

## HYPACK x Watermark: Earth Day

by Jocelyn Kane



The HYPACK team celebrated Earth Day this year with a Watermark event, and the weather was in our favor to make the most of it with an afternoon of plogging. What is Watermark? What is plogging? For those who do not know, our parent company Xylem has a corporate social responsibility program, Watermark, aimed at providing education and equitable access to safe water and sanitation to support healthy lives and build resilient communities. At HYPACK we frequently participate in activities, both in our free time and together at work, to contribute to that mission, and one of those ways is by plogging – picking up trash while jogging. Unlike the name suggests, it is more often done while walking which makes it the perfect activity for anyone to do. Armed with only a few supplies you probably already have, any amount of time, and probably a comfy pair of sneakers, you can help the planet.





There are really only two items you need in order to plog: something to protect your hands and somewhere to put the trash you find. Gardening or latex gloves and a trash bag work great, or if you want to level up your gear as well as be more sustainable you can use a bucket and trash grabbers (ours got lost during renovation but we will be using them next time!). That's it! I would just suggest some sunscreen and bug spray too depending on the weather and location.

Speaking of location, if you are short on time you can simply walk out your front door and around your neighborhood, or finish up your lunch break at the office with a short walk and include plogging. Working on a boat one day? That's great, you can pick up trash on the shore for a little while and directly prevent it from going in the water. Plogging doesn't take a large time commitment, you can add it to the walks you already do during the week, but it can be made even more enjoyable if you have some extra time like we did. HYPACK chose a nearby park so we were able to enjoy the beautiful lake at the same time, and for some, a hike and peak views. Exercise and being outdoors on a nice day, there are worse ways to spend a weekday afternoon.

Further, while you are out leisurely having fun, you are making a notable impact on the earth. The trash that is not properly disposed of is gross, making outdoor spaces less appealing for people to be in. Animals and plants are affected too as food waste doesn't decompose as fast as many assume and it is not native to the area or the animals' diets. Plus, even trash on the ground inland often ends up in the water. Over time, rain and other phenomena of nature move the litter from where it was first left directly to rivers and oceans or via storm drains and pollute the bodies of water.

Consider trying plogging the next time it is nice out or you have to take your dog for a walk. Have fun with it, go someplace cool. Bring your kids, maximizing your impact and teaching them to value the planet. Every step, every piece of trash counts; you'll end the day feeling accomplished knowing you did something good.

