



BIN BAG CHALLENGE

Section: Cleaning

Week: 5

Tick the boxes
as you achieve
the objectives

Cleaning can generate waste and pollution because of products' packaging and ingredients. Our objective this week will be to switch to: safer ingredients, less packaging, and reduce the amount of cleaning product.

Objective 1 Audit your habits

- Washers, drain cleaners and anti-bacterial sprays are often viewed as beneficial as they get rid of dirt, bacteria and other contaminants. Unfortunately, some of their main chemical components have a detrimental impact on our environment. Read [this](#) to learn more.
- Make a mental note of the ingredients to avoid: Parabens, phthalates, triclosan, triclocarban, phosphorous, nitrogen, ammonia and all other volatile organic compounds (VOCs); alkyl phenol ethoxylates (APEs), one of the surfactants; bleach!
- Have a look at the recommended new habits in the [Cleaning section](#), and compare with your current habits. How could you use fewer products, less of each, more eco-friendly products?

Objective 2 Upgrade your laundry system

- Have a discussion with your housemates**, about [how clean clothes need to be](#), what being clean/dirty means, and whether they could wear their clothes a few times before washing them. Would that reduce the number of loads you would do each week? Discuss how many you do already, the type of programs/heat, and how it is working for you.
- Set a common goal to reduce the number of weekly loads – and the heat.** For a family of four, 3 to 4 should be enough. Dark colours, light colours, high temperature, and an extra one depending on the needs. If you have more, where does it come from?
- Check whether your current **detergent** contains [chemicals in the blacklist](#). If ingredients are not disclosed, it is usually not a good sign! If nasty chemicals are included, **test detergents in our [Swap List](#)**, **including some DIY options**. Members of your Bin Bag Challenge group or neighbours might already be using some of these options and could give you samples to test before you buy.
- Reduce the amount of detergent** you use. Experiment to get to the minimum amount necessary.
- Check if you need dry cleaning**, and if you do, find eco-friendly dry cleaners; find a way to avoid the plastic hanger and cover. Find out here [whether dry cleaning is needed](#).
- If you use a dryer, abandon it – at least for most of your laundry.

* A note on swapping products: you certainly have what you need in terms of cleaning products now, and you shouldn't dispose of them to use eco-friendly alternatives before they are finished. That would go against our zero-waste objective! But you can start testing alternatives, so that you are ready to switch when your products are gone. Keep the packaging, as they can often be repurposed, especially the spray tops.

Objective 3 Upgrade your dish washing system

- Check how to [load your dishwasher for maximum efficiency](#), or how to [handwash your dishes](#).
- [Check your detergent](#). If needed, test eco-friendly alternatives for [detergent](#), [washing up liquid](#).
- When they reach the end of their lives, upgrade [sponges, scrubbers and cloths](#) for greener alternatives

To find out where to buy eco-friendly products or ingredients to make your own products, [go here](#).

Objective 4 Make your own house cleaning products

- **Tools:** Paper towels, wipes, [synthetic sponges and scrubbers](#), ... Set a goal in terms of timing and level of effort to get rid of all single use and non-biodegradable products in your cleaning routine. Specifically, can you ban single use wipes? [Read more about wipes](#).
- **Multipurpose spray:** Test at least one of the [DIY multipurpose sprays in our list](#). These sprays can do most of the cleaning works around the house – you might be convinced to adopt one. Making your own products significantly impacts the amount of waste, as it reduces the packaging, and often leads you to using fewer products (one multiproduct rather than several single purpose products).
- Consider testing the [clay-based cream](#) if you need a stronger product than the multi-surface spray. They are amazing to get to super clean surfaces.
- **Other products:** Have a look at all the suggested swaps for house cleaning in our [Swap List](#). Can you make a mental note to swap your cleaning products for these greener alternative when you run out?

Congrats, and a zero-waste gift!

You just finished the third week of the program. How do you feel? Does it look like you are making progress towards reducing your waste? Are you confirming that you were already on the right track?

It's time to congratulate yourself with a small gift! But oops, what are zero waste gifts? [Read here on how we can give more responsibly](#). And maybe, practice with a gift to yourself!

If you are not yet seeing any impact on your waste, no worries, we just started and you might still be working on meeting some of the objectives. You will see an impact in the few weeks to come.

If you are short on time, concentrate on these three things:

- *Reduce number and heat of your laundry and dish washing loads – and refrain from using your dryer.*
- *Swap any liquid soap and detergent for solid soap and powder detergent.*
- *When your current sponge, scrubbers, kitchen cloth reach the end of their time, upgrade with more sustainable and compostable options (use our Swap List)*

And book some time in your calendar now, to work on the remaining challenges!