



# WASTE AUDIT ACTIVITY





# HOW TO DO A WASTE AUDIT



If you're reading this, then you are already on the next step to zero waste. Doing a waste audit is a great way to see what materials you most often throw away and just how much waste you actually have. It will help you to see if you are recycling everything that you can at home and identify where you can make changes to make better packaging choices and ultimately reduce the amount of waste you produce at home.

## BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

### 1 Check exactly what can and cannot be recycled with your local authority.

Take this opportunity to re-familiarise yourself and see if there are any new items now accepted for recycling. Your local authority will have this information available on their website. Keep this information handy to check any materials you are unsure of when doing your waste audit.

### 2 Decide how many days you will do your waste audit over.

We suggest a week but it's up to you. You might want to tie it in with your bin collection day. Remember it should be a typical time period so don't do anything you wouldn't normally do.

### 3 Know what you are including in your waste audit.

For a true reflection of your waste we recommend including everything – that means recyclable and non-recyclable waste. However, you may want to focus on one container/material at a time i.e. all plastic waste or all non-recyclable waste.

### 4 Think about how you will carry out the waste audit.

There are two main ways of doing it. Option 1: Record as you go by taking a note of every item as you throw it out. Just make sure you have the audit log in a handy place. Option 2: Once a bin is full or has reached the end of the time period set by you - tip it out and sort through each item.

**You may want to consider wearing rubber gloves, overalls or old clothes and using a ground sheet or doing it outdoors (especially if you have food waste in any of your bins).**

This method involves a bit more planning but it is a real eye opener when you see the volume of how much you're throwing away.

### 5 Get the whole family involved.

Ensure everyone in your household knows what they need to do. Why not make posters to remind everyone to record anything they are throwing away! A waste audit can be a brilliant exercise for kids to learn more about waste and recycling - just be aware of any sharp edges when handling items.

## NOW YOU ARE READY TO CARRY OUT YOUR WASTE AUDIT

**6** Use the waste audit log sheet - you can fill it in online, print it off or draw out your own version. Log every item, you may choose to group items such as cardboard packaging together and separate others such as plastic bottles, yoghurt pots, plastic food trays.

**7** When noting if items are recyclable or not its important to be aware of what can and cannot be recycled through your recycling collection so remember to check your local authority website first. Items can be recyclable but not collected by your local authority therefore you may consider alternative recycling options in the future.

**8** Leave the final column 'the next step to zero waste' until you have completed your waste audit. Then look to identify at least one improvement you can make on each waste item you have categorised.

### Waste Audit Example:

Item	Quantity	Item is recyclable through household collection Yes/No If unsure check your local authority website	If item cannot be recycled at home. Can it be recycled elsewhere? Yes/No If unsure check the How To Waste Less website	The next step to zero waste i.e. stop buying, buy less, buy loose or find an alternative
<b>Examples:</b> Cardboard packaging	I	Yes	N/A	Start flattening all cardboard packaging to allow more space for recycling.
Crisp packets	IIII	No	Yes they can be recycled through TerraCycle	Find out more about TerraCycle and my nearest collection point.
Plastic packaging from fruit & veg	III	No	Yes plastic film can be recycled at supermarket collection points.	Buy loose fruit and veg where possible. Collect plastic film separately for recycling.
Holey socks	II	No	Yes at a textile recycling bank	Learn to repair holey socks or reuse them in craft projects.

### What next?

Little changes go a long way. Decide what your next steps are and what improvements you want to focus on from the things you have identified. Why not challenge yourself with a bigger goal to reduce the overall number of non-recyclable items. Carry out a waste audit monthly or quarterly and track your progress.

### Get sharing

We'd love to see your waste audit in action and hear about your achievements so please share your photos and results on our social media channels.

