

SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE

PLASTIC PLEDGE
JUNE 2020 - WEEK 1



DISCOVER >

ABOUT PLASTIC & WHAT HAPPENS TO IT

In 1869, the first synthetic polymer, or plastic, was invented as a substitute for ivory with the growing popularity of the game billiards. This was a revolutionary moment in history because we were less reliant on natural materials. The first fully synthetic polymer was later invented in 1907, and it was marketed to having thousands of uses due to its pliability, durability, and heat resistance. Through the early and mid-1900s, its use amplified and it was praised for vast uses while being cheap, safe and sanitary. However, in the 1960s and 70s, Americans became more concerned about the environment. The impact of plastics on environmental and human health continues to be a concern despite plastic being a critical part of modern life with many beneficial uses ([source](#)).

Today, the production of plastic continues to increase dramatically especially in the last 30 years. Of all the plastic ever produced only **9% has been recycled, 12% incinerated, and 79% has accumulated in landfills and the natural environment.** Furthermore, the largest category of plastic produced is single-use plastics such as grocery bags, beverage bottles, food and product packaging, etc. ([Ceyer et al. 2017](#)).

This month's challenge focuses on reducing our single-use plastics specifically since this is the largest sector of plastic produced and perhaps the greatest area of improvement in our daily lives.

ADJUST >

TIPS FOR WHERE YOU ARE

Considering the massive volume of plastic around us and the issues with its disposal, it may feel overwhelming. However, each step we take really adds up and often leads to more action. **Sustainability is a journey, so begin (or continue) yours with each choice you make.**

HOW TO REMEMBER

Most of the actions in this challenge require you to remember to bring reusables with you. Here are some tips on how to remember:

Have Items in Multiple Locations

Whether you want to use reusable bags, a coffee cup or a reusable fork, it may be helpful to have these items in multiple places. For example, have a set of cutlery at work and in your car. That way you're more likely to have one around.

Make It a Priority

Put a reminder on your phone, get an accountability partner, give yourself a reward for remembering, etc. Get others involved like your kids or roommate. If you see your action as important, then make it a priority to do it.

After Using Your Reusable, Do the Next Step

After grocery shopping (and washing your bags), put the bags back in your car or by the door. Also, get in the habit of washing your reusables immediately after use and putting them back where it's easy for you to use them the next time.

INVEST

We definitely encourage you to use items you already have or to upcycle, but sometimes, you may want to invest in making a change. Tips include:

Buy Quality & Support Sustainability

When you buy something, choose items that will last and you'll enjoy using. It's helpful during this pandemic to choose items that are easily cleaned. Also, support companies that are focused on sustainability.

Be Mindful of the Materials

Look for stainless steel or glass items for food containers.



GO BEYOND >

WANT TO GO DEEPER? START HERE

The best way to make a change is to educate yourself on why you should. Here are some resources to help you:

- [History & Future of Plastics article](#)
- [Our World in Data - FAQs on Plastics](#)
- [Production, Use, and Fate of All Plastics Ever Made article](#)
- [Zero Waste Blog](#) - Helpful tips to switching from plastics
- [11 Eco-friendly Solutions in the Kitchen](#) - An honest video review of several products with some good points.