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# Wellness Wednesday

## How To Stop Being Wasteful This Year Once And For All

How can I be less wasteful? If that question is front of mind for you in the new year, you're not alone. That's because last year was the year we learned that "ghost gear" was killing millions of marine animals, plastic straws became politicized and we discovered that humans are now pooping plastic.

That said, it's no surprise many of us are thinking about the way our lifestyle affects the world around us. From finding sustainable alternatives to paper towels, to ditching single-use plastic baggies for reusable ones, there are so many innovative and easy ways to leave a smaller footprint, without breaking the bank. To set you up for success, we've pulled together 10 of the easiest and most affordable ways you can be less wasteful, from the kitchen to the bathroom.



### 1. DITCH PAPER TOWELS FOR REUSABLE ALTERNATIVES.

One easy way to transition to a less wasteful lifestyle is to ditch single use paper towels in favor of reusable alternatives like cloth towels and linen napkins. Stock up on a bulk pack of basic microfiber cleaning cloths for everyday use, or these Unpaper Towels from Food52 for everything from spills to hand drying. Use these linen and cotton bowl covers instead of paper towels to protect your leftovers, doughs, batter or produce. Here, check out [a full list of alternatives to paper towels](#).

### 2. GIVE UP PLASTIC BAGS AND BAGGIES ONCE AND FOR ALL.

When you're at the grocery store and you've forgotten your favorite reusable tote bag at home, plastic bags are an easy fix. We get it. But we all know that plastics are really bad for the environment. Fortunately, there are now so many innovative alternatives to plastics out there. From beeswax-based wrap that can be used to wrap up leftover cheese, fruit, veggies and bread, to reusable silicone food bags for fruits, veggies and even liquids, there are lots of ways to ditch plastic bags and baggies in your kitchen for good. Here, check out [a full list of alternatives to plastic bags](#).

### 3. STOP PUTTING YOUR FOOD SCRAPS IN THE TRASH BIN.

If your goal is to be less wasteful this year, starting a food scrap collection in your home is an easy and inexpensive first step. If you have room for a compost bin in your kitchen, there are countertop compost bins that'll get the job done, but folks with small spaces might prefer a mounted compost bin for a kitchen cabinet. That said, not all compost bins are created equal. Design-conscious homeowners might choose a more stylish steel and [wood countertop compost bin](#), and folks focused on preventing smells would want a stainless steel design with charcoal filters.

#### **4. SWITCH TO A WATER-SAVING SHOWER HEAD.**

Showers are one of the largest water users in the home, behind clothes washers and toilets. The average shower lasts 8.2 minutes with a flow rate of 2.1 gallons per minute. In short, that's a lot of wasted water going down the drain. A water-saving shower head like [High Sierra's Low-Flow Shower Head](#) cuts the flow rate to 1.5 gallons per minute to save 40 percent more water. Folks who are after a budget-friendly solutions might prefer the [Economy Super Spray Water-Saving Shower Head](#) that rings up under \$9 and also boasts a 1.5 gallon-per-minute flow rate and super easy installation.

#### **5. BRING YOUR OWN DISHWARE AND CUTLERY FOR TAKEAWAY LUNCHES.**

Whether you hit the same salad spot for lunch every day, or prefer to take your chances at your workplace canteen, the weekly waste of those paper bowls and plastic cutlery adds up. Instead, bring your own reusable bento box to your favorite lunch spot and ask them to make your lunch in it. Simply rewash it and bring it around the next day — just don't forget your own reusable cutlery, too. [This portable bamboo cutlery set even comes with a reusable metal straw and cleaner.](#)

#### **6. FREEZE LEFTOVERS BEFORE THEY GO BAD — AND REMEMBER TO EAT THEM.**

In the U.S., food waste is estimated to be between 30 to 40 percent of the overall food supply. That's about 150,000 tons of food wasted each day by Americans. An easy way to be less wasteful is to, well, not waste food. Instead of storing leftover stews, veggies and casseroles in the fridge where they're likely to be forgotten before they mold, instead toss them in the freezer. [These reusable silicone food storage bags](#) are a smart, easy and reliable way to store meal-prep kits, leftovers, liquids, snacks and other foods in the freezer to extend their shelf life. Plus, they can be used in the microwave, oven, dishwasher and refrigerator, too.

#### **7. KEEP YOUR HERBS AND VEGGIES FRESHER FOR LONGER.**

Veggie crispers, despite their name, don't really do much in the way of keeping veggies fresh and crisp. If you're trying to transition to a more sustainable kitchen, there are alternative ways to keep your basil fresh and your sage aromatic without rolling them in a damp paper towel. There's airtight produce storage containers to ventilate your produce with a bottom tray to keep moisture away from your produce to reduce rot. Folks who want a plastic alternative might choose veggie storage bags that are made of organic cotton terrycloth to keep veggies dry and fresh. There are also silicone foods savers that'll extend the life of your half-used produce, while herb savers will keep your fresh herbs from wilting overnight. Here, check out [a full guide to gadgets that'll keep your produce fresher for longer.](#)

#### **8. DITCH THE PLASTIC WRAP FOR A SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE.**

Plastic wrap, or cling wrap, is used on a variety of foods and surfaces to keep your food fresher, longer. But instead of wrapping your food up in plastic, there are now plenty of alternatives to plastic wrap that'll keep your food fresh and protected. There's beeswax-based wrap that can be used to wrap up leftover cheese, fruit, veggies and bread, and linen and cotton bowl covers to protect leftovers, doughs or produce. For various sized bowls and tubs, [these silicone stretch lids](#) are durable and expand to fit every sized leftover in your fridge.

#### **9. TURN YOUR TOILET INTO A DUAL-FLUSH, WATER-SAVING TOILET.**

Even though new standards require that toilets can only use up to 1.6 gallons of water per flush, some older toilets can use anywhere between 3 to 7 gallons with each flush. High efficiency toilets and water-saving toilet repair kits use up to 70 percent less water. [The Next By Danco HydroRight Universal Water-Saving Toilet Kit](#) easily converts a standard toilet into a two-button, dual flush toilet that saves water and eliminates leaks. It's easy to use, easy to install and rings up under \$35.

#### **10. DITCH THE DRYER AND INSTEAD AIR DRY YOUR CLOTHES.**

Not all laundry day routines are created equal. In fact, outside of the U.S., dryers aren't all that ubiquitous. If you want to save money, slash utility costs and get great-smelling clothes in the process, ditch your dryer and instead hang-dry your laundry. [This clip and dry hanger](#) hooks to your shower rod or closet rod, and includes 16 clips for drying bras, lingerie and other delicates. If you have more floor space, you might prefer a foldable drying rack for your heavier garments like towels, jeans and sweaters.

# This Week's Exercise

## Kettlebell Push-Press



The push press is a phenomenal, explosive move that sculpts big shoulders, huge traps, and ripped triceps. It also builds tremendous core stability and forces you to generate power from your lower-body, transfer it up the kinetic chain, and out through your arms, which is integral in every sport.

### **HOW TO DO IT:**

Start with the kettlebells in the “rack position”—hold a kettlebells at your chest with the kettlebell on the outside of your arms and your hands underneath your chin. Keep your chest up, pull shoulders back, and crush your armpits. Keep your wrists straight.

Lower yourself into a very partial squat and explode upward with your legs while driving your arms overhead. At the top, make sure your biceps are next to your ears and your wrists are flat, not bent backward. Carefully lower the kettlebells back to the rack position and repeat.

### **HOW TO USE IT:**

Use it as a power exercise early in your workout or as a shoulder exercise in your upper-body workouts.

Article source: <http://bit.ly/2FNg2dj>

*Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.*

## CHICKEN AND AVOCADO SOUP



### Ingredients

2 tsp olive oil  
1-1/2 cups scallions, chopped fine  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 medium tomato, diced  
5 cups reduced sodium chicken broth  
2 cups shredded chicken breast (12 oz)  
8 ounces (from 2 small) ripe hass avocados, diced  
1/3 cup chopped cilantro  
4 lime wedges  
kosher salt and fresh pepper, to taste  
1/8 teaspoon cumin  
one pinch chipotle chile powder (optional)

### Directions

1. Heat a large pot over medium heat.
2. Add the oil, 1 cup of scallions and garlic. Sauté about 2 to 3 minutes until soft then add the tomatoes and sauté another minute, until soft.
3. Add chicken stock, cumin and chile powder and bring to a boil. Simmer, covered on low for about 15 minutes.
4. In four bowls, fill each with 1/2 cup chicken, 1/2 avocado, remainder of the scallions, and cilantro. Ladle 1 cup chicken broth over the chicken and serve with a lime wedge.

### Nutrition Information

Yield: 4 servings  
Serving Size: 1 3/4 cups

Amount Per Serving:  
Freestyle Points: 4  
Points +: 7  
Calories: 297  
Total Fat: 14g  
Saturated Fat: 2.5g  
Cholesterol: 72.5mg  
Sodium: 789.5mg  
Carbohydrates: 14.5g  
Fiber: 7.5g  
Sugar: 2.5g  
Protein: 31g

Recipe source:

<http://bit.ly/2FJFArA>