

6 Easy Ways To Resolve Plastic Pollution And Save The Planet

Do you ever remember going to the beach, digging up the sand to make a sandcastle, but finding loads of discarded plastic trash, or going for a paddle in the sea, only to find the water swamped with plastics?



Plastic bottles and other items thrown in the sand at the beach.

Do you ever remember having a lovely picnic on a hill, only to have plastic waste blown over to your picnic mat by a breeze?

Do you ever remember going for a walk in the park and seeing plastic thrown everywhere?

Most likely you do, because that is what the world has become today, and these are all the effects of plastic pollution.

What is plastic pollution?

Plastic pollution is caused by the disposal of plastic items, such as plastic bags, plastic containers, plastic toys, plastic cups,

plastic cutlery and much more. Up to 422 million tonnes of plastic are being produced each year [1], with 12.7 million tonnes being thrown into the ocean [2]. 2 million plastic bags are used every minute worldwide [3], and only 9% of plastic is recycled [4]. The average person eats 70,000 microplastics every year [5]. Long-term ingesting of microplastics does harm to the human body after the chemicals are digested.



Plastic waste littered on a street.

Production of plastic increased exponentially, from 2.3 million tonnes in 1950 to 448 million tonnes by 2015. Production is expected to double by 2050 [6].

How does plastic pollution affect us?

There are many ways that plastic pollution affects us. Firstly, the plastic thrown into the ocean are mistaken for food by marine animals, and consequently get eaten by them. There are no traces of digested plastic on the dead animal, so sometimes they are accidentally fished from the ocean by us humans without knowing.



A marine animal about to eat a plastic bag that was thrown into the ocean, along with other plastic items.

When those marine animals are eaten by us humans, we also digest part of the plastic the animals have eaten. The ingestion of plastic in animals may cause the eventual extinction of several species too.

Also, plastic pollution can cause beaches, cities, streets, parks and other public places to become extremely dirty. This causes an unsanitary and uncomfortable environment for us to live in, and it is something that nobody likes.

What can we do to stop plastic pollution?

There is a lot we can do to save our planet from the harmful effects of plastic pollution.

1. Bring your own grocery bags to the supermarket.

Billions of plastic bags are produced every year, and we don't need any more. Before you go shopping, always remember to bring your own reusable bags so you don't need to use those single-use plastic bags that will end up in the bin anyways.



A reusable grocery bag.

2. Try not to buy bottled water, but if you do, don't bin the bottle.

Buying bottled water doesn't only cost much more, it also increases plastic pollution on the planet when you throw the bottle away. Think about it, if you bring your own water bottle from home, it saves money and *also* saves the environment. But if you really have no choice and end up buying some water, don't bin the bottles! Most of you must be thinking, "Why, what else are you meant to do with those bottles?" Well, after you've finished the water, keep the bottle with you, and bring it home. Then the next time you go out, reuse the bottle and fill it with water!

3. Recycle.

Recycling is something everyone can do to help our planet, regardless of what kind of environmental issues they are targeting. For example, instead of throwing used paper away, you could bring the papers to a recycling centre so they can be processed and made into new papers again. Or if you are eating outdoors, throw your food wrappers into a recycling bin instead of a normal bin.

4. Bring your own garbage bag when you go camping, picnicking, etc.

Sometimes when we are having a picnic on the hill, a day at the beach, or a camping/hiking trip, bins can be hard to find. But disposing your unwanted items in nature is not the right thing to do! So, you should bring your own garbage bags, and put all your rubbish in the bag until you find a rubbish bin where you can throw away the garbage bag.



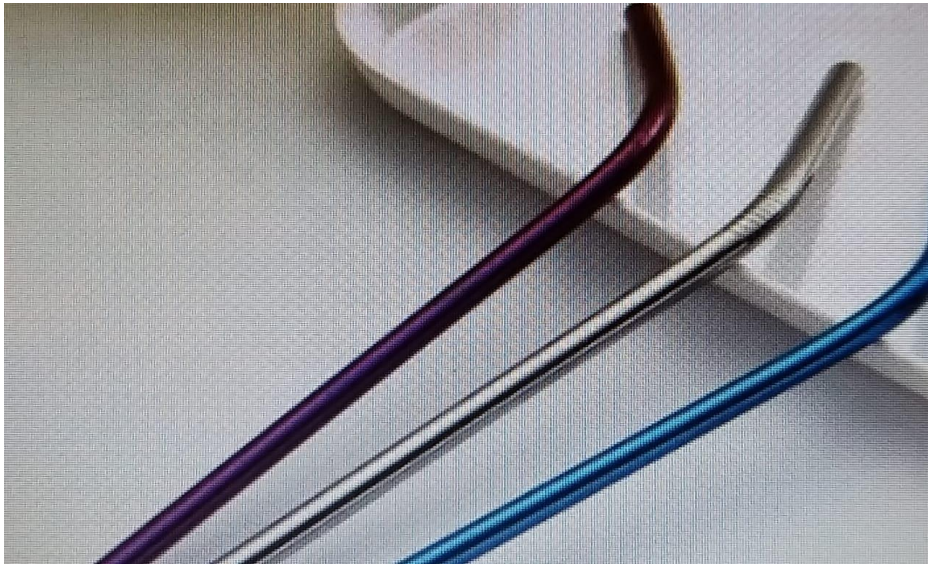
Someone putting their rubbish in a garbage bag.

5. Use biodegradable items.

Biodegradable means it's made with enough organic compounds and botanicals that the item will degrade in a short period of time and can imbue into nature without causing harm.

6. Get a steel straw.

Plastic straws are terrible for the environment. Whenever someone buys a drink, they throw away the straw when they are done. Even though plastic straw bans have gone into effect, there are still people that use plastic straws daily. To stop that, get a steel straw! These straws can be brought anywhere with you, and they are reusable, and can also be washed with soap and water!



A set of three stainless steel straws.

There are many ways we can help to save the environment from plastic pollution. If everyone works together to save the earth, we will succeed.

Citations

[1] <https://www.oceangeneration.org/blog/top-facts-on-plastic-pollution>

[2] <https://www.oceangeneration.org/blog/top-facts-on-plastic-pollution>

[3] <https://givingcompass.org/article/10-facts-about-plastic-pollution-you-absolute-need-to-know>

[4] <https://givingcompass.org/article/10-facts-about-plastic-pollution-you-absolute-need-to-know>

[5] <https://givingcompass.org/article/10-facts-about-plastic-pollution-you-absolute-need-to-know>

[6]

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