



Green Earth



Living waste-free is brought to you by the letter R: Reuse, refuse, recycle and rot. Learn more about how to implement the four R's in your household and cut down on the waste you generate.

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Live Free: Zero Waste Home

REUSE

Grab your reusable water bottle to get moving toward a life with less waste. According to the EPA, Americans buy 500,000 bottles of water every week. If you carry your own reusable bottle, you'll cut down on garbage in landfills, plastic plaguing the oceans and energy use. The energy bill for plastic bottles in the U.S. every year could power 1 million cars. Check out your local sporting goods store for plenty of options for reusable bottles.

Another easy way to cut down household waste is to bring grocery bags with you to the market. Most grocers nowadays carry reusable bags near the checkout lines for a reasonable price, and some even

offer discounts on your bill for using them. Some municipalities also charge a tax on plastic bags in an effort to cut down on waste.

REFUSE

Turn down things you don't need, such as straws in restaurants, extra napkins and free giveaways. Use your own utensils for takeout and say no to pre-packaged plastic forks and spoons. Also, pay attention to packaging and avoid accepting or purchasing products ensconced in lots of wasteful wrappings.

RECYCLE

What you do take, recycle. Many municipalities and garbage services offer free or low-

cost recycling programs, but to be effective, the waste must be effectively sorted and cleaned. Rinse any jars, cans or bottles that held food, and be careful about mixing trash with recycling.

Common items that can go into the recycling bin are cardboard boxes, paper goods, plastic bottles, beverage cans and jugs and lids. Always check with your recycler about what types of goods they take, and pay attention to recycling emblems.

ROT

Go a little greener with homemade compost. Compost is an organic material, such as dead leaves, grass clippings and kitchen scraps, that can be

added to your soil to help your garden grow. To get started composting, find a dry, shady spot for your pile or bin. Remember that your compost will have to be turned frequently; you may want to visit the local gardening center to find a bin that will allow you to manage your pile more easily.

From there, remember brown (dead leaves, branches), green (grass clippings, fruit and vegetable scraps) and water. Add the brown and green materials in equal measure, and moisten dry materials when you add them. Turn it regularly, burying fruit and vegetable scraps under 10 inches of compost. When the bottom layers are dark and rich in color, it's ready to use.

How Big Is your Footprint?

You might be surprised at how much your family uses every year. When looking to go green, it's a good idea to start by seeing just how big of an impact your household has on the planet every year.

GO ONLINE

Websites such as Eco Footprint (www.myfootprint.org) can help you determine how much your household impacts the environment. It will tell you how many planets would be needed to support your family's lifestyle if everyone lived like you. It also will give you the Earth Overshoot Day — the day when humanity as a whole maxes out Earth's resources for that year. The calculator is maintained by the Global Footprint Network and asks you a series of questions, then uses national data pulled from 15,000 data points per country per year from United Nations data sets, peer-reviewed science journals and collections.

OBSERVE AN ECO SABBATH

Now that you know how much you use, it's time to cut it down. One way to do that is to set aside one day a week for an eco sabbath. Like a religious sabbath, this is a time of rest from consumption. While it will be hard and you can expect withdrawal pains, the good news is that you get to set the rules. Set aside an hour, a day or a whole weekend and don't buy anything, don't use machines, don't cook, don't use mobile devices, however you want to tailor it to your family and your eco footprint.



GET GROWING

Another footprint your family leaves is your carbon footprint. A carbon footprint is the total set of greenhouse gas emissions caused by your

household, expressed as an equivalent of carbon dioxide. No matter how careful you are, you'll probably end up using some carbon. Offset that with a quick trip to your local

garden center to plant trees and plants that can reduce or even neutralize your carbon footprint. Ask for help choosing native landscaping that's easy on resources such as water and

doesn't require much in the way of chemical fertilizers and insect control. Another option is to donate to nonprofits and other causes that support carbon-neutral efforts.

Teaching Kids to Consume Less

It might seem like children don't have a lot of agency in reducing consumption in your home, but even the smallest members of the family can play a role.

Addressing consumption habits early can keep them from using too much later in life.

MAKE LEARNING FUN

Games, songs and videos make learning about good environmental stewardship fun. The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences has a website loaded with resources just for kids to teach them about the environment. Visit <https://kids.niehs.nih.gov/> to learn more. Local parks, schools, museums and universities also often offer plenty of opportunities for kids to get hands on.

TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Foster healthy choices in children, such as encouraging them to opt for faucet or fountain water in their own bottle versus bottled water or a packaged soft drink and picking food options with less packaging. Encourage wise use of the toys, games and other products your children have. Donate old toys and clothes to local charities or daycare centers.

CULTURE FIGHT

New Dream, a national organization that battles materialism, says that by the time the average American child is 3, they can recognize 100 brand logos. Marketers and advertis-

ers are increasingly targeting young children in their efforts, not for their own spending but for what their families will spend on them. Fight the impulse to buy, buy, buy with less screen time, modeling behaviors you'd like to see in your children and teaching them to engage critically with the advertisements they do see.

Be especially aware of Internet and social media advertising. More and more, advertising doesn't look like a Saturday morning commercial. It's branded smartphone games, ringtones and backgrounds. Be aware of what's on your children's devices and limit how much time they spend on them.

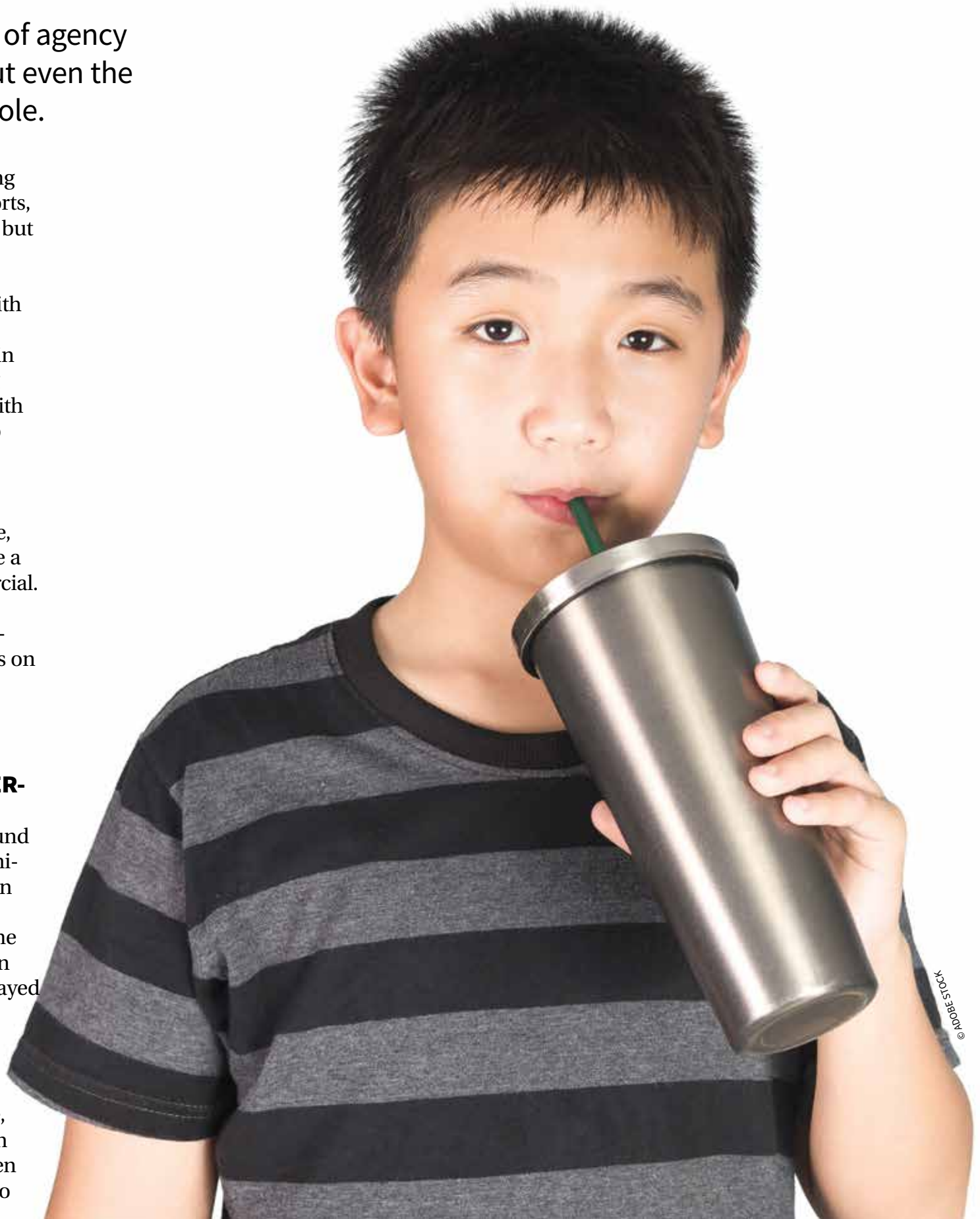
IDEAS FOR CONSUMER-FREE FAMILY TIME

Instead of gathering around the television, try these family-friendly activities that can reduce materialism.

Theme nights: Have game night or reading night. Then talk about the game you played or the book you read.

Take a class together: Cooking, painting, let your imagination run wild.

Get outside: Play a game, have a picnic, take a walk in the park. Show your children the nature you're working to save.



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Traveling Green

When you have to get away, take your green show on the road. While you may not be able to bring your own food, or stick to all your at-home rules, there are ways to conserve while you're on the go.

MAKE YOUR HOTEL STAY ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

Your hotel is your home away from home, and it's getting easier and easier to implement environmentally friendly solutions during your stay. Travel website TripAdvisor's GreenLeaders program screens hotels for environmentally friendly practices such as recycling, local food options and electric car charging stations. You also can choose hotels that are part of the Green Hotels Association (www.greenhotels.com).

Once you're there, implement some of the practices you use at home, such as limiting energy use and using your own water bottle. You also can reuse hotel linens; many properties give you a card to use when you'd like new towels or sheets. Also make sure to recycle food containers, newspapers and other products you accumulate on your trip.



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GETTING AROUND

Explore getting there by options such as train that are more environmentally friendly than flying. The World Wildlife Federation offers an environmental calculator to help you

pick the greenest way to take any trip at travel.panda.org.

Once you're there, instead of renting a car, choose greener options such as public transportation, ridesharing and bike rentals or shares. Or, better yet,

choose a hotel that is easily walkable to everywhere you're going.

GREEN VACATIONS

If you have the choice, look into ecotourism destinations.

Your local travel company might be able to help you book a trip that doesn't negatively impact the environment. Some operators also offer trips that can offset your carbon footprint entirely.

Ways to Trim Food Waste

Reducing food packaging is a great way to go green. But what's in those packages also can take a bite out of the environment. Keep reading for how you and your family can eat green.

GREEN UP THE MENU

Literally and figuratively. Eating more fruits and vegetables, especially locally grown ones, can help reduce your family's environmental impact in a big way. Look for local farmers who use sustainable practices at your local grocer or farmers markets. If your family eats meat, choose less beef. Opt instead for locally raised and harvested animals, and use all cuts of the animal. Your local butcher can help with sourcing and even give you cooking tips.

PLAN, PLAN AND THEN PLAN SOME MORE

A little bit of prep can go a long way. Plan your meals for the week and then shop appropriately, purchasing only what you need. Buy in bulk, but also keep a list of what you have on hand so you don't accidentally buy too much. And make sure you use it before it expires.

STORE APPROPRIATELY

A lot of the food that ends up in the garbage spoiled due to poor storage. Keep fruits and vegetables in the right conditions so they stay fresh longer; ask your local grocer if you're

unsure of how to store something. Before unused fruits and veggies spoil, freeze, preserve or can the leftovers, especially when in season and less expensive.

You also can freeze bread, some shredded cheese, meats and other foods you don't eat before they spoil. For even more convenience, cook and freeze whole dishes for a quick and easy dinner later.

EATING OUT

Remember not to use straws and request just the paper goods you'll use during your meal. When ordering or serving from a buffet, take only what you'll eat, and if you have leftovers, bring them with you for another meal.

PUT IT IN THE (COMPOST) BIN

Any fruits or veggies that do spoil can be put into the compost along with fruit and vegetable scraps from your meals. You must never compost dairy products, fats or oils, meat scraps or bones, pet wastes, or anything treated with chemical pesticides that can harm the good bacteria in your compost.



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Get Green at Work

It's not just at home where you can help the environment. Pack up some of your green principles and bring them to work to add some green to the environment — and the bottom line.

GO PAPERLESS

Hack away at your office's paper budget by moving toward a paperless office. You can use document services to share documents electronically rather than printing them out. Send out — and set up for your own vendors — paperless billing and statements. Use apps and scanners to email documents rather than fax.

HOLD A GREEN MEETING

Go beyond paperless and cut down on travel with video or teleconferencing. Some software suites even allow for screen sharing, so presentations and handouts can be shared electronically. Need it after the meeting? Upload the files to a file-sharing service and send the link to everyone. Depending on how much space your company uses, these services might even be free.

RECYCLE ELECTRONICS

Computers, faxes, printers and other devices are ubiquitous in the office. But did you know that they too can be recycled?



The EPA says that recycling 1 million laptops saves enough energy to power 3,500 American homes in a year. Out of a million cell phones, we can get 35,000 pounds of copper,

772 pounds of silver, 75 pounds of gold and 33 pounds of palladium. Many manufacturers and office supply stores offer recycling programs, and so do many local charities.

REUSE WHEN YOU CAN

Turn used paper into scratchpads. Use rechargeable batteries. Where it's feasible, buy refurbished electronics rather than new. Also remember

to recycle things such as packing materials, boxes and other paper goods your business receives. Source your office goods from manufacturers that offer recycled goods.



Go Tree Free

The United States uses millions and millions of tons of paper products each year. Look around your house at the amount of cardboard, paper, mail and other products you have. Then read on for ways to reduce it.

IN THE KITCHEN

Paper towels and napkins are an easy target for reducing paper goods in the home. Both can be replaced with reusable cloth towels and napkins from your local home goods store. Ditch paper plates and disposable cutlery for the real thing. And that notepad you use to jot down

what you need from the store? Replace that with a digital app the whole family can use.

STATIONERY

Reuse envelopes, wrapping paper and bags when you can, and recycle it when you can't. If you have to use wrapping paper and other stationery, choose items that are

made on recycled paper. If you have a printer, reuse printer paper when you can, or choose printer paper that's been recycled.

IN THE BATHROOM

Yep, we're going there. Choose toilet paper that's bleach-free and the highest post-consumer waste content

you can find. Also properly dispose of things such as feminine products, cotton buds and condoms. Never put these things into the toilet and flush them into the sewer.

BUILDING GREEN

If you're starting from the ground up, good for you. Pick

environmentally friendly and energy-efficient construction materials such as bamboo flooring, wiring your home for clean energy alternatives and choosing appliances that are ENERGY STAR-certified. With a little help from your contractor and local home stores, your castle can be as green as they come.