

# Watch Your Waste Challenge

Saturday 4th October – Sunday 12th October 2008



# Challengers Pack

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## Watch Your Waste Challenge guidance

Thank you for taking up the Watch Your Waste Challenge. This will be an interesting week for us all and we hope you enjoy seeing how close you can get to having a “waste free week”.

In addition to the guidance here, we have provided you with some top tips to help you through the week and enable you to keep up the good work after the challenge has finished. A record and evaluation sheet is also included on the back page which we would be grateful if you could complete and return back to us. This information is extremely useful in helping us to determine the amount of waste saved during the week and the overall success of the project.

This pack has been designed to help you navigate through the challenge but if you would like some additional support from other challengers then we have set up a Watch Your Waste Week Facebook page. This will enable you to speak to other challengers and share any tips or advice from your experiences.

The following information should provide you with all you need to know about the Watch Your Waste Challenge.

### What do you mean by ‘Watch Your Waste’?

During Watch Your Waste Week we are hoping to get people thinking about the amount of waste they produce. The aim is to get people to create less waste and ideally no waste at all. This is not as difficult as you may think and small changes really can make a big difference.

Trying to cut down what we use in the first place is a key part of reducing waste and if we only use things that can be reused, recycled or composted, then we’re left with nothing else to throw away.



### How does the Watch Your Waste Challenge work?

The Watch Your Waste Challenge runs from Saturday 4th October through to Sunday 12th October. You can start on Monday 6th October and go until Sunday 12th October. However, if you would rather start on the day your general waste is collected and go until your next collection day, that is fine. Starting with an empty bin will give you a much better idea on the amount of waste you throw away during a week.

Throughout this period the aim is to only use things that you can reuse, recycle or compost. In addition, we’ve asked if you could complete the record and evaluation sheet on the back page to help us measure the success of the week.

### How can I ‘Watch my Waste’ during the challenge?

Before the challenge begins, try to plan ahead and think about all the things you usually throw away, maybe even take a look in your bin and then think of alternatives you could use instead. If you cannot think of an alternative, think if you really need it.

#### Some examples:

- When buying bread, you can avoid the plastic wrapping by buying fresh bread over the counter. If wrapped in paper, you could compost or recycle or even bring your own bag to put it in.
- Try not to buy food products that are packaged in cartons that are difficult to recycle (eg. tetrapak). Buy drinks in recyclable containers.
- Don’t buy bottled water. Use tap water instead.
- If you buy drinks in non recyclable containers, try buying your drink in a recyclable can or bottle instead.
- Buy in bulk, it saves you money and on packaging.
- If you eat things like crisps or yoghurt, try buying something different in a container that can be more easily recycled.
- Order a vegetable box for the week, this saves on money (cost comparison saves £10 per week), trip to the supermarket and a massive amount of packaging.



### Is it possible not to throw anything away in the bin?

You only need to make small changes, adjusting purchasing habits, recycling and composting more and reusing items instead of throwing them away, but the results are massive over a longer period of time. However, the aim of the challenge is to see how close you can go. Circumstances are different for everyone and even if you don't quite manage to throw away nothing, you'll find you can have a dramatic effect on the amount you do throw away.

### What about the waste I produce at work?

This challenge is looking at your household waste so will not be including commercial waste as part of this project. However, this challenge does include waste that you produce away from home while not at work (eg. your lunch break from work).

### What about other members of my household?

If several people want to take part you can register as a household or group. You can complete one form between you or a form each, whichever you prefer. Please let us know if you need extra record sheets. If you are living with other people who do not wish to take part in the week, please make sure that you keep any waste that you do create separate from everyone else's waste.

### What do I do with any waste I do produce?

We suggest you use a carrier bag or similar to collect any waste you do create during the challenge. Make sure you keep it separate from anyone else's waste. If you can, please record the items you dispose of on the record sheet and if possible, please try and measure the contents at the end of the challenge.



### How should I record the information on the record sheet?

Completing and returning your record sheet will allow us to assess the success of the scheme and help us to find ways to tackle waste prevention in the future.

If possible, we would like you to record the amount of waste you throw away the week **before** the Watch Your Waste Challenge and compare it with the amount you throw away **during** the Watch Your Waste Challenge itself.

You can keep a record of the amount of waste you throw away from Saturday 4th to Friday 10th of October or from Monday 6th to Sunday 12th October, whichever you prefer. You can do this by weighing your rubbish or estimating the proportion you throw away (eg. 3 and 1/4 carrier bags, half a rubbish sack) or any other method that suits you. The rest of the sheet is for you to note down any observations over the course of the week, in particular any specific changes you made or any problems you encountered as well as any other comments you may have.

### How can schools participate in the challenge?

We are inviting everyone in North London to take part, including schools. Schools can count the amount of waste they throw away the week before the Watch Your Waste Challenge and then compare it with the amount they throw away during the challenge. You can do this by checking the number or fullness of the rubbish bins collected from your school.

### I don't have access to a garden. How can you compost at home?

For those of you that want to compost but don't have access to a garden you can try wormeries. Wormeries enable those living in flats or with balconies to compost at home and are easy and fun to use. Simply add your worms then your waste food; after a few months your worms will have eaten it all and left behind a fantastic fertiliser and a liquid, which is nutrient-rich and can be diluted for use as a plant food. If you are concerned about space you may be able to store your wormery with the recycling/rubbish bin area which is becoming a common site in residential streets where houses have been divided into flats. Or you may have a common area at your building entrance.

### For more information

If you have any further questions, please contact Dimitra Rappou on 020 8489 5366 or email [Dimitra.rappou@nlwa.gov.uk](mailto:Dimitra.rappou@nlwa.gov.uk).





## Top Tips for the Watch Your Waste Challenge

We've put together some useful tips and ideas to help you through the challenge. We hope you will find them helpful.

### What do I do about things I use that can't be recycled like yoghurt pots, pasta packets, meat packets, crisps and snacks?

Try the following suggestions:

- You could try and make some at home instead (in a previous challenge one family had a go at making yoghurt and pasta at home).
- Use an alternative instead (a smoothie might be a good alternative to yoghurt as it might come in a bottle which is recyclable as opposed to a non-recyclable yoghurt pot).
- Look out for places that sell the product with different packaging (yoghurt is occasionally sold in reusable glass jars and pasta in recyclable cardboard boxes).
- If you can't do any of the above, buy in bulk to reduce packaging (use one large bag of crisps rather than several small ones).



### Where can I get things with more reusable/recyclable packaging?

Try the following places:

- Use local shops which often have more opportunities for less packaging (grocers, butchers and bakers – bring your own containers along – you might want to ask people before you start the challenge if you can do this).
- Use the specialist counters at supermarkets (delicatessens, fish counters).
- Look out for local specialist/health food shops that sell items like pulses and cereals loose and provide refillable containers for cleaning liquids.
- Make use of local and farmers markets; bring your own bags and buy fruit and vegetables loose.

## Plan ahead and be prepared

Forgetfulness can sometimes be the biggest obstacle during the challenge so if you plan ahead, you're more likely to succeed!

- Plan ahead for shopping and meal times to help you choose items with less waste (some suggestions are shown on the next page).
- Remember to bring reusable bags whenever you go shopping (you could even reuse smaller bags for loose vegetables).
- Bring reusable bags and plastic containers for putting fresh food in (eg. bread, fresh meat, delicatessen items etc).

## Waste free lunches

A waste free lunch is a challenge to everyone to make as little rubbish as they can from their lunch. The following advice will help you when you are away from home, particularly at lunchtimes, for both adults and children.

- Only take what you can eat; there should be no food thrown away after lunch.
- Make your own lunch using your own containers or take your own container along if your local lunch outlet can pack them freshly for you.
- Bring a reusable flask out with you that you can use over again.
- Use cloth napkins .
- If you need cutlery use stainless-steel that can be washed and used again.

- If making a packed lunch, the following items can all be reused, recycled or eaten:
  - Small sandwich sized reusable container for sandwiches or a reusable plastic bag.
  - Take juice or water in a reusable flask or sports bottle so it can be washed and used again.
  - Fruit and vegetables (can all be composted).
  - Snacks that have either been bought in recyclable packaging or home made or from a bakers without any packaging (scotch eggs, flapjacks, sausages, baked chips, homemade popcorn).
  - Sweets and chocolates in recyclable packaging (chocolates with foil and paper, pick and mix sweets).

## Food waste

There's a lot you can do to minimise food waste:

- Use a compost bin for uncooked kitchen scraps (if you don't have a food waste collection, a compost bin or a wormery ask a friend or neighbour if you can put the scraps in theirs).
- Only buy as much as you need (avoid the temptation of 'buy one get one free' unless you're really going to use them both).
- Only cook as much as you need and stick to the quantities shown in recipe books.
- Freeze any left over food and use another time or cook it up as leftovers the following day.

## Did you know...

In the UK we throw away 6.7 million tonnes of food every year. A third of everything we buy goes straight in the bin unused. Most of this is avoidable and could have been eaten if only we had planned, stored and managed it better. (WRAP, 2008)

## How can I cook without creating any waste?

Here are some suggestions for waste free meals:



### Chicken casserole

- Chicken (bring your own container to the butcher and choose fat/bone free chicken breasts)
- Onion and vegetables (buy loose)
- Tomato for sauce (recyclable tins of tomato/puree in tins/fresh loose tomatoes)
- Stock (stock granules in recyclable container)
- Herbs (buy loose and reuse the elastic band, buy potted herb plants or use herbs in reusable/recyclable jars)

### Breakfast

- Porridge (often comes in cardboard boxes without an inside bag)
- Home made muesli (ingredients can be purchased loose from certain shops)
- Toast (unpacked bread from the baker with butter (tear the greaseproof paper up and compost it at home or put it in your wormery) and jam (in reusable/recyclable jar)

### Vegetable lasagne

- Onions, courgettes, peppers, leeks, garlic cloves (buy loose)
- Lasagne (in recyclable cardboard container or loose from a delicatessen)
- Flour (buy loose or in a recyclable paper container)
- Olive oil (in reusable/recyclable bottles)
- Cheese (bring your own container to a market stall/delicatessen)
- Mustard (in reusable/recyclable bottles)
- Tomato paste (in reusable/recyclable bottles)
- Chopped tomatoes (fresh or in recyclable cans)
- Milk (in recyclable bottle)
- Vegetable stock (stock cubes with foil and cardboard packaging)

### Beans and egg on toast

- Baked beans (in recyclable tins)
- Poached egg (compost the eggshells)
- Toast (see breakfast)

### Tuna and tomato risotto

- Rice (buy loose from certain shops or bought in bulk and store in sealed container)
- Tuna (in recyclable tins)
- Tomatoes, spring onions (buy loose, reuse the elastic bands)
- Olives (in reusable/recyclable jars)
- Herbs (buy loose and reuse the elastic band, buy potted herb plants or buy herbs in reusable/recyclable jars)

### Thai vegetable curry

- Vegetable oil (in reusable/ recyclable bottles)
- Onions and mixed vegetables such as courgette, cauliflower florets, pepper, small potatoes, mushrooms, green beans, mange tout, bean sprouts, carrots and spinach (buy loose)
- Coconut milk (buy fresh and extract the milk or buy in recyclable can)
- Lemon juice (buy lemons loose)

### Sausage and mash

- Sausage (bring your own container to the butcher)
- Potato (buy loose)
- Cabbage or vegetables (buy loose)
- Gravy (stock granules in recyclable container)

### Lentil salad

- Lentils (in recyclable tins or bought loose from certain shops)
- Beans and other vegetables (buy loose)
- Cheese chunks (bring your own container to the delicatessen)
- Olives and sundried tomatoes (in reusable/recyclable jars)
- Oil and vinegar dressing (in reusable/ recyclable bottles)





## Useful links

### Nearest reuse and recycling facilities

The Recycle for London website helps you find out what recycling services your local borough provides. Visit [www.recycleforlondon.com](http://www.recycleforlondon.com) and enter your full postcode to find out how easy it is to reuse and recycle locally.

### Food waste

If you want to know exactly how much to cook and ways of measuring different portions and for hints and tips for making the most of the food you buy you can find useful information on the 'Love Food Hate Waste' website: [www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/perfect\\_portion](http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/perfect_portion)

### Unwanted mail

Stop receiving unwanted mail by contacting MPS:

The Mailing Preference Service,  
DMA House,  
70 Margaret Street,  
London W1W 8SS

Telephone: 0845 7034599  
[www.mpsonline.org.uk](http://www.mpsonline.org.uk)

### Real nappies

Using real nappies can save you money as well as helping to save the environment. Real cotton nappies are mainly made up of natural fibres with no chemicals, paper pulp or plastics, can be washed at home or by nappy laundering services and are cost effective. For more information visit:

[www.realnappiesforlondon.org.uk](http://www.realnappiesforlondon.org.uk) or  
[www.realnappycampaign.com](http://www.realnappycampaign.com)

### Freecycle

Freecycle groups are open to all who want to recycle items they no longer need, rather than throw them away. Instead of throwing out things like furniture, dishes, bikes, and electronics, people that join Freecycle give these items away for free to other people in their community who can use them. If you want to sign up for free, visit [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)

## Watch Your Waste Challenge individual record sheet

We have provided you with this daily diary which we would be grateful if you could complete for each day of the challenge. Please note that this record sheet is also available as a Word document for ease of completion.

Once complete, please send it back to us before Friday 24th October.

**Fax:** 020 8365 0254. **Email:** [Dimitra.rappou@nlwa.gov.uk](mailto:Dimitra.rappou@nlwa.gov.uk)

**Post:** North London Waste Authority, Lee Valley Technopark, Unit 169, Ashley Road, Tottenham, N17 9LN.

Were you taking part as an individual or part of a school/business/community group? Please state name:			
Number of people taking part:		Postcode:	
Amount thrown away (if any) over the week (please, choose one of the following options):			
<b>Normal week</b>  (ideally the week before the Watch Your Waste Challenge)	Total weight (kg)		
	Number of carrier bags		
	Number of black rubbish sacks		
	Fullness of black bin		
<b>Watch Your Waste Challenge</b>	Total weight (kg)		
	Number of carrier bags		
	Number of black rubbish sacks		
	Fullness of black bin		
<b>Day</b>	<b>Please make a note below of any particular actions you took each day to minimise your waste, listing any specific problems you had, any items you had to throw away and any other observations you wish to make.</b>		
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

Please help us improve the Watch Your Waste Challenge by sharing your opinions and suggestions. We would be grateful if you could fill in the questions on the back of this sheet and give us some feedback. **Please note, we will only use your details for the purposes of this project and will not pass them on to a third party for marketing and commercial purposes.**

# Watch Your Waste Challenge Evaluation and Suggestion form

Are you going to make any lifestyle changes as a result of the Watch Your Waste Challenge?

yes  no

If 'yes' what kind of changes are you going to make?

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Do you think you would take part in a Watch Your Waste Challenge again?

yes  no

Did you find the amount of information presented in this pack:

too much  about right  too little

Did you find the Watch Your Waste Challenge Top Tips useful and informative?

yes  no

Future suggestions:

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Would you be interested in taking part in any local publicity? If so please put your contact details here and preferred method of contact.

Name:

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Address:

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Email:

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Telephone Number:

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**Thank you for your feedback and your participation in the  
Watch Your Waste Challenge!**