



25 STEPS FOR

PLASTIC  
FREE  
LIVING



LET'S BUILD A BEAUTIFUL  
AND SUSTAINABLE WORLD

# WELCOME!

Hello and welcome to Plastic Free Living! It is so wonderful to have you on board as we work together to grow generations of healthy little people who will be born into a beautiful and sustainable world. We can achieve this together and start right now by reducing our use of plastics.

We all know of the disastrous effect plastic waste is having on our environment. Each year enough plastic is thrown away to circle the earth 4 times!<sup>1</sup> And given that it takes 500-1,000 years for plastic to degrade, it is no surprise that we are facing a plastic pollution crisis across our world, and in our waterways. Over one-million sea birds and 100,000 sea mammals are killed every year from plastic in our oceans. And every single species of sea turtle has now been documented with plastic in or around their bodies<sup>2</sup>.



**EACH YEAR ENOUGH PLASTIC IS THROWN AWAY TO CIRCLE THE EARTH 4 TIMES<sup>1</sup>**

But the truth is, we are also doing incredible harm to our own health. Plastic chemicals are absorbed by the body and have been found to alter hormones, impact immune systems and have effects on our skin and respiratory systems. In a recent study, 93% of Americans aged 6 or older were found to have the plastic chemical BPA in their bodies<sup>3</sup> – a chemical recognised by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to have a neurotoxic effect on the body, impacting upon the brain's ability to grow and develop properly. And we expose ourselves and our children to this poison every day through plastic food wraps and storage products.

While government action to ban single-use plastics around the globe is a fantastic response to this crisis on the global scale, we have the opportunity to make a real impact in our homes, communities and to the health of us and our children every day. And that is why Plastic Free Living exists.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.reusethisbag.com/articles/the-truth-about-plastic/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.ecowatch.com/22-facts-about-plastic-pollution-and-10-things-we-can-do-about-it-1881885971.html>

<sup>3</sup>2003-2004 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES III) conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).





## ABOUT PLASTIC FREE LIVING

Plastic Free Living began a few years ago in our kitchen when preparing school lunches. I had just read about the health implications from plastic toxin exposure, and here I was sending our children off for the day with lunches encased in potentially harmful packaging. I took stock - plastic cling wrap, lunch boxes, drink bottles, food storage, straws...we could not escape plastic.

From that moment, I was passionate about researching plastics and had a dream of offering alternatives to parents who also shared my concerns. Coming from a midwifery and nursing background and also completing my maternal child health nursing, I was acutely aware that parents shared a deep concern not only for the safety of their little people but also for the world in which they would inherit.

My husband soon developed a passion for avoiding plastics, partly because I was always yelling “ Don’t put hot food in the plastic container, I don’t care if it is BPA free!” but also because he had started to notice increasing amounts of plastic pollution during his morning walks on the beach with our labradoodle, Rizzo. He was heartbroken to see our beautiful coastline seemingly covered in small pieces of plastic, intertwined in seaweed and littered over the foreshore where our children play.



Plastic Free Living was officially founded late 2018 and is based near the beautiful beaches of the Mornington Peninsula, Victoria. From its inception PFL has aimed to offer quality plastic free alternatives to homewares, including drink and food storage, kitchen utensils, as well as personal care items such as toothbrushes and also reusable food wraps and biodegradable/compostable bin liners.

We hold ourselves to account environmentally, ensuring that our packaging has the least amount of plastics possible. When plastic packaging is required for health and safety reasons, we work closely with our suppliers to source compostable plastics (where possible). We have also aligned ourselves with Sea Shepherd as part of our carbon offset program.

Plastic Free Living will continue to grow and offer plastic free alternatives with the hope of growing generations of healthy little people who will be born into a beautiful and sustainable world.

## PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

The purpose of this book is to not to judge or criticise your current use of plastics. We all make the best choices we can every day with the information we have at hand. Instead, this book has been created to inspire you to lessen your plastic waste footprint, and to help you make your contribution to a beautiful and sustainable world.

It also provides you with the information you need to make wise choices to protect yourself and your family from the harmful effects of plastic toxins, so that you can ensure the health and vitality of our future generations.

We all have the ability to make small and easy changes in our daily routines that will help us achieve a life without plastic, and this book will show you how. It is packed with ideas to minimise plastic in each key area of our lives and if they can't be removed completely, how to reduce, reuse and recycle plastics in our daily lives.

For it is each day, every day, that will make a difference.



BE PART OF THE SOLUTION, NOT PART OF THE POLLUTION

# 25 STEPS FOR PLASTIC FREE LIVING

## Shopping

Let's start with some great tips for one of the most fun activities – shopping. It is amazing the amount of plastic you can reduce on your daily and weekly shopping trips just by doing the following:

### 1. Carry Reusable Shopping Bags

This is one of the easiest ways to reduce the amount of plastic in your everyday life. Just by keeping and using reusable shopping bags in your handbag or car, you can instantly lessen the amount of plastics that end up in our environment. Or take a backpack with you for the small outings and put your purchases straight in – it makes them much easier to carry as well. But remember, reusable bags are not just for groceries. Take them with you for all of your purchases, from stationery, books, electricals and clothing!



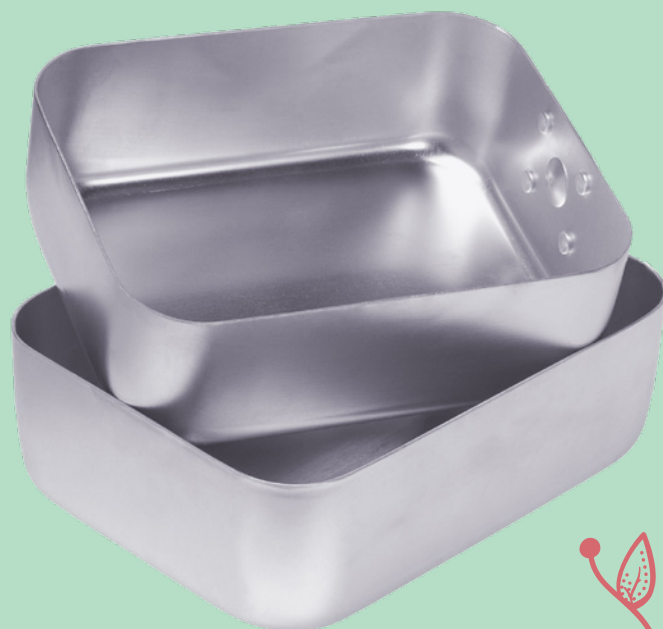
### 2. Use Produce Bags

One of the sneakiest ways plastic gets into your shopping is through separate small bags for produce. While they create a convenience, to be honest, they are really unnecessary. Single pieces of produce can just be left un-bagged – you will be washing it before use anyway. And just like your reusable shopping bags, for loose items you can use reusable produce bags. Check out these [great mesh produce bags](#) from our store. These bags let you rinse your produce and pop it straight into the fridge. They also have great airflow around the food to make sure it stays fresher for longer.



### 3. Take Your Own Meat Containers

But what about meat? You need plastic bags for the butchers, don't you? The answer is no, not if you are willing to be a bit prepared. You can take along your own containers to the butchers, and they can put the meat straight in. They can deduct the weight of the container to make sure you are only paying for the contents. The great news is, that if you use metal containers, the meat could even go straight into the oven, saving time and mess!



### 4. Shop At Farmers Markets

Buying produce fresh from the markets is a great way to lessen the need for plastic in food storage, transport pollution, and also to support our wonderful local farmers. Eating fresh and buying local not only keeps you and your family well but also contributes to a healthy and vibrant community.

### 5. Watch What You Wear

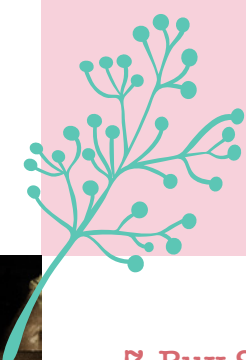
Polyester, acrylic, lycra, spandex, nylon...the list of clothing materials made from plastic is a lengthy one. And all of these synthetic fabrics create microfibre pollution when they are cleaned. So next time you are buying clothes, opt for natural fibres such as organic cotton, wool, bamboo or hemp. These products can be sometimes hard to find in mainstream stores, so you might need to have some fun exploring the wonderful range available online.





## 6. Buy In Bulk

One way to remove the use of plastics is to choose the cardboard or paper containers instead of the plastic ones for dry goods e.g. for pasta and cereals. But the other way to remove the demand for plastics is to buy in bulk. There is increasing access to bulk supplies in food, cleaning and personal care supplies. I would even suggest that almost everything you have in your pantry right now could be purchased in bulk. Think about all of the dry foods, beans, tea, coffee, nuts, cereals, pasta herbs and candy that could be sitting in your cupboard plastic free. The trick here though, is to be prepared and carry your own [bulk produce bags](#) and containers. You don't want to end up at the bulk food bins using plastic bags!



## 7. Buy Second-Hand

Shopping at thrift or charity stores is a great way to reduce the amount of new plastic floating around our environment. If you must replace existing plastics, then see if you can source them from a second-hand shop. This way you are not only reusing already made plastics, but you are helping out your local charities and businesses as well – a true win-win for your community!



## Out and About

One of the times we end up being caught out and having to purchase plastics is when we are on the go - when we need to drink or eat but have come unprepared. Follow these simple tips to minimise your exposure to toxins, and to reduce your plastic pollution every day.

### 8. Carry A Stainless Steel Water Bottle

While water is an essential part of life, the amount of resources used to produce bottled water is tragic. We have at our fingertips access to safe drinking water for just a fraction of the price. In addition, a recent study has found that a single bottle of water can contain dozens, or possibly even thousands of microscopic plastic particles<sup>4</sup>. Why would you expose yourself to these chemicals, when you have the ability to take your own safe water with you wherever you go? Check out these wonderful [stainless steel drink bottles](#) available today. Get one for your bag and keep one in the car!



### 9. Take A Travel Mug

If you only have space in your bag or backpack for one extra thing, then make sure it is a travel mug. This way you won't be caught out needing to use a take-away cup. In Australia alone, it is estimated that 2.7 million coffee cups end up in land fill each day<sup>5</sup>. There is such a beautiful range of [grab and run coffee cups](#) on offer – check out our store for some ideas. Travel mugs are a guilt-free way to enjoy a great take-away coffee, and you may find your local café offers price discounts if you bring your own cup. In case you don't have a water bottle, you can also fill the mugs with water from taps or bubblers to save purchasing bottled water as well.





## 10. Carry Your Own Straws and Cutlery

Plastic straws and cutlery are incredibly harmful to our health as they contain the neurotoxin BPA. Plastic straws also have a devastating effect on marine life with millions of straws finding their way into our oceans every year. While it is easy to avoid the use of plastic straws and cutlery at home, it can be challenging when you are on the go. Simply go without a straw and drink straight from the cup, or use an eco-friendly, reusable cutlery and straw set that can fit into your bag.



## 11. Think About Food Storage

While you are getting your bag ready with some reusable straws and utensils, also think about bringing your own food containers to take-away restaurants. It may seem a bit extreme to some, but just think about what a powerful action it is, to ask restaurants to use your own containers, rather than their polluting foam and plastic ones. Will people laugh? Maybe. Will you be refused? Maybe. But you just don't know until you try. Take a deep breath and do it anyway, proud in the knowing that you are taking action to make a real and positive difference to this world and setting a great example for others to follow.

<sup>4</sup><https://www.choice.com.au/food-and-drink/drinks/water/articles/is-bottled-water-safer-than-tap-water#is%20bottled%20water%20safer?>

<sup>5</sup>[Businessrecycling.com.au](https://www.businessrecycling.com.au)

## Cleaning

It's hard to imagine that you could clean your house without plastics of some sort – be it cloths, containers, brushes or bags. But it is possible, and here is how...

### 12. Do You Need Bin Liners?

With all of the reduction in your plastic rubbish from the other tips in this book, it is likely that your household rubbish will be dramatically reduced. Especially if you are composting organic matter as well! There may be less and less need for you to use a bin liner. But just in case you still need to use one, it may as well be compostable! Get some [sustainable bin liners](#) that have no microplastic residue and are free from nasty petrochemicals. And don't forget some for those walks with your furry friends too!

Put only those things back into the earth that will do it no harm!



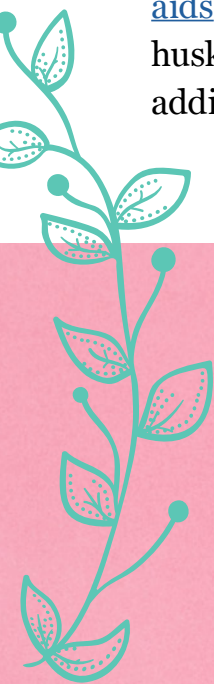
### 13. Simplify Your Cleaning Products

Instead of purchasing a whole range of different cleaning products, each in their own plastic containers, how about you make your own? And you can either just make them up as you need them or store them in glass or reusable plastic containers. You would be surprised how many things you can clean with regular household items such as vinegar, baking soda and lemons. Check out [this ultimate guide](#) for some great ideas about the cleaning you can do without the need for more plastic products.



#### 14. Use Plastic-Free Cleaning Aids

Most cleaning cloths you purchase at the supermarket these days are full of plastic. While they may feel like cloth, microfibre cleaners are essentially made from plastic, with the tiny fibres being released into the water when you are washing with them. To prevent these dangers, turn old clothes and towels into cleaning cloths, and you can scrub your pots and pans with baking soda! Alternatively there is a whole wonderful range of [natural cleaning aids](#) out there made out from coconut husks and bamboo that make a great addition to your cleaning toolkit.



## Personal Care

Plastics have made their way into every aspect of our lives, including our personal care products such as cosmetics, sun creams, soaps, toothbrushes, toothpaste and razors. But with some care you can avoid the plastics and use products that care for our environment and your health.

### 15. Choose Your Skin Care Wisely

All the added demands we are making of our cosmetics – anti-ageing, longer lasting, glossier, thicker, waterproof, smoother – come at a price. This price is the use of more synthetic materials such as plastics.

Microbeads are tiny pieces of plastic used as exfoliants in skin scrubs and toothpastes to add bulk and abrasion. These slip through normal water treatment systems and end up in our waterways. Thanks to the attention they have received, many countries are now banning the use of microbeads. However, microbeads aren't the only micro plastics used in skin care. Many sunscreens, shampoos, conditioners, cosmetics, and deodorants contain other types of micro plastics.

The message here then is to choose your personal care products carefully. Check the ingredients list to see if any of the following chemicals are included:

1. Polyethylene (PE)
2. Polypropylene (PP)
3. Polyethylene terephthalate (PET)
4. Polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA)
5. Nylon (PA)



Ultimately the safest option is to choose certified organic products. Organic certifiers do not permit the use of plastics, and so these products should be safe for yourself and the environment.

Also see if you can find somewhere near you that offers soaps and shampoos in bulk, to minimise any plastic packaging. Or consider using bar versions of soaps and shampoos which are a great package-free alternative.

## 16. Consider Your Toothbrush

Next time you are looking for something to think about while you are brushing your teeth, consider this – plastic toothbrushes take 400 years to decompose. They are made up of a combination of plastics derived from crude oil and rubber and the production processes result in a myriad of harmful plastic by-products. While they seem only such a small part of life, if everyone follows the dentist's advice and changed their brushes every two months, then each person goes through hundreds in a lifetime. Consider how many people live on this planet, and suddenly the toothbrush you are using does not look so innocent and insignificant does it?



Thank goodness there are companies who are now making a whole range of snazzy bamboo tooth brushes, and if you are forgetful like me, you can order them on subscription to arrive every few months. Certainly, something to think about for your next toothbrush change!

PLASTIC TOOTHBRUSHES TAKE

**400YRS**  
TO DECOMPOSE

### 17. Cut Out Disposable Razors

Well now that we have considered the huge problem plastic toothbrushes are, just think about disposable plastic razors. Instead of every few months, they are being cast away every few days. With an average male shaving about 5 times a week, one little razor adds up very quickly to a sea of pollution. It is no wonder that disposable razors rank in the top ten products polluting our planet.



## FIVE ALTERNATIVES TO A DISPOSABLE RAZOR

### GET AN ELECTRIC SHAVER

It's portable, quick and easy to use. It also doesn't require you to use shaving lather so you can cut down on shaving cost.



### BUY DISPOSABLE RECYCLED RAZORS

You help reduce the plastic pollution in the landfill while also lowering the carbon footprint from plastic production.



### USE A STRAIGHT RAZOR

It's durable and more cost-efficient. Its single and sharp blade allows you to achieve a very close shave in just a single pass.



### BUY REUSABLE RAZORS & REPLACE THE BLADES

This doesn't totally eliminate waste since the blades still need to be changed, but it reduces it.



### GET DIVORCED & GROW A BEARD

After their ex-wives get the lump settlement, how else can the men afford a shave?



<https://www.nakedarmorazors.com/blogs/news/five-alternatives-to-a-disposable-razor>

The good news though is there are five alternatives to single-use disposable razors: 1) Use an electric razor 2) Buy recycled razors 3) Use a straight razor 4) Buy reusable razors and replace the blades 5) Give up and grow a beard! Each option has its own pros and cons, but each comes with the ultimate reward of moving one step closer to Plastic Free Living!



## Kids and Babies

As parents and carers, we have both an incredible responsibility, but also opportunity to contribute to the health and wellbeing of our children. Moreover, the actions that we take today, can also arm the next generation with the information and tools they need for Plastic Free Living. Consider the following tips to give your children their best possible start at life, as well as giving this world its best chance at a sustainable future.

### 18. Get Creative With Lunch Boxes

My passion for Plastic Free Living began in my kitchen when I was preparing school lunches. I had just read about the health implications from plastic toxin exposure, and here I was sending our children off for the day with lunches encased in potentially harmful packaging. But after investing much time in research, we have found some very clever companies making some wonderful plastic alternatives.



Take for example these layered [stainless steel lunch boxes](#) which are strong and easy to clean. Then, to go completely plastic and waste free, how about using [beeswax wraps](#). They can cover everything from sandwiches, fruit, vegetables, and can be made into little pouches for biscuits and crackers to prevent using plastic containers.

Yes a complete plastic-free and waste-free lunch box is possible!



### 19. Choose plastic-free bottles, teats and soothers

While a ban on the use of BPA in baby bottles has occurred in many countries, glass and stainless steel bottles are still a much better alternative to reduce the overall demand for and risk of plastics. Bottle teats and soothers though are still usually made from either silicone or latex. Given that some children may develop a sensitivity to latex, it would be wise to avoid these where possible. products polluting our planet.



However, while silicone is non-toxic, it is still a plastic comprised of hydrocarbons which come from fossil sources such as petroleum and natural gas. There is also the risk that there may be BPA used in the colourants of these products, so always check the labels. However, there is also a great range of all-natural non-toxic rubber teats and soothers available in the market which provide a fantastic alternative.

WHILE SILICONE IS NON-TOXIC  
**IT IS STILL  
A PLASTIC**

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## 20. Time To Try Cloth Nappies

While many nappy manufacturers have taken action to address some of the environmental and health concerns from plastic use, there are still several chemicals found in disposable nappies that can do your baby harm. For example, Dioxins and TRIBUTYL-TIN (TBT) have been found to cause disruptions in both hormonal and immune systems. Dyes and perfumes can cause skin irritations, and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC), superabsorbent polymers and phthalates can cause respiratory problems<sup>6</sup>.



The best and safest way to avoid plastics and chemicals in disposable nappies is to ditch disposables altogether. Cloth nappies are chemical-free, breathable, and a lot of the time made from natural materials.

While there are pros and cons with both choices, modern cloth nappies are definitely a much better choice in terms of the environment and financially as well. By the time your child makes it into underpants, you would have used about 300 nappies, and disposable ones, while they are easy to throw away, can take up to 150 years to break down. Using a cloth nappy prevents this contribution to landfill and environmental pollution, and a cold wash cycle and line drying is about half the cost of a disposable nappy<sup>7</sup>. You won't know until you give it a go...so maybe today is the day to try out the modern cloth nappies and get one step to Plastic Free Living.

<sup>6</sup>The French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES)

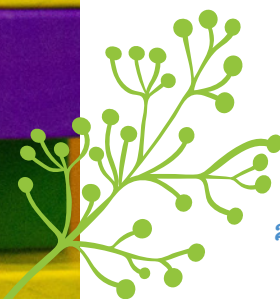
<sup>7</sup><https://www.choice.com.au/babies-and-kids/baby-clothes-and-nappies/nappies/buying-guides/disposable-and-cloth-nappies>

## 21. Find Plastic Toy Alternatives

I think it would be fair to say, that for most families with children, toys make up the majority of plastics in the home. And it is understandable – they are relatively inexpensive, and their vibrant colours are very attractive to kids. However, they are practically impossible to recycle and at this time, the full health effects of the chemicals used in the production of plastic toys is not yet known.



So instead of buying that next plastic toy, investigate items made from wood, metal, cotton, cardboard and natural rubber. These products contribute to Plastic Free Living and also prevent contributions to air, water and land pollution. Environmentally friendly toys encourage your child to be active and they stimulate the senses with their smell and feel much more than their sterile plastic counterparts. If all else fails though, consider purchasing second-hand plastic toys, from thrift shops. This will certainly reduce the amount of plastic that ends up damaging the environment in landfill, but also comes with the added bonus of helping out your local charities!



## Entertainment

And lastly, let's think about some plastic-free fun! You don't need plastic to have a great time.

### 22. Go Digital

Gone are the days when the only way to access music or movies was through DVD's or CD's. Today we have unlimited entertainment resources at our fingertips, through digital services such as iTunes, Netflix, Stan and Spotify. You don't need to own another DVD or CD again, along with its numerous layers of plastic wrapping. Go digital for your music and movies and ditch the plastic from your leisure time as well.



### 23. Eat and Drink and Be Plastic Free!

It is quite normal for people to purchase plastic plates and cups for barbeques and parties. But there are much wiser choices than throwing away your hard-earned party money on single-use plastics. Consider purchasing a second-hand set of crockery, cutlery and glasses from a thrift or charity shop, and keep these as your 'entertainment' set. Alternatively, go for biodegradable and combustible tableware options such as paper, bamboo, palm or sugarcane pulp (bagasse) all of which can be sourced online.



## 24. Balloon Alternatives

Balloons are a great symbol of celebration. But if released they can travel hundreds of kilometres and endanger our environment and wildlife. Marine animals can get entangled in burst balloons. Birds and turtles also mistake balloons for jelly fish and eat them, resulting in severe digestive injuries. There are so many plastic-free alternatives to balloons! Next time you are having a celebration, think about decorating the space with buntings, tissue paper pom poms, candles lanterns, kites, pinwheels, or dancing inflatables. Don't let our marine friends be the ones that pay dearly for your party.



## 25. How You Can Make Ice Cream Even Better!

Is this actually possible? Can ice cream be even better? Well yes it can, for both the environment and your health. Next time you are treating yourself to an ice cream, ditch the cup and enjoy a cone. What a wonderful way to use one less piece of plastic in your day! This choice just made the world a much sweeter place.

# THANK YOU

We hope that this book has given you a lot of ideas and inspiration about how you can achieve Plastic Free Living, for the benefit of the environment, your health, and the wellbeing of your family.

As you can see, going plastic-free does not have to mean a radical re-do of our homes or lives. It can just be a series of small choices we make each day. For example, where we choose to do our shopping (supermarket or farmers market) can make a big difference to our plastic consumption. Being prepared and putting water bottles, reusable coffee cups and utensils in your bag can create the opportunity for you not to have to rely on plastics when you are out and about. When it is time to replace them, choosing a non-plastic razor or toothbrush helps to reduce the plastics in your bathroom, and purchasing soaps, shampoos and conditioners in bulk also reduces the amount of plastics you use and dispose of. There are some incredibly ingenious containers and reusable wraps out there to achieve your aim of a plastic-free and waste-free lunchbox and it is so easy to trial cloth nappies to prevent you throwing hundreds away into landfill. And when you are finished taking all of these great actions, you can sit back and enjoy an ice-cream in a cone at your plastic-free party!



It is so easy to take your first steps to Plastic Free Living today, and we are here to support you. We hope you will join us as we move forward together to ensure the health and wellbeing of ourselves, our little people, and of the world which they will inherit.

With our thanks and all of our best wishes for your plastic-free journey.

**THE TEAM AT PLASTIC FREE LIVING**

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Remember: please feel free to drop us a line with your questions, comments or ideas. Our email is [hello@plasticfreeliving.com](mailto:hello@plasticfreeliving.com)

