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Tracking Exercise to Help Reduce Your Food Waste (and slow climate change!)

Approximately 40% of the food grown or raised in this country is wasted—much of it by us as consumers. Perfectly edible, wonderfully nutritious food rots in our landfills — in a country where 1 in 6 people are considered food insecure.

Less obvious, but just as important, wasted food is a big contributor to climate change, (1) as it decomposes in landfills, producing methane (a potent greenhouse gas) and (2) because of all the energy wasted and emissions produced as it is grown, processed, packaged, transported and stored, only to be thrown away.

Here's an easy tracking process to see how much food you are wasting—and to begin reducing it!

First week: Become aware of how much food you waste and where you waste it:

Measure all your edible food waste for a week by putting it in one-gallon plastic bags. Think about each wasted item as you put it in the bag--is there anything you might have done differently to avoid wasting this?

Bring home uneaten food from restaurants or other places and include it in the bag.

Likewise, measure wasted liquids in a jar that has an indicator of ounces or that you know the size of. (Include everything except tap water.)



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Write down how many such bags you create (include partial bags as 1/3, 1/2, etc.) and how many ounces of liquid. (You can empty bags or throw out liquids at any point as long as you keep track of the volume.)

Second week: Begin to find places to cut your food waste

Think about possible ways you might waste less this week than last week and put some of these into practice.

Measure your food and beverage waste in the same way as last week.

If you've wasted less at the end of the week, give yourself a pat on the back (and keep making choices that waste less food)!

If you haven't decreased your waste, don't give up. Be conscious of where the food waste happens; try some of the tips suggested below.

Sources for tips on not wasting food:

- **The Kitchn** - [Tips and Tricks: How to Avoid Wasting Food](#)
- **The Sierra Club** - [7 Foods That Are Still Delicious \(and Safe\) Past Expiration](#) by Mikey Jane Moran
- **Greatist** - [29 Smart and Easy Ways to Reduce Food Waste](#) (Tips start about half way through article)

Check out all of ICPJ's 2015 Food & Justice programming at
www.foodandjustice.icpj.org or call **734-663-1870**