

One of the values my husband and I share is to be as zero waste as possible, and in everything we do maintain a very small ecological footprint. This has been hard with a tight student budget, but also rewarding as it can become a very freeing thing to know you aren't carrying so much stuff, and that the earth is feeling just that little bit healthier because of you.

So whether you are still living at home, a share house or living out on your own, here are a bunch of big and small tricks we have taken on board in our home to live a more eco friendly lifestyle:

THE KITCHEN

Plastic reduction! This is a habit that took a little while to fully wipe clean from, as there is plastic EVERYWHERE. However, sometimes you need to just take one small step at a time before you can completely reduce your plastic use. For general daily use, I invested in getting one strong and burly shopping bag, which I take with me everytime I go grocery shopping. **Smaller linen string bags** are also very useful in carrying smaller things such as lettuce, mushrooms, and just about anything that comes in multiples- they're also very easy to find these days in most shopping centres (We bought ours from *Harris farm*).

Another solution for plastic reduction in grocery shopping, is visiting any of your local **bulk food suppliers** and using jars to fill up on all your basics. In our first couple of weeks, I visited *source bulk foods* and took a big box of glass jars to fill up anything we would use on the reg that comes in plastic. Some people would say that this could be costly- however even I was surprised at how little it cost me to fill up on so many jars. For roughly \$60, I was able to fill up 6 1L jars of flours, oats, pancake mix, sugar, and cacao. Also, **tupperware!!** Invest in some nice air tight containers that can be thrown around in bags for lunch and not spill, as well as for storing leftovers or open products in your fridges or pantries!

To avoid using glad wrap, swap for **beeswax wraps!!** This *can* be pricey, but very worth your money. We were given a whole heap as wedding presents so we didn't need to go and buy this ourselves, however I have heard of people making these on their own and since they have done it in bulk it has been a whole lot cheaper than market price. It seems like a very fun activity as well! You can reuse old fabrics from clothes or curtains, and with any leftover- you can use as gifts!

Composting!! This is something I'm new to, and has been a such a life changer. I've gotten a whole heap better at separating my rubbish out and having super organised bin systems too. It's just not that hard! We have recycling, compost and general. For our general rubbish, we dispose of in our red bin. For our recycling we take the small stuff to the yellow bin, but bigger bulkier items we take to our local recycling centre (Mine is Thornleigh, on sefton rd), and for our compost- we take to our local community garden, where it can be reused and put straight back into the earth that it came from.

Food wastage! This one I am still figuring out, however I am trying to be more wary of how much I am buying, and how much we actually need for a meal. At the moment I try to freeze more of my liquids such as milk that may go off, or soup stock in ice cube trays. And I try to buy veggies and fruit that will be consumed between 1-2 days, as we have often been guilty of letting veg and fruit go uneaten and eventually end up wastfully in our compost.

THE BATHROOM

Shampoo and conditioner bars! These are surprisingly very easy and very effective to use, and you can say goodbye to mountains of empty plastic bottles! *Lush* do make a range of shampoo and conditioner bars which I have tried- but often found to dry out my hair a bit. A brand I have recently come across is *flora and fauna* which have proved to be dramatically better for my hair. If you have a browse on their website as well- you'll find even more things for your home that are all eco friendly.

EVERYWHERE ELSE

Energy consumption! Again this is a habit I am still battling with, but it can actually be stupidly easy with such a dramatic impact. So turn your lights off when you aren't using them, and take advantage of natural light.

Also, cleaning products! While I was at source bulk foods I picked up their all-purpose surface cleaner. It comes in a spray bottle which you can reuse over and over- and the product itself is made up of ingredients that can go down drains without causing any damage to our beautiful oceans.

At the end of the day, without even trying, every move you make in this world leaves an impact of some sort. So let your impacts be one that does good to the earth!