

Twelve tips to reduce, reuse and recycle in 2012

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MADISON -- With a new year, many people are making resolutions to improve their health, save money and live better. State environmental officials say this is a good time to also resolve to help the environment and go easier on your pocketbook by reducing, reusing and recycling more of your waste.

To kick start the New Year, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Waste and Materials Management program offers 12 simple tips everyone can take to reduce their waste.

Reduce

1. Purchase only what food and other supplies you need. Purchasing less means you'll have less to dispose of later.
2. Opt out of junk-mail by registering with the Direct Marketing Association. www.dmchoice.org [exit DNR]
3. Avoid creating trash whenever possible. When ordering food, don't take any unnecessary plastic utensils, straws, etc. (ask in advance), don't accept "free" promotional products and buy products with the least amount of packaging.
4. Pack a waste-free lunch with no throwaway bags, containers, plastic wrap, etc. Use reusable containers to store food instead.
5. Avoid single-use items like juice boxes, soda bottles, paper dinnerware or plastic utensils. Buy cleaning supplies and other non-perishable materials in bulk to cut down on packaging.

Reuse

6. Donate usable clothing, appliances, furniture and other items to nonprofits or secondhand stores in your area. Not only will you reduce the amount of waste you produce, you'll also help others in your community.
7. Switch from disposable to reusable items like plastic or metal food or beverage containers, refillable razors and pens, and washable kitchen towels and diapers.
8. When remodeling or making improvements to your home, donate usable items like cabinets, lighting, appliances, lumber, flooring and windows to construction resale shops. Habitat Restores www.habitat.org [exit DNR] are a great option.
9. Start a swap with your friends or coworkers to trade items like books, clothing, computer equipment and games. Something you're no longer interested in could be a great find for a friend.
10. Bring your own shopping bags to the grocery store, mall and other stores.

Recycle

11. Recycle in your home and workplace. Many communities have expanded the range of materials they collect – you may be surprised at what new materials are being collected. To see what recyclables are accepted by your community, visit Recycle More Wisconsin www.recyclemorewisconsin.org [exit DNR].
12. Clear out the electronics that have been collecting dust in your closet. [E-Cycle Wisconsin](#) offers a list of recyclers for televisions, computers, computer accessories and more. Most items can be collected for a small fee or for free.

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