

How to recycle your plastic at home

By Felicity Aris

Trying to figure out what can or can't be recycled can be a real headache, especially when it comes to any plastic items at home. From our milk bottles to our shower gels to our bathroom sprays, many of our household products are made up of lots of different types of plastic which come with their own, often very different, recycling instructions that can be complicated to follow. As a result, only 12% of plastic that is thrown away in the UK is actually recycled, according to The Big Plastic Count, a nationwide study which a few Aldbury households took part in earlier this year.

What can we do about this in our own homes? Here are just three simple things you can work on at home that can make a big difference in reducing our plastic pollution:

Keep the lids on your plastic milk bottles

Blue, green and red bottle caps are made from a different material to the milk bottles they are attached to and previously it's been recommended to keep these separate, but that has prevented a lot of bottle caps from being recycled. When you throw your plastic milk bottles away, screw the lids back on as this will make it easier to collect the material at recycling centers and improve their chances of being recycled.

Clean ready meal trays before you throw them away

The cleaner the recycling, the higher the quality of the material will be to the recycler. If you get ready meals from major supermarkets such as Sainsburies, Tesco, or Waitrose, these are made of CPET and can be recycled. The best way to do this is by removing the film lids (put these in general waste). Then remove any food and rinse the dirty trays. This helps prevent recycling machinery from breaking down due to grease buildup from processing.

Do NOT put your recycling in plastic bags in your blue-lidded bin

Recycling placed in plastic bags makes sorting material harder, especially black plastic bin liners which are difficult to recycle. On dacorum.gov.uk, residents are requested to put their dry mixed recycling **loose** in their blue-lidded bins, not in plastic bags. This includes all your (clean and dry) plastic bottles, pots, tubs, and trays along with your cardboard, glass bottles, paper and tins.

Guidance taken from Dacorum.gov.uk and recyclingbins.co.uk, thebigplasticcount.com.
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