

8 Ways to Green Your Recycling

by Trey Granger on February 18th, 2008

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Ideally, the act of recycling would be enough for you to rest easy. But here are eight ways to make your recycling efforts as eco-friendly as possible.

1. Change Your Recycling Perspective

Instead of asking, “What things around my house can I recycle?” try “What things CAN’T I recycle?” Putting cans and paper at the curb is how your parents recycled. The new generation is recycling everything from [batteries](#) to [motor oil](#) to [computer monitors](#). Run a search using [Earth 911’s recycling locator](#) to find a destination for these and other products.

2. Know What You’re Recycling and Where to Recycle It

Driving around to five different recycling centers to find a home for your ferrous metals can easily be avoided with some research. Use [Earth 911’s recycling locator](#) to make sure a facility provides the services you want. Driving 10 extra miles because you didn’t do your homework will negate the effects of recycling.

3. Recycle in Groups

If you’re dropping off recycling, you’ll need a car instead of relying on a bike or public transportation. But what if you and three friends all recycled on the same day with one car-load?

Another option to recycle in groups is to [Start a Recycling Program](#). This will cut down on your trips to the recycling center entirely.

4. Reuse Your Recycling Containers

Using plastic bags to carry your recyclables is great, but they only provide a one-time use. Instead, invest in storage bins that allow more content and can be used for numerous trips. Just make sure you keep the bins clean so you don’t attract bugs.

5. Pre-cycle When You Shop

Nearly everything you buy at the grocery store will come in some sort of container. The key to pre-cycling is finding products in containers that are either [made from recycled material](#) or recyclable, or both. Anything in [aluminum](#), [cardboard](#) or [glass](#) will be easy to recycle. [Plastics](#) get trickier.

6. Start Green-cycling

What happens to all the waste you create while gardening? Some communities have yard waste pick-up service, but an alternative is creating your own [compost](#) system. Green-cycling can occur year round whether its [recycling your Christmas tree](#) or [composting your autumn leaves](#).

7. Reuse Before You Recycle

Your plastic containers won't be turned away if the writing has faded from a few trips through the microwave. Paper can be recycled no matter how many times it is written on. A little creativity can give many recyclables in your house a second life before they go to the curb.

8. Pass Along the Message

The current recycling rate in America is around 33 percent. By passing on some recycling knowledge, you can help raise that rate, and that is something worth talking about.

This story is part of Earth 911's "Green Eight" series, where we showcase eight ways to green your life in various areas. Click here to see Earth 911's ["Green Eight" archive](#).