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# You and Your Waste

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A simple 'cartoon about trash' caused quite a stir on the internet. The 20-minute movie *The Story Of Stuff* has been viewed more than 40 million times worldwide.

Produced by Annie Leonard and Free Range Studios, this short film is all about the way we make, use, and throw away stuff. The production unleashed a torrent of pent-up demand for honest conversation about the impacts of our consumer-crazed culture on people and the planet.

We live in a wasteful, throw away society. Every year, 600 million tonnes of products and materials enter the UK economy and only 115 million tonnes of that gets recycled. Most ends up on landfill sites, which produce carbon dioxide and methane gas, affecting climate and biodiversity.

weblink



do



## Watch The Story of Stuff...

...with your church, small group, family and friends. What do you think about it? Does it cause you to take any further action? By reducing, reusing and recycling, we can preserve our precious finite resources for future generations and live more sustainably on our planet.

THE STORY OF STUFF  
[www.storyofstuff.org](http://www.storyofstuff.org)

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## Reduce, reuse and recycle

A Rocha UK's Living Lightly initiative reminds us nothing is wasted in creation. Autumn leaves become spring's fertile mulch. Every element has a fruitful role. Yet in the UK we each throw away an average of half a tonne of waste per year, at least 60 per cent of which could be recycled. Tackling waste is a technical exercise and a spiritual discipline. Visit the Living Lightly pages for ideas on reducing, reusing and recycling your stuff.

## Turn your waste into something wonderful

A great source of bulky, organic material is your own garden compost. The best time to make some is in spring, because it will rot down faster. It's easy to make, it costs nothing and it does the garden a whole lot of good. Here is the BBC's step-by-step guide to making your own compost heap.

## Get to the root of composting

It's really quite simple. It's also eco-friendly, cheap and utterly addictive, says The Ecologist. Composting is nature's way of breaking down materials. Anything natural such as leaves, fruit, vegetables, wool or paper will slowly rot and decompose over time – thanks to myriad organisms, bacteria, fungi, and insects. What remains is a rich, nutrient packed substance, which looks similar to soil, that your garden will love.

## Don't be a drip!

Wasting water is another problem we need to tackle. Do you want to know how much water you use, and where you can make savings? Thames Water has produced an online questionnaire to work out your average water usage and highlight ways in which you can save water.

weblink



A ROCHA UK'S LIVING LIGHTLY  
[arocha.org.uk/our-activities/living-lightly-take-action/waste-2](http://arocha.org.uk/our-activities/living-lightly-take-action/waste-2)

BBC'S GUIDE TO MAKING YOUR  
OWN COMPOST HEAP

[www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/htbg/module7/making\\_your\\_own\\_compost1.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/htbg/module7/making_your_own_compost1.shtml)

THE ECOLOGIST'S GUIDE TO  
COMPOSTING

[www.theecologist.org/green\\_green\\_living/gardening/1092448/the\\_beginners\\_guide\\_to\\_making\\_your\\_own\\_compost.html](http://www.theecologist.org/green_green_living/gardening/1092448/the_beginners_guide_to_making_your_own_compost.html)

THAMES WATER'S USAGE  
CALCULATOR

[secure.thameswater.co.uk/waterwisely/calculate.htm](http://secure.thameswater.co.uk/waterwisely/calculate.htm)

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ECOTOILETS

<http://www.eco-toilets.co.uk/>

## Waterless toilets – the way to go

Composting toilets save water and money, and produce fertilizer and compost that benefits the environment! All composting toilets decompose waste by creating the aerobic conditions for bacteria and other macro and micro-organisms to thrive. The objective is to destroy harmful pathogens, eliminate the risk to human health and environment, and transform the waste nutrients into fertile soil. They typically break down waste material to a small percentage of its original volume.

Compost that is too wet can become anaerobic and produce unpleasant smells. Because of this, Ecotoilets supply waterless composting toilets that separate urine from faeces. The collected urine goes through a process of nitrification, resulting in an odourless, bacteria-free liquid that can be used as a fertiliser or leached safely into the ground. The faeces and toilet paper are collected in a holding tank under the toilet seat with a composting medium using a screen to avoid any unpleasant sights and to keep out flies and other unwanted bugs. The tank either has a stirrer or rotation mechanism to distribute the material and allow even decomposition. When the tank is full it is removed and either stored until fully decomposed or added to a compost pile or rapid composter.

All composting toilets require a little management to ensure that they remain clean, hygienic and odour free. All need to have compost material removed at regular intervals. But these are minor inconveniences compared to the advantages of composting toilets. They protect groundwater, surface water and soil from sewage pollution, prevent the accumulation of hazardous pathogenic waste, and solve the problem of disposing sewage sludge to landfill. They save huge quantities of water in a world where water is an increasingly scarce resource, and require very little infrastructure.



## Get to the bottom of the problem

Reusable nappies – also known as washable nappies, cloth nappies or real nappies – have evolved significantly in the past decade and are a popular choice for eco-conscious parents. Modern reusable nappies don't require soaking and can be washed in the washing machine at home, or picked up by a nappy laundry service. Which asked parents which are the best reusable nappy brands. Find out how they rated 17 different reusable nappy brands, including Mothercare, Bambino Mio and Tots Bots.

## Use your resources responsibly

WRAP is a registered charity with a powerful vision – to show how businesses, organisations and consumers can be part of a 'resource revolution' that will re-invent, re-think and re-define how we use materials. The organisation's five-year plan focuses on three priority areas – food and drink, clothing and textiles, and electricals and electronics – all underpinned by resource management.

## Share and share alike

More than 5,000 groups with nearly ten million members make up the global Freecycle Network. It's a grassroots and entirely nonprofit movement of people who are giving – and getting – stuff for free in their own towns. It's all about reuse and keeping good stuff out of landfills. Each local group is moderated by local volunteers. Membership is free. To sign up, find your community by entering it into the search box or by clicking on 'Browse Groups' above the search box.

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### RESUSABLE NAPPIES

<http://www.which.co.uk/baby-and-child/nursery-and-feeding/guides/disposable-vs-reusable-nappies/reusable-nappies/>

### WRAP

[www.wrap.org.uk](http://www.wrap.org.uk)

### FREecycle

[www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)

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## Rescue and revamp

Upcycling is the act of taking something no longer in use and giving it a second life and new function. In doing so, the finished product often becomes more practical, valuable and beautiful than what it previously was. A website called Upcycle That provides upcycling ideas, inspiration and tutorials. By showcasing discarded items as a resource, they aim to inspire people to creatively repurpose and reuse what they already have. The site was founded by Jacques Karsten and Judy Rom on Earth Day 2012. Upcycle That is a resource for people interested in reusing items in innovative ways.

## Buy recycled stuff

This will increase the demand for recycled products as well as create a good recycling loop. Recycled products are widely available. Use this weblink to become familiar with the different eco-friendly labels you might find on these products.

## See what's in your neighbourhood

Connect with Streetbank, a movement that encourages people to give things away and share things and skills. It all started in 2010, after a man called Sam had a good experience of sharing with his nextdoor neighbours. They'd been lending stuff to him – like a cup of sugar – but it got bigger, like a ladder. In time he found he'd actually made friends with them. They even took down the fence between their gardens and they did all the gardening. Since Sam's good experience, Streetbank has grown to be one of the biggest neighbourhood sharing websites in the world.

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UPCYCLE THAT

[www.upcyclethat.com](http://www.upcyclethat.com)

RECYCLING GUIDE

[www.recycling-guide.org.uk/products.html](http://www.recycling-guide.org.uk/products.html)

STREETBANK

[www.streetbank.com](http://www.streetbank.com)