

Living a Low-Plastic Lifestyle

By Kanchan Kargwal

World Environment Day reminds us—the contributing species to pollution on planet Earth—that the environment can be preserved through mindful actions and addressing harmful human activities. In the context of this year's focus on combating plastic pollution, [the United Nations Environment Programme](#) has strongly emphasised the significant role of individuals in accelerating the shift to a plastic-free world.

Therefore, in this blog post, I aim to discuss my easily adoptable personal lifestyle habits for reducing plastic pollution. In the endeavour of making mindful choices and living a sustainable life, I have taken small yet meaningful steps to reduce my plastic consumption. Though seemingly minor, these day-to-day lifestyle choices and conscious habits can have a substantial impact in minimising plastic pollution.

One of the fundamental changes I made a long time ago was incorporating reusable alternatives into my daily routine. For instance, I carry my own glass water bottles wherever I go, avoiding the need to purchase plastic water bottles—one of the most common plastic items in the environment. However, I often face a significant challenge in finding access to safe and filtered drinking water for refilling my personal bottle, forcing me to buy a water bottle and contribute to the accumulating plastic waste.

Another example is the use of paper or jute bags and reusable containers while shopping, which enables me to avoid store packaging and reduce my consumption of single-use plastic. Further, I prefer grocery products with minimal or no plastic packaging and buying fresh produce from local farmers' markets or ration stores.

Furthermore, I carry my own reusable steel cutlery set and straw, which enable me to enjoy my meals without generating any plastic waste.

In my quest for a plastic-free lifestyle, I am working towards reducing and eliminating (in the long run) my monthly sanitary pad consumption. As these pads do not biodegrade and contribute to plastic waste, I explored sustainable alternatives, such as menstrual cups and reusable cloth pads. Initially, transitioning from the convenience of disposable sanitary pads to something like a menstrual cup was challenging, but my perseverance and practice made the switch to this environment- and pocket-friendly option smoother.

Although gifts and souvenirs presented with finesse add an element of surprise and bring joy to the recipient, I try to avoid plastic gift wrapping and unnecessary plastic packaging by opting for paper-based materials.

Beyond personal choices, I strongly believe in the power of education and advocacy. I actively engage in conversations about plastic pollution, sharing my experiences and knowledge with friends, family, and colleagues. By raising awareness and inspiring others to take actions towards reducing plastic consumption and promoting sustainable practices, I believe that we can collectively make a significant impact on the degrading environment.

I understand that completely avoiding plastic usage is challenging in certain situations, but by making efforts and adopting or changing certain lifestyle habits, we can undoubtedly reduce our plastic

footprint. Further, living a sustainable lifestyle and reducing our plastic consumption is an ongoing journey that requires continuous commitment, habit changes, and conscious decision-making. Having said that, every small step counts in the fight against plastic pollution.

The rewards of embracing a low-plastic lifestyle extend beyond personal fulfilment to mitigating the adverse environmental effects of plastic pollution, conserving resources, and safeguarding ecosystems. I firmly believe that together we can make a difference, so let us prioritise the well-being of our planet and take tangible steps towards a plastic-free future.

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