

Waste Audit - Directions & Data Sheet - Zero Waste Week 2021

Waste Audit: An inventory of the trash that is produced in your household, school, or place of business

Goal of a Waste Audit: To become familiar with what you are throwing away in an effort to initiate waste reduction efforts

Directions:

1. Collect one days worth of trash (minimally) and conduct a waste audit. Gather all of the materials listed and have fun. ***Pro tip -** keep the days worth of organic material (food scraps) separate from other trash in your kitchen for easy sorting.
2. Take your days worth of trash from your kitchen (usually your main trash can) and spread it out on a tarp. This should include all your recyclables items for the day too. Put your separated organic material on the tarp also.
3. Sort the items into these categories (reusable item, recyclable item, organic material or landfill waste). Take pictures and then enter the data on your data sheet:
 - a. **Weigh** each category and get a count of items
 - b. If you don't have a scale you can **estimate the volume**. For example, you may visually identify that there is 10% reusable materials, 30% recyclable material, 20% organic material, and 40% landfill waste.
4. Place everything in their appropriate bin once the waste audit is complete. Put recyclables in the recycling bins, place organics in a compost pile if you have one and then bag up the landfill waste.
5. Think about the items that you throw away. Were there areas where you could reduce? Are there products you can avoid? Is there a reusable alternative to a single-use item even if that single-use item is recyclable? Consider setting up a composting bin in your backyard if you don't already have one or subscribe to a local community composter.
Nothing in nature is wasted and all resources flow through the ecosystems benefiting all in the community. This is your guide as you think about what resources you discard daily.
6. Repeat this waste audit for as many days as you want - I suggest 7 days in a row to get some great data!

Materials Needed:

- One days worth (or several days) of trash from your household (remember to keep your food scraps separated all day)
- An area to sort the trash (preferably outside on a towel or tarp)
- Personal protective equipment: gloves, closed toed shoes, and eye protection
- Data collection equipment: data sheet, pencils, scales, camera or phone for pictures
- Local recycling guidelines - City of Gainesville [Recycling Resource](#)



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