



The 7-day Plastic Bag-Free Challenge is a program developed by Marrickville Council for members of the community. It encourages people to go plastic bag-free for one week using eco-friendly alternatives.

Josie, who is a local resident, decided to take on the challenge and to say no to plastic bags. Here is a summary of her experience, including her own ideas and personal challenges. We hope it will inspire you to also sign up for the plastic bag-free challenge!

**Before taking on the challenge**, Josie already had a good routine in place to remember to bring reusable bags when she goes shopping, such as a sign near her front door as a reminder. *“I have developed a habit to remember the bags and so it’s not an issue for me anymore,”* she says. Josie adds that if for one reason or another you don’t have your reusable bag with you and you want to buy something you should simply ask yourself if you really need the product at that time. *“Perhaps it can wait till the next time you do shopping? That way you can make sure to bring your bag next time. I know this is not always the case but it can be sometimes,”* she said.



**Day 1:** Josie remembered to bring her large calico bag when shopping, so she didn’t need to use any plastic bags. She realised that using a big shoulder bag makes it easy to handle large amounts of groceries. She says: *“What would normally need a few plastic bags to carry I can now fit in one big reusable bag.”*

**Day 2:** On the second day of the challenge, Josie bought an apricot danish at a bakery and forgot to refuse the plastic bag. She thought, next time I’ll make sure not to take the plastic bag, and I’ll ask for a paper bag instead.

**Day 3:** Josie put her food scraps in the worm farm that she keeps in her backyard. This reduces her rubbish by about half and in turn, it reduces her use of plastic bin liners. She says: *“Using newspaper is not practical for lining my large bin but I will get some compostable cornstarch bin liners when my plastic bags run out.”*



**Day 4:** Josie went to buy vitamins in a local pharmacy and since it was only a couple of items, she put them in her handbag instead of using a plastic bag.

**Day 5:** Josie took her dog for a walk and used supermarket bread bags for collecting dog waste.

She normally uses biodegradable bags that she buys at the Watershed in Newtown but she says reusing supermarket wrappings is even better and can save her money.



**Day 6:** Josie used 2 plastic bags to carry fresh meat home, but she made sure to reuse them. She says: *“I reuse plastic bags to store dog bones in the freezer. My freezer is too small to fit plastic containers. Next time, I’ll use a reusable cooler bag to carry meat and I’ll save some more supermarket wrappings to put dog food in the freezer.”*

**Day 7:** Josie went shopping at Westfield Bondi Junction. She noticed that the shops in the food court didn’t offer plastic bags. *“There is no plastic at all - no plastic bags, no plastic wrap - paper instead, glass bottles instead of plastic bottles, proper reusable plates and cutlery that gets washed up, instead of plastic plates and cutlery that gets thrown away,”* she explains. She thought it was an excellent idea and decided to enquire whether it could be implemented in the shopping centres in her local Marrickville area.

Josie considerably reduced her use of plastic bags throughout the week and learnt simple ways to reduce her environmental impact. She enjoyed doing the challenge and she invites you to join it too!

*It just takes a little extra thought every day.*

For more information and to join the challenge, go to [www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au/bagbusters/challenge.htm](http://www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au/bagbusters/challenge.htm)