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Recycle 101

Resolving to be a better recycler is easy! We all start somewhere, and whether you are a brand new or an on-and-off recycler, these tips will help you make recycling a simple habit all year.

Know what to throw. “Stick with the Six.” Republic Services collects the following recycle materials with curbside collection: Cardboard, paper, metal cans, plastic bottles and jugs and glass. Of these six materials, the ones that are considered “recycling gold” because of their ability to be remade into new products are: cardboard, paper, aluminum and plastic bottles and jugs.

Empty, clean and dry. These are the three magic words of recycling. Every item in your recycling bin should be free of liquid and food residue. When items are soiled, they can contaminate other perfectly good recyclables and those contaminated materials will end up in the landfill. Give your recyclable containers a rinse, then tap out the excess water, leaving no more than a teaspoon.

When in doubt, throw it out. There will be times when you just aren’t sure if something should be recycled or not. It’s best to toss the item in the waste bin when that happens.

Don’t bag it. While it might seem to make sense to place recyclables in a plastic bag, it’s a big no-no. Materials must stay loose so they can easily be sorted and separated at the recycling center. And that plastic bag isn’t recyclable via your curbside program. (But most grocery stores have plastic bag collection bins near the entrance.)

Visit recyclingsimplified.com for more information on how to become an avid recycler.