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# EARTHHERO



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1. **Reduce:** This is the golden rule. Preventing waste in the bulk is far better than dealing with it later.



2. **Reuse:** Give items a second life by finding new ways to use them.
3. **Recycle:** Turn waste materials into new products, minimising the need for virgin resources.
4. **Compost:** Transform organic waste into nutrient-rich fertiliser for your garden.

By following this hierarchy, we minimise landfill waste, reduce pollution, and conserve valuable resources.

## Reduce: Plan, Simplify, and Prioritise

**Meal Planning:** Food waste is a major culprit. Planning your meals for the week helps you buy only what you need, avoiding impulse purchases and food spoilage. Get creative with leftovers and experiment with meal prepping to manage portion sizes. Consider using reusable containers for packed lunches or storing leftovers instead of plastic wrap.

**Embrace Minimalism:** Resist the urge to buy on a whim. Ask yourself, "Do I truly need this? Will I use it regularly?" A minimalist approach reduces unnecessary clutter and ultimately, waste. Consider borrowing items you need infrequently from friends or neighbours instead of purchasing them outright.

**Ditch Disposables, Embrace Reusables:** Single-use items create a massive waste stream. Invest in reusable water bottles, coffee mugs, shopping bags, cloth napkins, and handkerchiefs. Opt for containers with lids to store leftovers instead of plastic wrap. Explore using reusable produce bags and silicone food wraps for a zero-waste approach.



## **Reuse: Repurpose, Reimagine, and Breathe New Life**

**Get Crafty!:** Don't toss old jars, furniture, or clothing! Repurpose jars for storage, give furniture a makeover, or transform clothing into cleaning rags or tote bags. Host clothing swap parties with friends to exchange unwanted items and give them a new lease on life.

**Shop Second-Hand:** Look for pre-loved treasures at thrift stores or online marketplaces like Carousell. This reduces demand for new products and can lead to unique finds! Consider selling or donating unwanted items to give them a second life. Look for furniture or clothing repairs instead of replacements whenever possible.

**Gift Experiences:** For birthdays and holidays, consider experiences like concert tickets or museum passes. These create lasting memories without adding physical clutter. Consider gifting experiences that involve learning new skills or spending time outdoors, fostering a connection with nature and a respect for the environment.

## **Recycle: Know Your Materials and Sort with Care**

**Local Recycling Know-How:** Did you know that since 2015, the Malaysian government has mandated the segregation of solid waste at its source? It's been enforced in a few states like Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, and Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya. You can check with your local waste management service to understand what materials they accept and their sorting guidelines. Knowing what goes where ensures your recyclables get recycled effectively. Contact your city council to inquire about bulk recycling options for specific materials like cardboard, clothing, or electronics.

**Recycling Bins for Everyone:** Having designated recycling bins in your kitchen, bathroom, and other areas makes sorting waste easier. Labelling your bins with clear signage helps everyone in the household participate. Consider colour-coding your bins to match local recycling guidelines for intuitive sorting.





**Packaging Power:** When purchasing products, choose items with minimal or recyclable packaging. Look for concentrated products in smaller packages with minimal plastic or cardboard. Support companies that offer package-free or refillable options whenever possible. Advocate for legislation that promotes reduced packaging and holds manufacturers accountable for their waste footprint.

### **Compost: Transform Kitchen Scraps into Garden Gold**



**Composting Basics:** Composting turns food scraps and yard waste into nutrient-rich fertiliser. It can be done in a backyard bin or even on your countertop with a smaller system. Explore different techniques of composting for smaller kitchens or apartments, which uses a special fermentation process to break down food scraps.

**The Benefits of Composting:** Composting reduces landfill waste while creating a valuable amendment for your garden. Compost helps retain moisture in soil, promotes healthy plant growth, and reduces the need for chemical fertilisers. Composting can also attract beneficial insects and worms to your garden, creating a thriving ecosystem.

## **Beyond the Basics: Embracing a Sustainable Lifestyle**

**Support Sustainable Brands:** Seek companies committed to sustainable practices, using recycled materials and minimising packaging. Check out our last article for local companies that you can support.

**Fix, Don't Toss!** Consider repairing broken items instead of replacing them. Many online resources offer DIY repair tutorials, and local repair shops can help breathe new life into your belongings.

**Embrace Digital Alternatives:** Reduce paper usage by opting for digital bank statements, e-bills, and online subscriptions.

**Educate and Advocate:** Share your knowledge and enthusiasm for waste reduction with friends, family, and community members. Organise workshops, participate in local clean-up efforts to raise awareness, and inspire action. Support policies and initiatives that promote waste reduction, recycling infrastructure, and sustainable practices at the local and national levels. Write to your Member of Parliament (MP), join environmental organisations, and participate in advocacy campaigns to drive systemic change.

Remember, reducing household waste is a journey, not a destination. Celebrate your victories and focus on making gradual changes. Involving your family and friends creates a supportive waste-reduction community.

By adopting these practical strategies, you can significantly reduce your household waste footprint.



Embrace the power of "reduce, reuse, recycle, and compost" and embark on a journey towards a more sustainable home and a greener future for all.

