

# Clean Ocean Action's 12 Steps to Kick Your Plastic Habit



*Our use of single-use plastic is an addiction and the harmful effects reach around the globe. As a petro-chemical, every piece of plastic is related to oil drilling, pollution from refineries, and more chemical contamination. However, the most visible impact is litter found in every habitat on the planet, especially waterways. Today, the ocean is awash in plastics, killing or harming marine life by ingestion or entanglement. While some plastics do have a role in society, we must reduce our overuse. You can help. Use this 12-Step Guide to help break your addiction to single-use plastic. Integrate these steps into your lifestyle and reduce your plastic waste.*

- 1. Recognize your plastic habit.** Understanding your use of disposables is the first step to reducing usage. Look at your trash. Take special note of items with excess packaging, or any items that are single-use. Make a list of how many disposable items are in your trash. Make a personal goal to reduce or ban those items.
- 2. Know the numbers.** Recycle more plastics by familiarizing yourself with the recycling number system. The “chasing arrow” indicates that it can be recycled and the number inside the arrows indicates the type of plastic from which the material is made. “1” (PETE) and “2” (HDPE) are the most widely recyclable. Check with your municipality to see if they accept other numbers.
- 3. Be straw-free.** Americans use around 500 million straws a day! Just say “hold the straw.” There are also plenty of reusable straw options, such as glass, stainless steel, and bamboo.
- 4. Ban the bead.** Avoid using any products that contain microbeads, such as the ingredients *polyethylene* and *polypropylene*.
- 5. BYOB.** Bring your own Bag and Bottle! Putting a reusable bag in your car, briefcase, backpack or purse, and carrying a reusable bottle are easy ways to start plastic-free habits.



over, please

**6. Fork it over.** Don't accept plastic ware for take-out. Bring your own silverware. Better yet pack your own meal in a reusable lunch box/bag, and use reusable sandwich bags or containers.

**7. DIY at home.** Clean your house using products you already own (lemons, vinegar, baking soda) instead of buying harsh chemicals in plastic containers. Look on-line for "recipes".

**8. Can it.** Choose cans over plastic. Most cans contain 50 percent or more recycled aluminum. A used aluminum can is recycled and back on the grocery shelf as a new can in as little as 60 days. Better yet, use your reusable bottle!

**9. Be a smart shopper.** Look before you buy. Avoid items with excess packaging and disposable towelettes. Use a sponge or rag instead. Be creative.

**10. Support action.** Stay informed about plastic and microplastic policies, and take action to support these policies. Contact COA for current actions.

**11. Rally more converts.** Help friends and family understand the importance of reducing plastic usage, and show them available alternatives. Tell us about your progress!

**12. Join the campaign.** Supporting COA's Crowdrise campaign for microplastic research will ensure the availability of ongoing information and resolutions for a clean, healthy ocean.

[www.CleanOceanAction.org](http://www.CleanOceanAction.org)



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