

Sustainable Living

*“WE DON’T NEED A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE DOING ZERO WASTE PERFECTLY.
WE NEED MILLIONS OF PEOPLE DOING IT IMPERFECTLY.”*

~ANNE MARIE BONNEAU

Introduction – Jen Milnes



- Grew up in NJ
- Studied Social Policy and Organizational Change
- Moved to San Francisco to work in corporate retail focused on supply chain, inventory strategy and operations
- Moved back to NJ 6 years ago
- After 15 years in corporate retail, paused to figure out next step
- Now an Executive Coach helping people increase fulfillment in career and life

Family. Community. Impact.

What is Sustainable Living?

What does “sustainable living” or “zero waste living” mean?

- It means to send less (or nothing) to the landfill/incinerator. Use zero waste as the goal but be gentle on ourselves that minimizing waste is the realistic short term goal.
- We can create less garbage by choosing reusable products that have a full lifecycle plan (i.e. reusable or compostable) instead of single-use items that we temporarily use and then throw away.
- There are lots of options to swap current habits or products to more eco-friendly and less waste producing options.

*NOTE: “It’s only a straw”,
said 8 billion people.*

While you may doubt your own impact, know that you influence those around you.

Sustainable Living

There are many areas of our lives to examine which each have their own opportunities for upgrading to more sustainable options:

- Kitchen
- Packing Lunches
- On the Go
- Cleaners
- Laundry
- Bathroom
- Conscious Consumerism
- Fashion

Framework:

- 1 What's your motivation?
- 2 What one change can you make this month?
- 3 What support structures can you set in place to help?

What is your motivation?



Why change your habits to be more sustainable?

Why minimize our waste?

Environment



- Reduce climate change impact (extreme weather patterns, rising sea levels due to increasing temperatures, wildlife habitat impact)
- Conserve resources & save energy used to make new materials (cans, plastic bags, paper products)
- Reduce waste going to landfill or incinerators (generates emissions that contribute to air pollution and climate change. And generates toxic incinerator ash.)

Health



- Food supply impacted by droughts or extreme weather
- Diseases spread more easily with warmer temperatures (ex. Mosquitoes spreading Zika virus) or bad air quality
- Microplastics found in water we drink and food we eat

Finances



- Avoid spending money on products that get thrown away. Razors:



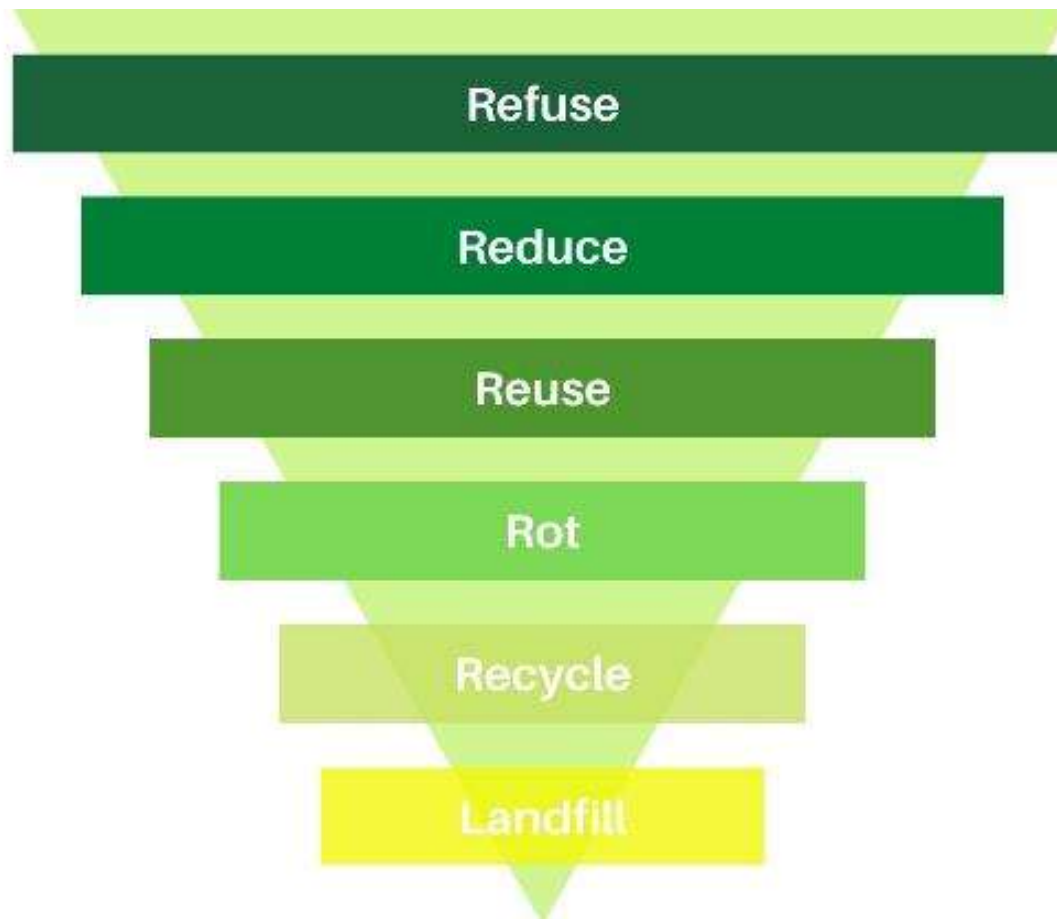
Blade replacements = \$5



Blade replacements = 20 cents

Recycling will not save us

Many people believe recycling is the answer to helping the environment but we can do even more before items get to the point of recycling. The old 3 R's of “Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle” have expanded.



What does refusing look like?

- *Refuse single use bags at stores*
- *Say no to extra napkins/utensils when doing takeout*

Choosing alternatives is key.

Zooming out on our choices

Our Broken Materials Economy, a.k.a. "The Story of Stuff"



Our goal...

LINEAR ECONOMY



RECYCLING ECONOMY



CIRCULAR ECONOMY

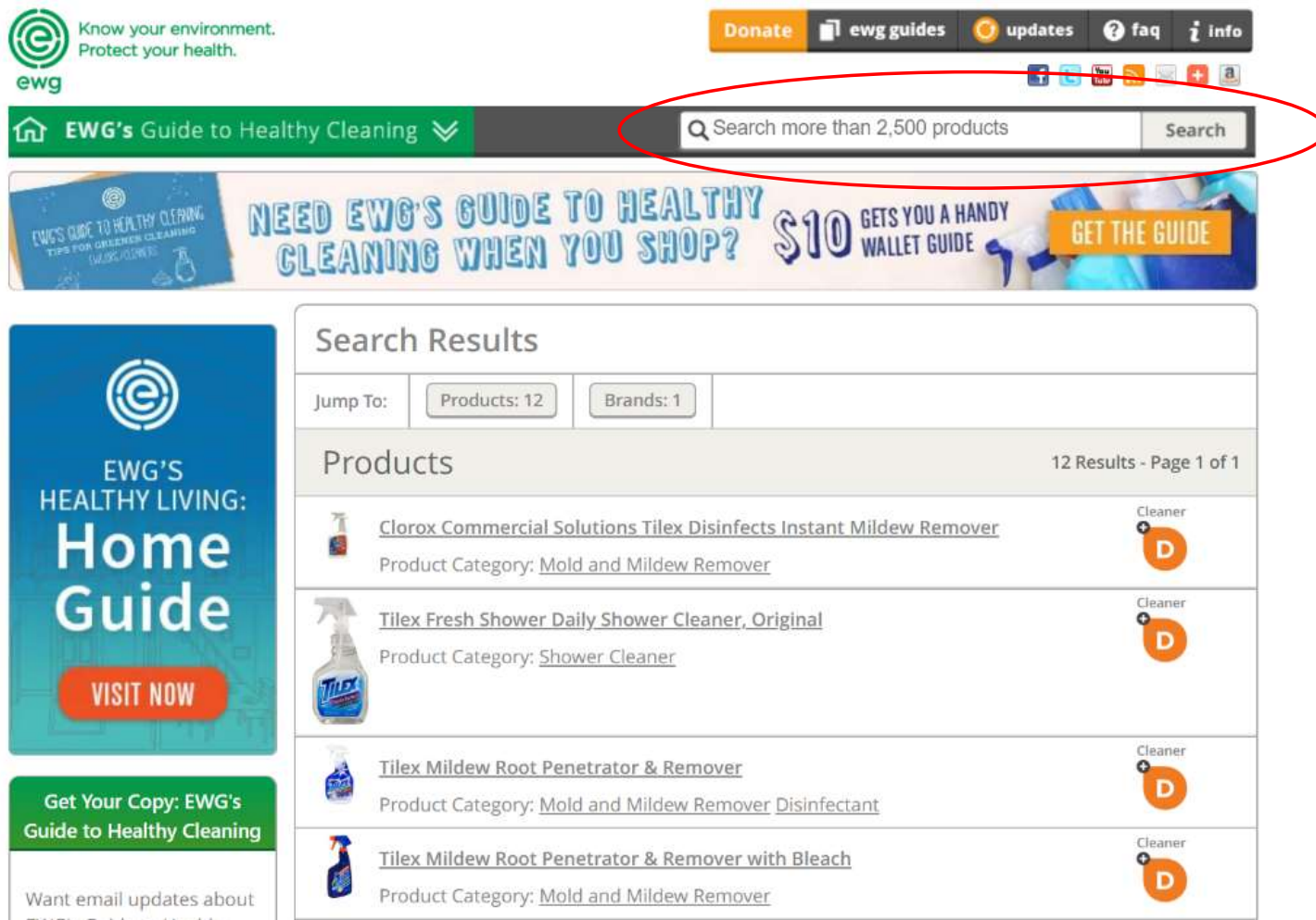


Sustainable Living





What are you already doing today to live sustainably at home?

Non Toxic Cleaners

Many cleaners have toxins that are bad for our health and the environment. Use the Environmental Working Group's website to research your products:




The screenshot shows the EWG website interface. At the top left is the EWG logo with the tagline "Know your environment. Protect your health." To the right are navigation links: "Donate", "ewg guides", "updates", "faq", and "info". Below these is a search bar containing the text "Search more than 2,500 products" and a "Search" button. A red circle highlights the search bar. Below the search bar is a promotional banner for "NEED EWG'S GUIDE TO HEALTHY CLEANING WHEN YOU SHOP? \$10 GETS YOU A HANDY WALLET GUIDE" with a "GET THE GUIDE" button. On the left side, there is a vertical banner for "EWG'S HEALTHY LIVING: Home Guide" with a "VISIT NOW" button. Below that is a green button that says "Get Your Copy: EWG's Guide to Healthy Cleaning" and a text box for email updates. The main content area is titled "Search Results" and shows "Jump To: Products: 12 Brands: 1". Below this is a table of search results for "Products" (12 Results - Page 1 of 1).

Search Results	
Jump To: Products: 12 Brands: 1	
Products 12 Results - Page 1 of 1	
	Clorox Commercial Solutions Tilex Disinfects Instant Mildew Remover Product Category: Mold and Mildew Remover Cleaner D
	Tilex Fresh Shower Daily Shower Cleaner, Original Product Category: Shower Cleaner Cleaner D
	Tilex Mildew Root Penetrator & Remover Product Category: Mold and Mildew Remover Disinfectant Cleaner D
	Tilex Mildew Root Penetrator & Remover with Bleach Product Category: Mold and Mildew Remover Cleaner D

Non Toxic Cleaners

You can look up products and understand what's in the cleaners and how it might affect your body.

[← Back](#)



See more:

- Product Ingredients
- What's on the label
- Health & Environmental Concerns
- Warnings & Directions

F Tilex Bathroom Cleaner, Lemon

See:

Asthma/Respiratory	<div><div style="width: 60%;"></div></div>	Moderate Concern
Skin Allergies & Irritation	<div><div style="width: 20%;"></div></div>	Some Concern
Developmental & Reproductive Toxicity	<div><div style="width: 30%;"></div></div>	Some Concern
Cancer	<div><div style="width: 40%;"></div></div>	Some Concern
Environment	<div><div style="width: 30%;"></div></div>	Some Concern

How does it rate: Scores for similar cleaners ranged **from A to F**. Search for a [better General Purpose Bathroom Cleaner](#)

Top Scoring Factors: Corrosive; May contain ingredients with potential for respiratory effects; general systemic/organ effects; cancer

Ingredient Disclosure: good Green Certified: Share on: [f](#) [t](#) [+](#)

Product ingredients

Non Toxic Cleaners

If you're looking for a better alternative, you can search categories by rating.



General Purpose Bathroom Cleaner

Jump To: Products: 97 Brands: 44 Companies: 36

General Purpose Bathroom Cleaner Cleaners That Scored A

-  AspenClean Bathroom Cleaner 
 There is more than one version of this product.
-  Attitude Sensitive Skin Natural Bathroom Cleaner 
-  Aunt Fannie's Bathroom Cleaner Vinegar Wash 

Non Toxic Cleaners



For a healthy, environmentally friendly, and cheaper option...

MAKE YOUR OWN



“Vinegar is a mild acid, which makes it a great multi-purpose cleaner for around the house...You can use it undiluted, combined with baking soda, or as an ingredient in a homemade household cleaner, and every room in your house can benefit from vinegar in some way.”¹

Create solution of 50% distilled white vinegar and 50% water

Detailed instructions:

<https://www.wikihow.life/Use-Vinegar-for-Household-Cleaning>

REFILL



Order online or take container and REFILL at a refill shop

Wash clothes less frequently



Washing machines use a lot of water: “The average washing machine uses 13,500 gallons of water per year. That is as much water as you will drink in your lifetime.”¹

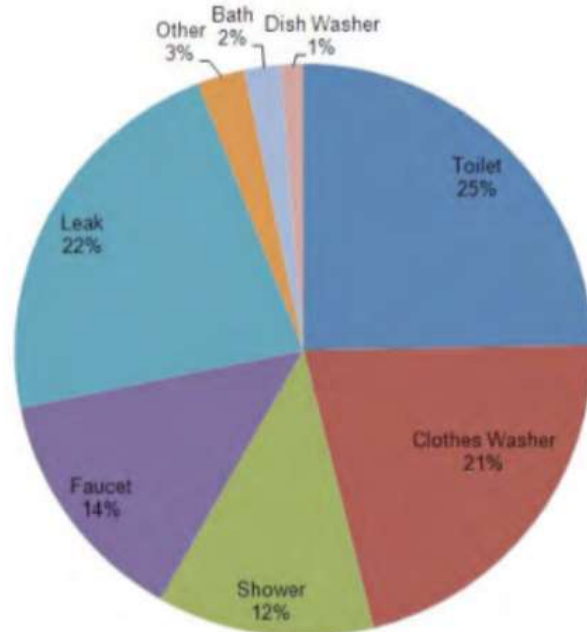


Figure 4.8. Pie chart comparing breakdown of daily usage by components

- Spot clean your clothes
- Wear clothes multiple times to minimize amount to wash
- Choose high-efficiency washer if buying new/used
- Use cold water to wash clothes because “~75% of the energy required to do a load of laundry goes into heating the water...Cold water can make your clothes last longer. Heat can break down dyes in the clothes and can cause shrinkage.”²

1: <http://sustainability.umich.edu/pba/resources/water/laundry-water-use>

2: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/case-washing-clothes-cold-water-180955459/>

Laundry detergent



After you've verified something is healthy for you,
what are some more eco-friendly options?

REFILL



Take container to a refill shop

64 oz concentrated = 128 loads
100 oz standard = 32 loads

MAKE YOUR OWN



14 cups very hot water, divided
1 cup baking soda, divided
1/2 cup salt
1 cup unscented liquid castile soap
30 drops lavender essential oil,
optional, for scent
Gallon-sized jug

Instructions:

<https://wholefully.com/homemade-borax-free-laundry-detergent/>

Tip: Making your own saves money!

Drying clothes



Stop using fabric softeners and dryer sheets to soften clothes due to many chemicals in them which will get absorbed by our skin.

Instead...

- Use ½ cup distilled white vinegar in washing machine to brighten and soften clothes¹
- Use wool dryer balls in dryer to minimize static and reduce drying time by 10-25% (saving energy and \$)²



Tip: Air dry as much as possible, including synthetics.

12 REASONS

to get rid of your
FABRIC SOFTENERS and DRYER SHEETS

- 1 **ALPHA TERPINEOL:** can cause headaches, loss of muscular control, central nervous damage and respiratory problems
- 2 **BENZYL ACETATE:** has been linked to pancreatic cancer
- 3 **BENYL ALCOHOL:** respiratory tract irritant, central nervous system depressant, death
- 4 **BIODEGRADABLE CATIONIC SOFTENERS:** make clothes fluffy and static free & build up in the body and over time damage the nervous system
- 5 **CAMPHOR:** causes central nervous disorders, confusion, is easily absorbed through skin
- 6 **CHLOROFORM:** a known carcinogenic neurotoxin
- 7 **DICHLOROBENZENE:** extremely carcinogenic solvent used to make paint thinners
- 8 **ETHANOL:** on the EPA's "hazardous waste" list, can cause central nervous system disorders
- 9 **ETHYL ACETATE:** a narcotic on the EPA's "hazardous waste" list
- 10 **LIMONENE:** a known carcinogen that irritates eyes and skin
- 11 **LINALOOL:** causes central nervous system disorders, reduced spontaneous motor activity and depresses heart activity
- 12 **PENTANE:** harmful if inhaled — can cause headaches, nausea, dizziness, drowsiness, loss of consciousness & central nervous system depression

LEARN MORE AT BRANCHBASICS.COM

1: <https://www.thespruce.com/top-uses-for-vinegar-in-laundry-2147286>

2: <https://www.realsimple.com/home-organizing/cleaning/laundry/best-dryer-balls>

3: <https://branchbasics.com/blog/12-toxic-chemicals-in-dryer-sheets-fabric-softeners/>

Minimizing Waste: Meal Planning



- Make a plan for the week
- Shop for groceries from your meal plan list to avoid buying extras/impulse foods that won't get eaten.

Meal Planner

NOTES



	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	GROCERY LIST
MON				
TUE				
WED				

NOTE: "Up to 40 percent of the food in the United States is never eaten...40% of that is from residential homes." ~NRDC

Grocery Shopping



- Shop at local farmer's markets or participate in a CSA with a local farm
- Buy naked foods – avoid buying plastic wrapped foods
- Bring your own produce bags to put produce in
- Avoid items packaged in smaller bundles
- Buy in bulk using your own containers
- Bring your own reusable shopping bags



Cotton produce bag



Unnecessary plastic wrap



Bulk bins (if/when available)

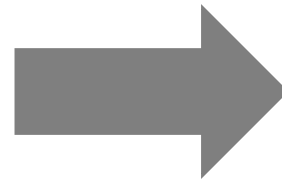
Food Storage



Instead of using plastic wrap to store food, consider these alternatives:



Plastic wrap or Ziploc bags on food – used once and thrown away



Glass containers



Beeswax Wraps



Stasher bag

NOTE: *Plastics contain chemicals that are bad for our health due to endocrine disruptors so we don't want them close to our food or items we eat off of.* ^{1,2}

1: https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/youre-literally-eating-microplastics-how-you-can-cut-down-exposure-to-them/2019/10/04/22ebdfb6-e17a-11e9-8dc8-498eabc129a0_story.html

2: <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2011/04/25/peds.2011-0523>

Minimizing Waste: Linens



Paper napkins



Linen napkins (helpful to have different sizes)



Paper towels

$\$15 \times 6 = \90



Bar towels, upcycled fabrics, "unpaper towel"

$\$14 \times 1 = \14



Support structure: Place a bucket nearby in the kitchen for dirty napkins and unpaper towels (and masks).

Maximizing Food: Storage



The way you store food can make it last much longer minimizing the potential to waste and increasing the chance to save money.



Carrots can last up to a month if stored this way



Be mindful of ethylene producing fruit (apples) vs ethylene sensitive foods (bananas)

Dish and Hand Soap



Choose bar soap or refillable liquid



Dish soap block
(No Tox Life)



Refillable liquid dish and hand soap
(Fillaree subscription model, local refill shops)

NOTE: Bar soaps often have minimal packaging – paper to recycle or naked.

Shower – Bar Soaps



To minimize single-use plastic, switch to bar soaps with minimal packaging or refillable products.



Plastic bottles of shampoo, conditioner, face wash, body wash

Bar soaps or refillable

On The Go – Daily Life



Plan ahead – what does your day look like?



Prepare for common habits/actions



TIP: Napkin can be used to wrap dirty utensils or as a Kleenex if needed.



What one thing will you try changing during the next month?

- Food usage – meal planning to minimize waste
- Grocery shopping – buy naked
- Grocery shopping – bring own produce and shopping bags
- Grocery shopping – bring reusable containers to buy bulk
- Storage – Reusable mason jars/glass containers
- Storage – Plastic wrap alternative
- Storage – Ziploc bag alternative
- Linens – washable napkins
- Linens – washable papertowel alternative
- Strategic about how to store food to maximize its life
- Wash clothes less frequently
- Use non-toxic cleaners
- Use bar soap
- Switch to refillable soaps
- Use an on-the-go alternative

Support Structures



Schedule it: When will you do the first step? Put it on your calendar (paper, digital). Time is our most precious commodity.



Tell someone: Share with others to help hold you accountable (partner, friend, coworker, kids)



Make it easy: Set up physical aspects to make the change easier (ex. Put a bucket in the kitchen or paper towel replacements)



Self-compassion: Remind yourself you are doing the best that you can.

Final Thoughts

1. What's your "why"?
2. What one change can you make this month?
3. What support structures will help you?



Contact Information



CHAMPION
of CHANGE

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