

1. The world uses over 1.2 trillion plastic bags a year – that's almost one a day for every adult on the planet.
2. On average, we use a plastic bag for about 12 minutes before throwing it away.
3. Only 1 in 200 throw-away shopping bags is recycled; the rest end up as landfill or in the environment.
4. Almost every bit of plastic ever made still exists in some form, somewhere. Plastic bags last in the environment for centuries. They don't biodegrade, they just break down into smaller and smaller toxic bits, contaminating soil, waterways and oceans, and entering the food chain when ingested by animals.
5. Plastic litter kills more than 100,000 birds, whales, seals and turtles every year.
6. Plastic bags are an oil-based product, made from a non-renewable and declining resource.
7. If 10,000 Londoners stopped using plastic bags, they would save CO2 equivalent to taking 45 cars off the road.
8. The proposed London ban is not just a ban on plastic carrier bags, but on all throw-away shopping bags, because paper and other disposable alternatives also damage the environment during manufacture and recycling.
9. In two November 2007 surveys, 61% approved of charging for bags and 84% said they would not change to a rival supermarket if theirs stopped giving away bags.
10. Most people nowadays are concerned about the environment, several states now ban or tax plastic bags, and some UK towns are now plastic-bag-free. More and more shoppers are carrying their own re-usable bags whenever they go out.

**...AND 5 THINGS YOU CAN DO**

1. **REFUSE** throw-away carrier bags, and support shops that no longer offer them. Ask shops to stop giving away plastic bags – they listen to their customers.
2. **REMEMBER** and **REUSE** the bags you already have.
3. **Get yourself a long-life bag** from one of the many local shops and stores that sell or give away biodegradable cotton or hessian bags, or ones made of recycled materials.
4. **Sign our petition** at [www.plasticbagfreekingston.org.uk](http://www.plasticbagfreekingston.org.uk)
5. **Find out more** about the problems caused by throw-away shopping bags, where to find good alternatives, and answers to FAQs at [www.plasticbagfreekingston.org.uk](http://www.plasticbagfreekingston.org.uk);



and find out more about your impact on the planet and how to reduce it at [www.kingston.gov.uk/eco\\_footprint](http://www.kingston.gov.uk/eco_footprint) or <http://footprint.wwf.org.uk/>



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## 10 things you probably didn't know about plastic bags...



Photo by Harriet Cauthery

