

BEYOND RECYCLING

Earth Day 2020 – Plastic Bottles

Water is a necessity to everyday life and health to most living organisms on this Earth. Over the years, people have become accustomed to the idea that bottled water is a great option due to its level of convenience and portability; however what people don't realize are the negative effects that plastic bottles have on our environment. Some of these effects include expensive cost, lack of recycling, and extreme overuse contributing to landfill buildup.

Many people think that changing their habits has no real effect on the environment or the economy; however, if everyone was to limit or stop using one-use plastic bottles, the changes would have a huge impact. Change starts with one person, so be the person that starts the change!

Here are a few ideas to help start this process:

- ✓ Limit the number of plastic bottles used daily.
- ✓ Choose to use a reusable stainless steel or multi-use plastic bottle.
- ✓ If using a plastic bottle is necessary, be sure to recycle it instead of throwing it in the trash.



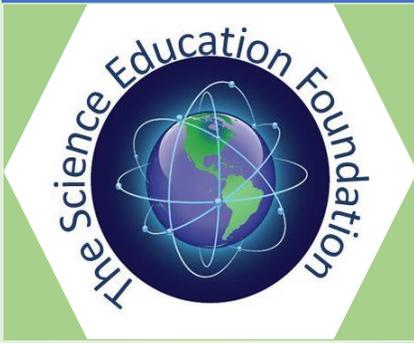
Cost Savings of Drinking Tap Water vs. Bottled Water

Drinking bottled water is significantly more costly compared to that of drinking tap water. In an article published by the Harvard University on sustainability, the author states that while tap water costs approximately \$0.02 per gallon, bottled water costs more than thirty times that at \$0.64 per gallon (<https://green.harvard.edu/tools-resources/green-tip/reasons-avoid-bottled-water>).

To the consumer, it may seem that the cost of water is increasing when an individual makes a purchase; however, the bottle makes up most of the cost. Making the move to purchase and use a reusable water bottle could save many people more money than they think.

By purchasing a \$20.00 reusable water bottle, people could save on average \$6,180 over a five-year span. Imagine what that extra money could be used to purchase! Not only could people save money, but there would also be potential to fix the issue of recycling.

“The use of a \$20 reusable water bottle can save the average American \$6,180 after five years of use.” –(Harper 1)



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Recycling has been an ongoing promotion and push for many years now and although the statistics may be getting better than what they were, there is still an enormous amount of room for growth. Many people believe that just recycling their plastic bottles is the answer to saving the world but less than half of those bottles make it into a recycling bin. According to an environmental news site called Go Green, “12% out of the thirty-five billion bottles used in one year gets recycled” (<http://www.gogreen.org/blog/impacts-of-plastic-water-bottles>). This is not the only statistic that shows that the amount of one-time use water bottles recycled is significantly less than 50%. Therefore, individuals can see that the amount of recycling that is taking place is clearly not up to par with where it needs to be in order to keep the Earth as safe and healthy as possible. It is also very hard to recycle so much when one-time use plastic bottles are used so much every day. In the United States, millions of plastic water bottles are used every day. While one-use bottles may seem convenient and easy to use, they have immense detrimental effects on landfills.

“1,500 plastic water bottles are being used every second in the United States alone.”
(<http://www.gogreen.org/blog/impacts-of-plastic-water-bottles>)



The same organization quoted above, also states that the United States goes through 60,000,000 plastic bottles a day and about 80% of those bottles end up overflowing landfills. Too many bottles are disposed of daily and the rate of decomposition cannot compare. It takes 500 to 1,000 years for plastic to degrade. It also costs money to perform up-keep on landfills and one-use plastic bottles are a major contributor to that cost. With a little bit of work from everyone, major changes could be made.

References:

<https://green.harvard.edu/tools-resources/green-tip/reasons-avoid-bottled-water>, accessed January 9, 2020.

<http://www.gogreen.org/blog/impacts-of-plastic-water-bottles>, accessed January 9, 2020.

<https://sites.psu.edu/math033fa17/2017/10/10/plastic-vs-reusable-water-bottles/>, accessed January 9, 2020.