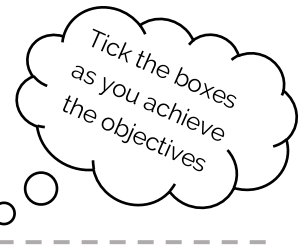


BIN BAG CHALLENGE

Section: Getting Started

Weeks: 1 & 2



These first two weeks are focused on learning more about the waste-lite approach and why recycling can't be the solution to reduce our carbon footprint, clarifying where you currently stand (get to know your waste!) and where you want to go.

WEEK 1

Objective 1 Read about the waste-lite approach, and set your mantra

- Familiarize yourself** with [the waste-lite approach and the 5Rs](#), why [recycling is not enough](#), and why [the focus of this program](#) is limited but still impactful.
- Make sure you use the [list of key questions before buying or binning](#)**: pin them to the door of your fridge, take a picture on your phone – anything that will help you get into the habit of questioning your buying and disposing habits.
- Define your “Remember”**, a mantra that will remind you of your deepest values when you are tempted to reverse your new improved habits. Why are you trying to improve your consumption habits? What can help you resist the temptation to buy, or find the extra energy to get something without packaging?

Objective 2 Start a two-week waste audit

- Record the number of bags** you are throwing away each week. Take a photo when you put them out and continue for the whole duration of this program - it will be useful to track the impact of this program. You can even weigh them and share the pictures with the group.
- Start a diary of your household waste**, monitoring the recurring items, and continue for at least two weeks.
- If you need additional motivation, go on a quick waste audit of your neighbourhood, in the nearest park for instance, with gloves and a bag, and collect rubbish for just 10 minutes.
- You can also assess your ecological footprint using the [WWF questionnaire](#).

 [More info, tips and a format for your waste audit here.](#)

Objective 3 Organise your bins and learn how to recycle

- Learn [how and where to recycle](#)** (batteries, pens, medicine, electric appliances, used oil, fabric, shoes, ...). Every borough has its own rules and recycling collection points. Out of carrier bags, cling film, bubble wrap, frozen food bags, which ones do you think you cannot take to recycling? None! Find out more [here](#).
- Make a list** of the items that you need to put aside and take to specific collection points, and decide how you will deal with them.
- Get your bins organised**. Will you manage to have only five, including the jar for cooking oils? If not, go bin-liner free for all bedroom/office/bathroom bins.
- Last but not least: **educate** your family / housemates so that they know what goes where, understand why it is necessary, and help with the recycling trips!

WEEK 2

Objective 4 No more single use items

- Find reusable shopping bags** to replace the single use plastic carrier bags. Get any other bag you need, for veggies or bread – even if they are paper bags. Don't fall for the fashionable tote bag though, as [cotton bags can be the worst replacement for plastic bags!](#)
- Find a way to remember to take them with you when shopping. Place one in each coat? In your purse? Stick it to the door? Leave it on your bike?
- Get the reusable items you need to reduce your take-away food waste:** a reusable tea/coffee cup, a reusable water bottle, durable cutlery, a cloth napkin, a metal straw (if you really need a straw!). Just buy what you need, and try to buy second-hand.
- Commit to always refuse straws**, even if they are paper based or biodegradable. Straws tend to appear all by magic –the key is to let the waiter know you don't want one when you order.
- Avoid water bottles at home too** – find another system to get tap water to your taste. [Charcoal](#) for instance.

 [More tips on reducing single-use items here.](#)

Objective 5 Stop unwanted mail

- Place a **"no junk mail please" sticker** on your box
- Stop **unaddressed email**. Contact the [Mailing Preference Service](#). If this is not enough, you can also register with the [DMA Your Choice program](#) and [Royal Mail](#). Just make sure your local council has your email/tel number so that you do not miss important information when stopping unaddressed mail.
- If you receive **catalogues** or magazines that you do not need, go online and find ways to stop this post mail. As these are not unaddressed mail, registering with MPS, DMA, Royal Mail might not stop them from coming. You often have to look for the "contact us" form or email on the supplier website and send a message.
- From now on, ensure you **always tick the box** (or untick it!) indicating that you don't want your details to be used for future promotions when ordering things online.
- You can go a step further by **opting for online bill services** (water, energy, bank).
- And even further by **refusing letters addressed to the previous occupier**.

 [Check these guidelines from Recycle Now, a great resource centre.](#)

Objective 6 Set goals

- Identify the areas responsible for the majority of your waste.**
 - Is your waste linked to food waste? What type of food waste (past due date, packaging, leftovers, ...)? Or is it Amazon packaging? Cleaning products? Kids and toys? Clothing? Pets? Beauty products? Work?
 - Is your waste due to single use items, or the number of items you are buying?
 - Are you throwing away items that could be recycled?
 - Can you identify recurring items, with short term lives, that could be avoided?
- Give some thoughts to **what you bought**, i.e., your future waste. What did you buy in the past few days? What did your housemates buy? Was everything necessary?
- Set goals** in terms of reducing your waste and... consumption.

 [Guidelines and examples of goals here.](#)