Zero Waste is fun!

Guide

for motivated, lazy or busy beginners who would like to easily reduce waste.

ZeroWaste Switzerland's vision is a world without waste. Thanks to our members and donations, we are working to empower individuals and firms to reduce waste. To help anyone get started with the Zero Waste lifestyle, we offer this guide in open-access. Was it helpful? If you would like to support us, you can become a member or make a donation on our website www.zerowasteswitzerland.ch.

Thank you!

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Thank you to Aline, who's blog www.consommonssainement.com has been an inspiration for this guide

Thank you to Dorinda, who gave us the main ideas for this guide

Thank you to the ambassadors and the comitee of ZeroWaste Switzerland who contributed to this guide by sharing their experience and their advice with us
Zero Waste, what is it?

Two meanings! Zero Waste means reducing the amount of waste we produce but it is also about not wasting resources in the first place.

Definition

The Zero Waste movement’s goal is to reduce waste globally. It especially aims to reduce everything that cannot be reused or recycled.

It is all about learning to eat, drink, get dressed, play, clean or even work in a waste free way. The main goal is to avoid unnecessary packaging, that goes straight to the bin.

Becoming Zero Waste will enrich your life and give you more time to experience new activities and a better quality of life. Learn all the good tips and tricks in this guide!

A global inspiration

Many people discovered the Zero Waste movement through Bea Johnson’s blog or her book "Zero Waste Home". After several years and a lot of research, Bea reduced the waste of her family in her Californian home to a jar a year!

No need to travel this far for an example though. Looking back a couple of years and we quickly realize that the amount of waste keeps growing and growing. For our (great) grandmothers, just after the second World War, the story was completely different. As resources as well as money were scarce, they were buying in bulk and reusing everything they could. Ask them for a few tips and discover again easy things you can do to reduce material or food waste.

Go far with Zero Waste

You will quickly get hooked! Rethinking the way you consume can lead to reconsider your way of life. With new priorities in your life, your attention will switch from HAVING to BEING.

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National pride? According to Eurostat, Switzerland is the second biggest waste producer with 730 kilos per person. We generate more waste per person than the USA or China! It's expensive for us (taxes) and it is costly to the environment.

By lowering your waste, you will also...

♦ **have a better ecological footprint**
You will not throw away plastic anymore which means less plastic will have to be incinerated.

♦ **improve the health of your family and your own**
You will buy products in your own bags and containers. That way they will not be contaminated by plastics. No more chemicals in your home as you will prepare your cleaning products yourself.

♦ **spare money**
Without realizing it, you probably consume more than what you need. Go back to the basics and spare money.

♦ **have more time and space**
You will not have to spend your weekend sorting through all the trash. You will then have more time to do the activities you love. If you also try to reduce the amount of items you consume, you could also have less to recycle and more space in your kitchen.

♦ **more fun**
Looking for alternatives and exchanging recipes and ideas with other people is fun!

♦ **take back control**
Defy marketing campaigns and take back control of what and how you buy.

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Fast and slow! Before you start your Zero Waste journey, think about the following 6 points. It should make things easier and motivate you.

1. **To be aware? Go on a photo safari!**
   Camera in hand, hunt for all the items that are sold packaged. Note what the packaging is made of. Make an album of your "safari" in shops, at work or in the streets. If you feel courageous open your trash bag and analyze what is inside.

2. **More motivation? Share with others!**
   Why do you want to adopt the Zero Waste lifestyle? Know your reasons and share them with your friends. It is more fun to challenge yourself when your friends do the same.

3. **First steps? Baby steps, one thing at a time!**
   Select only ONE thing (food, item) each week as a start. Try to find out if you can buy it package free, if you can do it yourself or if you even really need it! You can also start with one room, for example your bathroom, and review all the items there one after the other.

4. **More knowledge? Hunt for tips!**
   Look up the website www.zerowasteswitzerland.ch for tips. Contact the association’s ambassadors. Join a coffee event or Zero Waste workshop to exchange ideas.

5. **How to last? Create your Zero Waste kit!**
   It is easier to avoid packaging if you always have a Zero Waste kit with you (cloth bags, washable boxes and bottles). Keep it in your hallway, on your bike or in your car.

6. **Measure your progress? Write it down!**
   Writing things down can help you track your progress, for example count the number of trash bags you are using every month. If you pay by weight, you can ask your town for an account statement to follow your progress.
Let's get started! Fast or slow changer, here are 5 key steps that will help you to significantly reduce waste.

1. **While grocery shopping, bring your own containers and do not use plastic bags**
   - When you go grocery shopping, bring your own cloth bags. Refuse plastic bags. If you have forgotten your reusable bags, prefer a paper bag (like those for the mushrooms) to a plastic one.
   - Bring containers for all the "wet" food like meat, fish and cheese.
   - You can also bring your own bottles to buy drinks, oil, vinegar etc. You can also buy liquids in glass bottles if you reuse them afterwards.

2. **Avoid PET bottles**
   Always have a reusable bottle (preferably in alu or inox) in your bag. In Switzerland, you can safely fill it up using tap or fountain water. If you are always on the go, bring your own bottle to your favourite take-away.

3. **Go the your local market to buy fruits and vegetables**
   Local markets sell fruits and vegetables in bulk. They are usually local and fresh! Buying local is also a great way to support your region's jobs and social life.

4. **Look for small and local shops**
   To buy meat, fish, dairy or spices, discover the small shops in your neighborhood or village. They usually sell better products than supermakets.

5. **Be prepared**
   It is hard to be prepared for everything and it is nice to buy things spontaneously sometimes. For unexpected purchase, always have a reusable bag with you.
The next 5 steps

Become a Zero Waste champion! You have mastered the 5 first steps and reduced waste significantly. We invite you to go further. Who knows? Maybe you are going to become a Zero Waste champion with your 1 liter jar of trash a year.

1. **Make your own cleaning products**
Start with infusing vinegar with citruses. With only a few ingredients (vinegar, baking soda and soap) you can clean your whole house.

2. **Use bars of soap**
Bars of soap or shampoo last longer. For healthier alternatives, buy handmade organic soap bars.

3. **Replace paper towels and tissues with cloth alternatives**
A towel with a hole or an old sheet? That is perfect to replace paper towels and tissues. You can cut it the size you want, it is soft and it smells good.

4. **Buy your clothes second hand**
Find second hand shops or garage sales in your area. You can also organize your own event to swap clothes.

5. **Repair**
Look for "Repair cafes" where professionals or amateurs help you to repair your device. Or bring your device to a specialized repair shop (e.g. La Bonne Combine in Lausanne).

- on [www.zerowasteswitzerland.ch](http://www.zerowasteswitzerland.ch), you can find all the information you need on bulk shops and repair shops in your area.
- The PDF guide « The best Zero Waste recipes » will give you the best recipes to make your own cleaning and care products (coming up fall 2017)

www.zerowasteswitzerland.ch
To go even further

Do you want more tips? It is such a fun game to rethink our way of consuming. Here are a couple more tips for you.

1. **Install a compost in your garden or your neighborhood**
   With a compost, you can recycle vegetables and fruits waste which amounts to about one third of the content of trash bags. If you do not have a garden, you may have a small grass area behind your building. Together with your neighbors you can ask the owner for permission to install a common compost.

2. **Enjoy making things yourself**
   Yogurts, kefirs, jams, pickles, bread, cookies or granola for breakfast, the list goes on of things that we can easily make ourselves. Try it out and discover what you enjoy making. You can also make your own soap, laundry detergent or cosmetics.

3. **Grow a garden, try permaculture**
   You only have flowers? Or just a balcony? You can start growing salads, radishes, tomatoes or herbs. You will see, it tastes so different!

4. **Talk with local merchants**
   Convince them to accept that clients bring their own containers. They will have to buy less containers and they will spare money! Propose that they become members of ZeroWaste Switzerland!

5. **Become a ZeroWaste Switzerland member or volunteer in a community grocery store (or both)!**
   By becoming a member of ZeroWaste Switzerland, you support concrete actions. Thanks to volunteers, bulk community grocery stores can offer items at a reasonable price.

6. **Rethink your life**
   Rethinking your life is a journey. Bon voyage!

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Our founding principles

Rethink... your way of consuming, what you buy
Reduce... the useless or the unnecessary
Reuse and Repair... what you need
Recycle... to avoid filling up your trash can

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