

## WFWP USA: Plastic Waste: Our Hearts Must Change When Thinking of Convenience

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In a world of quick and easy convenience, single-use plastics are so prevalent that trying to avoid them seems hopeless. However, making a difference starts with individual, even miniscule, changes. Our hearts and minds must change when we think about our behaviors toward plastics and reducing our waste pollution.

According to National Geographic, plastic production has "increased exponentially, from 2.3 million tons in 1950 to 448 million tons by 2015. Production is expected to double by 2050." By 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in our oceans. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has called people's attitudes toward the planet "our war on nature" and the pressing reality that we must "nurture [earth] back to health."

FACTS (A few reasons to reconsider convenience.)

50% of all plastic produced (380 million tons per year) is for single-use purposes, meaning that it is used for just minutes and then thrown away.

At least 8 million tons of plastic are thrown in our oceans annually. That's equal to more than a garbage truck load every minute (50% of all oxygen is generated by the ocean).

Less than 9% of all plastic actually gets recycled. There is more microplastic in the ocean than there are stars in the Milky Way. Microplastics are small particles that are made of non-degradable plastic, smaller than five millimeters long, and unable to dissolve in water.

The average U.S. citizen consumes 167 plastic water bottles each year, but only recycles about 25% of them.

The average person eats 70,000 microplastics each year and throws away approximately 185 pounds of plastic annually.

It takes 500 - 1,000 years for plastic to degrade.

THE CHANGE (Individual change can bring collective change.)

Luckily, there are many ways each of us can make a difference, even beyond recycling. Here are a few tips to minimize your single-use plastics for good. Keep in mind to choose whatever works for you and your budget.

Give up bottled water, buy a reusable bottle.

Always pack a reusable bag when shopping.

Carry reusable utensils.

Give up gum. Yes, gum. Gum is made of a synthetic rubber, aka plastic.

Stop using single - use plastic, such as Ziploc bags. Buy reusable storage bags or reusable containers. It might be bulkier, but at least you are reducing your plastic waste.

Cook more often, to reduce the use of plastic - takeout containers create a lot of waste.

Buy in bulk. Avoid individually packed goods, like snack packs.

Repair things when they break. Don't be so quick to buy a new one.

Look around your home to see if there are any items that come in single-use plastic bottles which are now available without plastic containers. Some examples include shampoo bars (like a soap bar, but shampoo!) instead of shampoo bottles, or laundry detergent sheets instead of jugs.

Lastly,

Speak out in support of local plastic bans, whether by calling your local government representative or simply starting a conversation with neighbors.

Some make the assumption that being sustainable is expensive or not practical, but sustainability starts with the desire to want to make small changes that will lead to big impacts in the future. Let's be practical when thinking of ways to nurture Mother Earth and discover ways in which we can individually contribute to bringing peace to "our war on nature."

### **Some brands that offer alternatives that are sustainable!**

**Public Goods:** This brand sells everyday essentials that include personal care, household appliances, groceries, pet supplies, and vitamins! They use biodegradable alternatives to single- use plastic and their products are free of parabens, sulfates, toxic chemicals, and unnecessary additives. A fun fact about Public Goods is that they plant a tree for every order. [www.publicgoods.com/](http://www.publicgoods.com/)

**Earth Hero:** Earth Hero is an eco-friendly online marketplace. They partner with different brands that are helping create a more sustainable future. There are several brands that sell products on zero waste living. They also sell clothes, shoes, home décor, pet supplies, athletic clothing and gear, beauty care products, and much more. All their brands are focused on doing business differently by improving the materials they use to increase cleaner production to have a lower carbon footprint. These brands want to increase quality and decrease waste. [earthhero.com/](http://earthhero.com/)

**Package Free:** This brand sells zero waste essentials and is an ecosystem of brands on a mission to make the world "less trashy." Package Free sells kitchen supplies, personal care products, and household essentials. This brand gives you the opportunity to shop by solving the solution of greenhouse gases, food waste, forest preservation, and ocean health. [packagefreeshop.com/](http://packagefreeshop.com/)

**Who Gives a Crap:** This brand sells plastic free products. They sell toilet paper, reusable clothes, and tissue boxes. 50% of profits of this brand is donated to help build toilets to bring water, sanitation, and hygiene to developing countries. Supplying these needs would eliminate some of the burden that falls on women and girls and at the same time, reducing the use of plastic. [us.whogivesacrap.org/](http://us.whogivesacrap.org/)

### **References:**

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