

Reduce and Reuse Waste



Recycling in the UK has become more and more a part of everyday life which is encouraging news for the environment. According to the most recent figures, UK recycling rates increased to 27% - nearly four times higher than in 1996/7. These figures show that the amount of municipal (household) waste produced dropped by 3%. The fall was the biggest on record and was accompanied by a reduction of 10% (1.9 million tonnes) in the amount of waste sent to landfill. However there is still more to be done - and it's through reducing the amount of waste we produce in the first place, and reusing materials that we can make a difference.

Here are a few pointers to help you reduce and reuse more of your waste...

Buy Refillable Items

Purchase products which can be refilled - such as washing up liquid and washing powder. This saves on the packaging you'll have to dispose of.

Composting

Why not start producing your own compost? A composting bin can be inexpensively purchased from your local council. This will reduce the amount of green waste you need to throw in the bin and will also help your garden stay green and luscious.

Packaging

Reduce the unnecessary plastic wrappings, boxes and paper you throw out whenever you buy something new. You should avoid overly packaged items altogether – after all, the best way to protest against packaging is through your power as a consumer.

Reusable Bags

Invest in a reusable bag or 'bag for life' so you don't need to use plastic bags unnecessarily. Currently, 100,000 tonnes of plastic bags are thrown away a year needlessly, equivalent to the weight of 70,000 cars. Each bag takes 100 years to decompose.

Mail

If you're a whiz with the internet, why not send cards and letters 21st century style? Sending e-cards and emails rather than paper based mail can save on waste paper. You should also reduce the amount of junk mail you receive by signing up to the Mailing Preference Service. This ensures that your address is taken off junk mail lists.

Buy Durable

When looking for something new, you should always try and purchase good quality and durable items that have been built to last. This means that less material will be rendered unwanted and sent to the landfill. Plus, buying quality products will save on the amount of money you spend in the long run.

WEEE Directive

Under the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive, which comes into force later this year, all electrical retailers have a responsibility to your waste. This means that parts of unwanted or broken electrical items that are still in working order can be reused. Ask manufacturers how you can get involved.

Use the Internet

Your junk could be someone's treasure - use an online service such as the Freecycle network. There you can swap and donate items for someone else to make the most from. Or, you may be able to make money from your unwanted goods by trying an online auction website such as eBay.

Donate Items to Charity

If you're having spring clean in your home, remember that donating unwanted items to charity shops is a worthwhile cause. You should donate reasonably conditioned clothes and any working household objects.

Buy Recycled Items

If it's possible, always try to buy recycled items. This helps to reduce the overall amount of material that's going to landfill – and you'll get an original product with a history to talk about into the bargain!

Reusable Nappies

Around 90% of the eight million disposable nappies used every day end up in a landfill site. Reusable nappies are made from natural fabrics and save money. Disposable nappies are an expensive choice. It's possible to save over £500 a

year by switching to cotton nappies washed and laundered at home - even taking into account the purchase of a washing machine, electricity and washing powder. You can also find more information about re-usable nappies at [Eco-Friendly Kids](#).

