

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

There is no such thing as an organism that doesn't create an impact on the environment. The question becomes how much impact that organism is making and whether the environment can absorb that impact without severely affecting the entire ecosystem. The average American creates 12 times the environmental impact of the average Indian. Within nations, super rich households can consume as much as 100-1000 times that of the poorest. Each of us has not only the ability but the responsibility to minimize our wasteful ways.

The Three R's (reduce, reuse, recycle) represent a checklist from which we can lower our impact on the environment. The first step is to know the real reasons why we are buying things. In today's market economy, things that we buy are much cheaper than they would be if all of the externalized costs (e.g. pollution) associated to its production and distribution were included in its price. This leaves the erroneous impression that people can consume as much as they want without impact. Reducing what we buy to only what we need is the first step to lowering our impact.

The second step is to determine what can be reused once the object has served its initial purpose. Use the old garage door as part of the [half wall between the kitchen and bathroom](#). Take that old aquarium and [create a coffee table](#). Grab all those extra utensils and [make a drum kit](#)! Reusing materials can create unique and personal environments and help to foster a more sacred relationship to material goods, which are part of the [sustainable values](#) needed to spawn a sustainable world.

Finally, when things can no longer be reused, we should make every attempt to recycle them. Composting organic material, reusing glass milk containers, using biodegradable packaging are all examples how we can recycle materials.

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