

HOW TO DO A HOME WASTE AUDIT



YOU WILL NEED

- 3 days worth of trash (include recycling and food waste, not bathroom waste)
- disposable gloves, optional apron, eyewear, face mask
- a tarp (or old shower curtain, or any large piece of plastic)
- a data collection chart and pencil
- optional clipboard
- optional kitchen or bathroom scale and a calculator

1

PREPARATIONS

Collect 3 days worth of waste from your home. Lay a tarp or other large piece of plastic wherever you are performing the audit. Get your data collection chart and pencil, and if available, a clipboard. If you would like to include weights in your data collection, get a bathroom or kitchen scale. Put on gloves, and, if you wish, an apron, eye protection, and/or face mask.

2

SPREADING & SORTING TRASH

Spread out your trash so you can see it on the tarp.

Sort the trash into the following piles:

- plastic (bottles, bags, containers, packaging, bottle caps, etc.)
- paper products (paper, newspaper, magazine, paper bags, cardboard, etc.)
- glass
- metal
- food waste
- miscellaneous/other

Thanks to the Staff & Students
at Hopewell Valley Central High School
who developed this Tool!!

HOW TO DO A HOME WASTE AUDIT CONT.



3

COLLECTING DATA

Using your data collection chart, write down how many pieces of each item you have.

If you would like to also weigh your trash, you can record the weight of each trash group, using a kitchen scale. If you only have a bathroom scale, follow these steps to get the weight of items:

- Weigh yourself holding an empty bag. Write down your weight.
- Then weigh yourself holding the items (such as plastics) in the bag.
- Subtract your weight (a) from your weight holding the items (b) to get the items' weight.

Add up all your data.

Clean up and properly dispose of your trash.

4

CREATING WASTE REDUCTION GOALS

Have a family meeting to discuss the results of your data. Decide together on some eco-goals you are willing to try as a family. Maybe you'll try to reduce your plastic use; maybe you'll try starting a compost bin; maybe you'll drink tap water instead of buying bottled water. Set your goals and a time frame. After a month, recollect your data. Share your results!

Home Waste Audit Data Collection: Audit #1

Categories	Number Of Items	Weight of Items*
Plastics (total)		
• plastic bottles		
• plastic bags		
• plastic containers		
• plastic packaging		
• plastic bottle caps		
• other plastic items		
Paper products (total)		
• paper		
• newspaper		
• magazines		
• cardboard		
• paper bags		
• other paper items		
Glass		
Metal		
Food Waste		
Miscellaneous/other		

* Weight of items can be calculated either:

a. through direct weighing
-or-

b. by weighing yourself (a), then weighing yourself holding the items (b) and subtracting the two (b-a)

Home Waste Audit Data Collection: Audit #2

Categories	Number Of Items	Weight of Items*
Plastics (total)		
• plastic bottles		
• plastic bags		
• plastic containers		
• plastic packaging		
• plastic bottle caps		
• other plastic items		
Paper products (total)		
• paper		
• newspaper		
• magazines		
• cardboard		
• paper bags		
• other paper items		
Glass		
Metal		
Food Waste		
Miscellaneous/other		

* Weight of items can be calculated either:

c. through direct weighing
-or-

d. by weighing yourself (a), then weighing yourself holding the items (b) and subtracting the two (b-a)