilet paper rolls
❖ Food cans	❖ Paper bags (clean)	❖ Toiletries (clean containers)
❖ Jar lids	❖ Plastic bags (clean)	❖ Yoghurt containers (clean)
❖ Liquid soap container (empty)	❖ Plastic caps	
Glass (Brown Lid Bin)		
❖ Glass bottles		
❖ Glass jars		
Organic Waste (Small Green Bin - White compostable bag)		
❖ Coffee remains	❖ Soiled napkins	
❖ Leftovers (incl. Cooked food)	❖ Used tea bags & leaves	
❖ Egg and egg shells	❖ Nut shells	
❖ Expired food (without packaging)	❖ Seafood shells	
❖ Fish	❖ Rotten fruit & vegetables	
❖ Garden waste (dried flowers and leaves)	❖ Soiled newspapers	
❖ Fruit & vegetable peels		
❖ Raw food		

Bulky Waste

Some items are too big for normal household waste. These include broken electronic items, furniture, glass panels etc. For these you can:

1. Use the bulky waste collection service which is free of charge to all households. You can contact your Local Council and arrange for it to be picked up.
2. Take it to a Civic Amenity site - Locations of Civic Amenity Sites.

Hazardous Waste

Certain items may pose a risk to human health and the environment if not disposed of a safe and responsible manner. Hazardous waste includes a wide variety of waste such as: chemicals (including empty chemical containers), paint (including empty paint containers), lubricating oils, solvents, batteries, and used light bulbs and neon tubes.

Household hazardous waste should be taken to a Civic Amenity Site- Locations of Civic Amenity Sites

Expired Medicines

- You can drop off your old, unused, unwanted, or expired medicine at an authorised pharmacy (List of Authorised Pharmacies). Here, you can dispose of loose or packaged tablets and capsules, bottled medicines, inhalers and medicinal cream tubes.
- First remove all medicine packaging, information leaflets, and any plastic caps, cups or spoons. These can be disposed of in the green lid bin. Plastic inhaler casings should also be separated from the canister and disposed of in the green lid bin.
- Empty glass medicine bottles can be disposed of in the brown lid bin.
- Tablet and capsule packaging, as well as cosmetic items, must be disposed of in the black lid bin.
- Never take any biohazardous items such as syringes and EpiPen devices to a pharmacy. These must be put into special disposal containers and taken to a Civic Amenity Site Locations of Civic Amenity Sites.

For information on the days different waste is collected contact your local council or take a look at the information provided by Wasteserv's - Wasteserv Domestic Waste.



Benefits of the 3Rs

- ✓ Reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators
- ✓ Reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global climate change
- ✓ Help sustain the environment for future generations
- ✓ Allow products to be used to their fullest extent
- ✓ Conserve valuable finite natural resources such as timber, water and minerals
- ✓ Increase economic security by using a domestic source of materials
- ✓ Prevent pollution by reducing the need to collect new raw materials
- ✓ Help create jobs in reuse and recycling industries
- ✓ Save energy and fossil fuel reserves
- ✓ Save money



Sources of Information:

<https://www.wsm.com.mt/>

<https://www.epa.gov/recycle>

<https://kids.niehs.nih.gov/topics/reduce/index.htm>

<https://www.greenandgrowing.org/reduce-reuse-recycle-information/>

Note: These websites offer plenty of other potentially helpful resources which can be researched.

Sources of Images:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/education/>

<http://gopinathpaper.com/wp-content/uploads/Reduce-Reuse-Recycle.png>

<https://cdn8.bigcommerce.com/s-10c6f/content/images/articles/reduce-waste.jpg>

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