

Less is More: The Sustainable Office

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There are many ways to develop a more sustainable lifestyle at home and on the go, but even folks who are "green" at home may have difficulty maintaining that lifestyle at the office. Switching over from single use products can be a simple, one-item-at-a-time way to begin to develop habits that can save you money and protect the environment while you are at work. Here are some tips on how to start:

Look around your office and see which things you throw away on a regular basis.

Ask yourself, is there another option?

Do you drink coffee? Bring a reusable mug to work. While you're at it, store a small container of creamer in the office fridge and keep a well-sealed jar of sugar at your desk. If there's a coffee station, maybe others would be willing to pitch in to make it a more sustainable space. Getting rid of the single serve sugar and creamer packs and plastic stirring sticks can significantly cut down on the waste your coffee habit generates.

What about all that plastic silverware? Tuck a reusable fork and spoon in a pouch and keep them in your desk drawer. Wash them at home and bring them back.

Leftovers from eating out for lunch? Keep a small stash of reusable containers on hand and bring them to the restaurant to avoid taking home single use to-go boxes that then go directly in the trashcan.

Bring your lunch in reusable containers.

Hang onto that reusable water bottle and stay hydrated instead of purchasing less healthy options like soda in single use bottles.

Save used paper clips, rubber bands, file folders, and other office supplies. There is no reason that these things can't be reused over and over again.

Skip the paper towels. Hand dryers really do save paper. If your office isn't equipped with hand dryers, then just take what you need. Instead of four or five paper towels, dry your hands with one.

Take only what you need. This is a great philosophy to live by! From ketchup packets to business cards and brochures, we throw out much of what we collect on a daily basis without thinking about it. These small things add up, and the best way to avoid ending up with a desk drawer full of useless items that need to be thrown in the trash is to not collect those things in the first place.

In addition to forgoing single use items, there are many ways to be more environmental at work; from turning the lights off when you leave your office to keeping a live plant on your desk that can brighten up your space and help increase air quality. No matter what you choose to do, it is important to bring a more sustainable mindset to the workplace.

