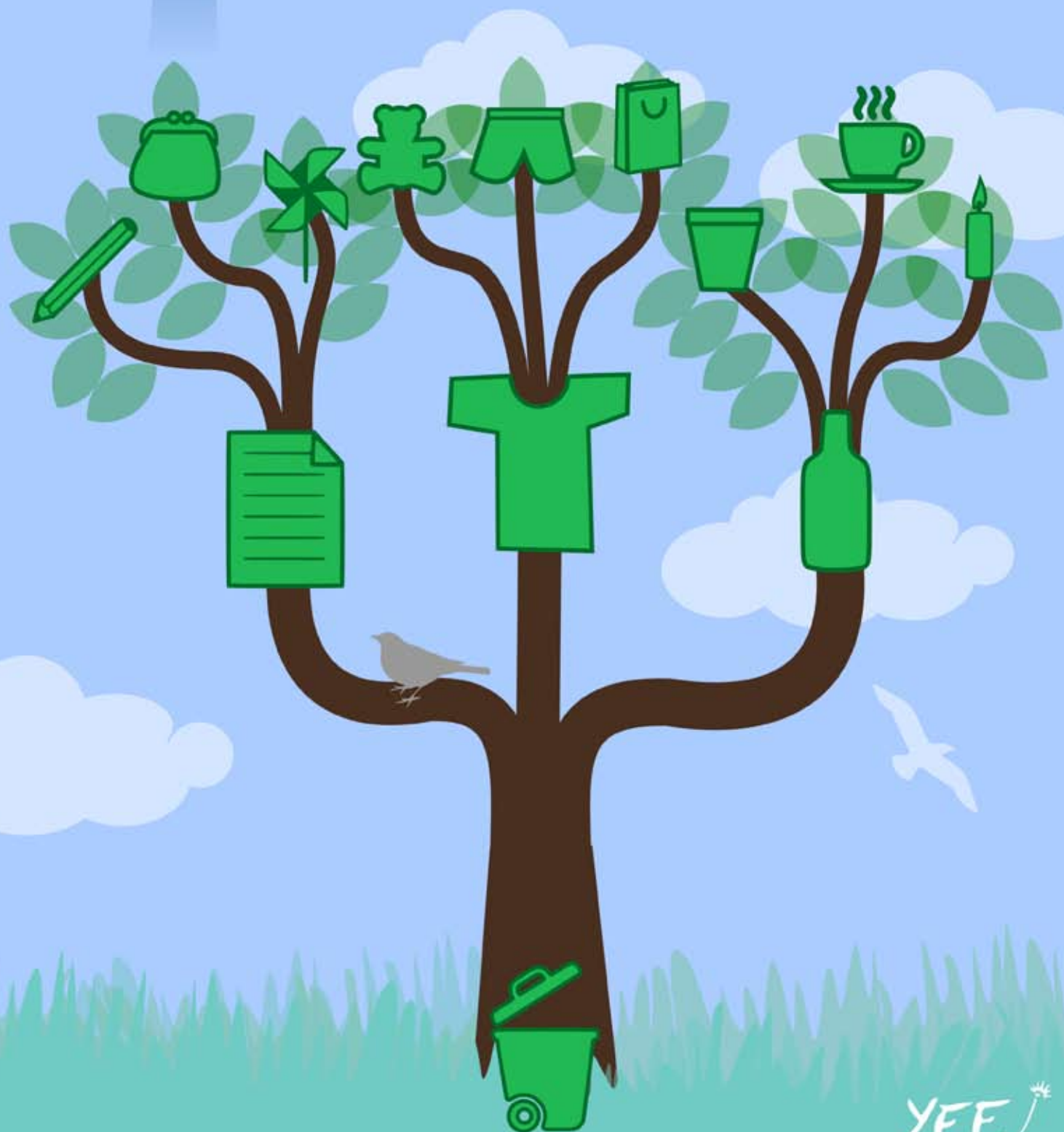


# UP CYCLING



# Upcycling ideas

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We are...

# Funders



The publication 'Upcycling' was created within the framework of the Youth and Environment Europe (YEE) International Campaign on Upcycling focused on raising environmental awareness by promoting in various ways the concept of upcycling among European young people.

The campaign and the publication have been funded with support from the Council of Europe, European Youth Foundation.

The **European Youth Foundation** (EYF) is a fund established by the Council of Europe to provide financial support for European youth activities. Its purpose is to encourage co-operation among young people in Europe by providing financial support to such European youth activities which serve the promotion of peace, understanding and co-operation in a spirit of respect for the Council of Europe's fundamental values of human rights, democracy, tolerance and solidarity.\*

**\*Source:**



[European Youth Foundation](#)



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# Introduction

Youth and Environment Europe for many years has been trying to raise environmental awareness in Europe and promote a sustainable lifestyle. Young people from our network across Europe realise that waste is becoming an increasingly serious problem that we should find a solution for. That is why we decided to promote together the idea of upcycling.

Upcycling is taking waste and making it into something that has equal or greater use or value. It is a very valuable environmental concept which acts as an alternative for or a complement to recycling. It raises awareness of the value of objects and highlights the environmental consequences of consumerism.

The international campaign on Upcycling was prepared during January-June 2013 by 7 youth environmental organisations from 6 countries. It aimed to raise environmental awareness by promoting in various ways the concept of upcycling among European young people. The campaign promoted the idea of upcycling in several ways: creating a booklet (that you are reading now) with many examples of upcycling objects, organising local workshops in 6 countries, preparing videos with instructions on how to make upcycling objects as well as promoting the concept through media. We wanted to empower the youth of Europe to cooperate internationally in order to raise environmental awareness.

*“UPCYCLING IS TAKING WASTE AND MAKING IT INTO SOMETHING THAT HAS EQUAL OR GREATER USE OR VALUE.”*

This booklet will give you an introduction into the world of upcycling. You will be able to read more about this environmentally-friendly concept and check many instructions on how to make upcycled objects from various materials. But these are only examples. Try to improvise and invent new upcycled ideas.

We hope we will encourage you to reuse materials by upcycling.

So enjoy reading our booklet and... upcycle!

On behalf of the project team,  
Gosia Zubowicz-Thull  
YEE Main Coordinator

Check more about Upcycling Campaign:



[www.yeenet.eu](http://www.yeenet.eu) section Campaigns



Upcycling Campaign



## ABOUT UPCYCLING

Waste is a massive problem. We waste so many things because we assume they are no longer useful. So before you throw something away – think again. Maybe this object can be useful to you. Maybe you can increase its value by transforming it into a new object. This is called upcycling.

Upcycling is a creative and environmental action. It reduces waste and preserves materials. It is not recycling. It does not break down or 'downcycle' base materials to make new products. It transforms existing products so they have a new purpose. It increases their value. You do not need factories for upcycling. You just need your imagination.

Upcycling is a new word, first recorded in 1994, but the idea is not new. People have always found constructive ways to use old things. Upcycling can save you money. It can teach you how to be resourceful. It also has many environmental benefits. Upcycling prevents waste from congesting landfills or being incinerated. It helps to preserve precious raw materials from being used unnecessarily. It can even be preferable to recycling as it requires minimal energy use. The recycling process includes costly mass transportation and the

breaking down of materials which both emit unavoidable carbon emissions. To recycle a glass bottle, the glass must be melted in scorching hot furnaces. Upcycling has a low environmental impact.

Upcycling can also promote environmental consciousness by demonstrating how easily we dismiss useful things as 'waste'. For example a park bench made entirely from scrap metal will inspire the public to think more about waste and how we manage it. In this way, upcycling raises awareness about the environment. The scrap metal bench is not only a practical, useful thing. It is a symbol of sustainable design. It contributes to public discussion about how much we need and how much we are taking. Hopefully when people see the bench they are reminded that we do not have access to limitless resources. We must preserve and care for our environment.

When you upcycle something you are promoting an alternative, eco-friendly way of life.

**“UPCYCLING CAN ALSO PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS BY DEMONSTRATING HOW EASILY WE DISMISS USEFUL THINGS AS ‘WASTE’.”**





Before you start upcycling, read some tips from us.

The first questions you should ask yourself are: Can I provide for my needs with what I have? Is there some material I can use? Is there an alternative use for what I am putting in the bin?

**Imagine new uses, shapes and possibilities for your waste.**

Shapes and sizes can be personalised so adapt the objects to your needs. The design is 100% yours. If you look around you will notice that there are basic useful shapes: squares, circles, tubes, cubes, etc. There are also common materials in your daily life: plastic, metal, paper, glass, wood, textiles, etc. Then think which tools you need to create your upcycled object. They hide everywhere. Remember that a tool is any instrument used for a particular work. So a spoon can be a shovel, a stone can be a hammer or a shoelace can be a perfect rope. Think about which action you need and look around!

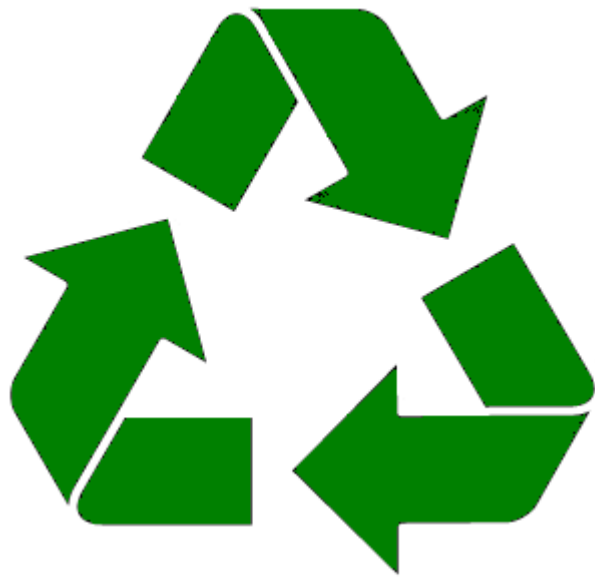
You are surrounded by this equation:  
**Materials + Shapes + Tools = Solutions for your needs.**

You can use upcycling for many purposes. You can make objects you need or you can simply decorate your apartment. Upcycling can be the creation of useful things or art. It's also a perfect way to make personalised presents. One of the best things about upcycling is that you can make the ideal design for the person you want to give your present to. You can also use upcycling as a way to earn money. If you sell your creations, their originality will be appreciated.

Now it's time to start upcycling! But do not forget:

- 1** To recycle all the little pieces you cannot use anymore (paper, fabric, plastic, etc.)
- 2** Try not to mix materials that cannot be recycled together in the final stage. For example if you make something with paper, try to use paper tape.
- 3** When you upcycle something it should be more useful and valuable than the original object. Creating another useless object is waste too.

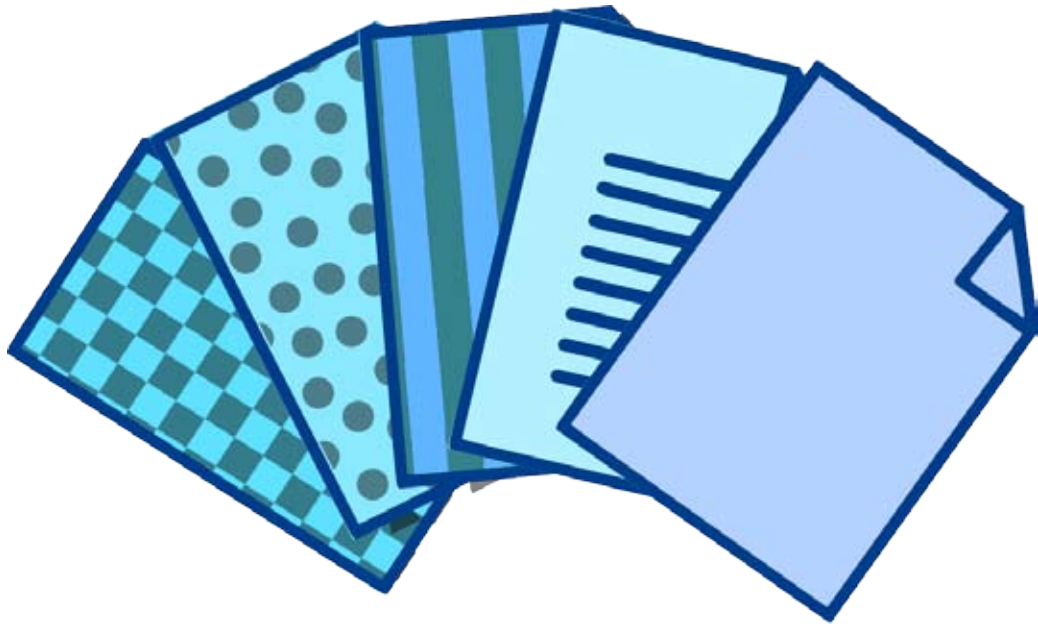
**“ THE DESIGN IS 100% YOURS. ”**



# UP

Upcycling ideas





Paper

# RECYCLED PAPER PEN

*FINISHED YOUR NEWSPAPER? DON'T THROW IT AWAY. MAKE YOURSELF A SPECIAL PEN.*

## MATERIALS

- A pen refill ◀
- Glue ◀
- An old newspaper ◀



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Fold your newspaper as shown in the picture.
- 2 Place a pen refill on the corner.
- 3 Glue the corner over the top of your refill.
- 4 Roll the newspaper to cover the pen.
- 5 Glue to secure.
- 6 Cut off any excess newspaper.
- 7 You can decorate it, add your logo or write your website address.
- 8 Optional step: cover the pen with lacquer for extra strength.



# BOOKMARK

CREATE YOUR OWN ORIGINAL BOOK-  
MARK FROM WASTE PAPER!

## MATERIALS

- Cardboard ◀
- An old magazine ◀
- Scissors ◀
- Glue ◀



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Cut out an interesting picture from the magazine.
- 2 Glue the picture onto the cardboard.
- 3 Cut the cardboard into a rectangle. You can cut around the shape at the top.
- 4 Cut a flap in the cardboard. This will secure the bookmark to the page.



# WIND FLOWER

THE WIND FLOWER HELPS CHILDREN EXPLORE THE POWER OF THE WIND WHILE THEY ENJOY FRESH AIR. YOU CAN MAKE IT FUN AND COLORFUL – JUST USE YOUR IMAGINATION.

## MATERIALS

- Paper ◀
- Scissors ◀
- A pin ◀
- A stick ◀



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Cut the paper into a perfect square.
- 2 Fold the paper in half diagonally, so it looks like a triangle. Open it up. Repeat this step in the opposite direction. Open it up. Your square should have two folded lines.
- 3 Cut half-way along each line.
- 4 Fold each piece of the paper towards the center.
- 5 Fix the 4 folded angles at the center with a pin.
- 6 Finally, attach it to the stick.





# BRACELET

DON'T LET YOUR SCRAPS OF PAPER GO TO WASTE. TRANSFORM THEM INTO AN ORIGINAL ECO BRACELET. LEARNING TO WEAVE PAPER CAN BE TRICKY. HERE'S A SIMPLE TECHNIQUE TO GET YOU STARTED.

## MATERIALS

Scissors ◀

Paper ◀

(old newspapers, magazines, packaging, leaflets etc.)



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Neatly cut your paper into strips (4x10cm).
- 2 Take a piece of paper. Fold the two long sides into the middle. Then fold the paper in half lengthways.
- 3 Fold the paper in half width ways. It should form a 'V' shape.
- 4 Fold each side of the section inwards to make a smaller 'V'.
- 5 Prepare as many sections as you need this way. It is best to use an even number of sections.
- 6 Now you must weave the sections together. Take the two ends of one section and slot them through the two loops of another. Repeat this step until you have a chain long enough to fit around your clenched fist.
- 7 Staple or glue the chain together. It should fit over your hand. Your bracelet is finished. Enjoy!





# NEWSPAPER TABLE

*IMAGINE THAT INSTEAD OF GETTING RID OF YOUR NEWSPAPERS YOU CAN USE THEM IN YOUR ROOM, BY MAKING A MODERN TABLE.*

## MATERIALS

Newspapers ◀

Superglue ◀

Paintbrush ◀

Tape ◀

A table surface ◀

This could be an old tray, part of an old door or even a sheet of glass



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Roll up your newspapers and secure them with glue and tape. Paint the rolls with superglue to make them extra strong.
- 2 Arrange the rolls into a unique design.
- 3 Superglue your table surface to the top of the newspapers.



# GIFT BAG

CALENDARS HAVE AN EXPIRY DATE BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THEY'RE USELESS. NOW YOU CAN TRANSFORM YOUR OLD CALENDAR INTO A GIFT BAG.

## MATERIALS

- Scissors ◀
- An old calendar ◀
- Glue ◀
- Ribbon ◀



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Measure the size of your gift. Usually 12 x 9 cm is sufficient. Do not forget to leave some space for glue.
- 2 Fold your calendar page as shown in the picture.
- 3 Fold the top edge about 2 cm inwards. Stick it together.
- 4 Measure how tall you want your bag to be. Fold along the bottom edge.
- 5 Fold the bottom of the bag as you can see in the pictures and stick it together.
- 6 Make holes at the top to add ribbon and Tadaaaa! Your bag is ready.







Plastic

# CANDY POT

THIS USEFUL CANDY POT ALSO MAKES A BEAUTIFUL DECORATION FOR YOUR TABLE.

## MATERIALS

- A plastic bottle ◀
- Scissors ◀
- Candies! ◀
- Accessories ◀  
such as ribbons and colourful paper



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Take your plastic bottle and clean it.
- 2 Cut the top part of the bottle off. You should have three quarters of the bottle remaining.
- 3 Cut half of the bottle into long, thin strips.
- 4 Fold each strip around the next one and into the pot. This should create a chain.
- 5 Decorate your pot with the accessories. Your candy pot is ready for candy!





# CAMERA BAG

CREATE SOMETHING USEFUL AND CRAFTY FROM AN OLD PLASTIC BAG.

## MATERIALS

- Plastic bag ◀
- 1 button ◀
- Scissors ◀
- 1 crotchet needle ◀



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 First you need to make some thread from the plastic bag.
- 2 Cut off the bottom and the handles.
- 3 Cut the bag into thread. Start at the bottom and cut one long strip as if you were peeling an apple.
- 4 Measure your camera or phone to ensure you crochet the right size bag.
- 5 Crochet with the plastic thread. If you don't know how to crochet, ask a crafty friend or check the internet.
- 6 Sew on a button.





# POT FOR PLANTS

USE AN OLD BOTTLE TO MAKE A POT FOR YOUR FLOWERS AND PLANTS. MAKE YOUR ROOM OR OFFICE MORE GREEN!

## MATERIALS

- Plastic bottle (keep the lid) ◀
- Marker ◀
- Cutter ◀
- Rope ◀
- Lighter ◀
- Awl ◀
- Screw ◀
- Soil ◀
- Seeds or plants ◀



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Use the marker to trace a large oval on the bottle's side. Cut it out.
  - 2 Heat the awl. Pierce the bottom of the plastic bottle with the hot awl to make a small hole.
  - 3 Widen the hole and put the screw in.
  - 4 Tie one end of the rope around the screw. Tie the other end around the mouth of the bottle.
  - 5 Fill the bottle with soil.
  - 6 Plant anything you wish to grow.
  - 7 Make and tie together as many 'bottle-pots' as you want (one beneath another).
- + You can decorate the bottles and hang them on the wall. Let your plants grow.



# WEDDING DRESS

*HAVE YOU EVER IMAGINED THAT ALL YOUR WASTED PLASTIC COULD BE TRANSFORMED INTO A FABULOUS WEDDING DRESS?*

## MATERIALS

- Lots of plastic ◀
- Bubble wrap ◀
- Store mannequin ◀
- Wire ◀
- Hot glue and hot glue gun ◀



Photo by Márcio D'Almeida

## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Arrange the wire on the mannequin to make your dress structure.
- 2 Start applying your plastic around the wire, working upwards. Carefully use the hot glue gun to secure the plastic around the wire.
- 3 Repeat this step until you reach the top.
- 4 Now begin the construction of the bodice. Here you must use plastic wrap, which is applied in layers and then glued together. After several layers this structure becomes moldable.
- 5 You can cover the skirt with more plastic for a smoother texture.
- 6 For the veil you could use bubble wrap for a dynamic look. Wear it with joy!





# VASE FROM SPOONS

USE PLASTIC SPOONS TO MAKE AN ORIGINAL VASE FOR FLOWERS. IT CAN DECORATE YOUR ROOM.

## MATERIALS

- Used and washed plastic spoons ◀
- A plastic bottle ◀
- Scissors ◀
- Gel glue and hot glue ◀
- A marker ◀



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Cut the top part of the plastic bottle to create the base of the vase.
- 2 Cut heads of the spoons to use for decorating the vase.
- 3 Stick the heads of the spoons with gel glue on the bottle in nice layers until the plastic bottle is totally covered.
- 4 You can decorate the vase with ribbons and colours and put flowers in it.





Glass



# PAINTED JAR

*DON'T THROW AWAY THE JARS THAT YOU BUY. USE YOUR IMAGINATION AND TRANSFORM THEM INTO SOMETHING USEFUL.*

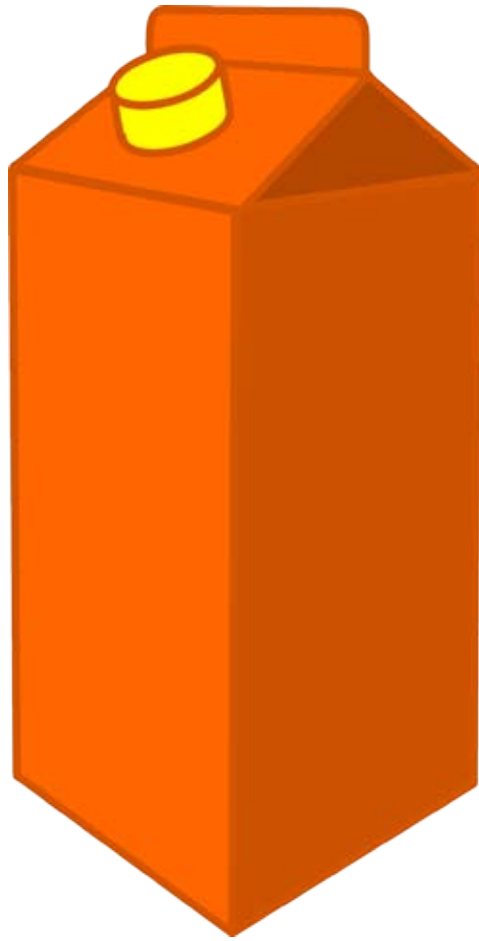
## MATERIALS

- Used jars ◀
- Glass Paint ◀
- Ribbon ◀
- Kitchen sponge wire ◀



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Put your jar in a container with warm water. Leave it to soak. This will make it easier to remove the label.
- 2 Remove the label. Use a kitchen sponge wire to help if necessary.
- 3 Paint the jar using your imagination.
- 4 You can use it to store many things such as flowers, pencils or candies.



Carton

# WALLET

TRANSFORM AN OLD MILK OR JUICE CARTON INTO A NOVEL WALLET TO KEEP YOUR MONEY SAFE.

## MATERIALS

- A carton ◀
- Scissors or cutter ◀
- Needle and thread ◀
- Button or button-head rivet ◀
- Colored wide adhesive tape ◀



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE:

- 1 Take an empty carton, wash it properly and let it dry.
- 2 Detach the bottom and top angles of the carton that are glued to the sides. Flatten it.
- 3 Cut off the top and the bottom. Unflatten your carton so you can look through it. Flatten it again, but this time fold in the sides.
- 4 Fold most of your carton into the middle. Staple or sew together the inside pockets.
- 5 You should have some carton left at the top. This will be your lid. Cut out the front and sides of this part so you have one flap. You can cut this flap into a semi-circle. Fold the flap over to close the wallet.
- 6 Sew a button onto one side of your lid. Sew a loop onto the wallet to secure the button. You could use a button-head rivet instead.





# PENCIL HOLDER

*SIMPLE BUT FUN. UPCYCLE YOUR CARTON INTO THIS VERY HANDY AND BRIGHT PENCIL HOLDER.*

## MATERIALS

- A carton ◀
- Cutter ◀
- Popsicles ◀
- Colorful paints ◀
- Hot glue ◀
- Raffia/Ribbon ◀



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Cut the carton to your desired size.
- 2 Paint the popsicles.
- 3 Glue the colorful popsicles onto the carton with hot glue.
- 4 Finally wrap some raffia or ribbon around the pencil holder for decoration.



Clothes

# T-SHIRT RUG

*OLD T-SHIRTS CAN STILL BE USEFUL  
IN CREATING A COMFY RUG.*

## MATERIALS

- Round barrel ◀
- Old t-shirts ◀
- Scissors ◀
- A net ◀



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

First you will need a base for the rug.  
It can be any net with big holes.  
It can be for example an old bag with  
plastic thread (like in the photo).

- 1 Cut your net into the shape you want  
the rug to be.
- 2 Adjust the net to have equally sized  
holes.
- 3 Cut your t-shirts into small rectangular  
pieces.
- 4 Tie each piece of t-shirt to the net.  
Tie them closely together for a fluffy  
texture.





# T-SHIRT BAG

DO YOU HAVE AN OLD T-SHIRT TOO SPECIAL TO GIVE AWAY? YOU CAN UPCYCLE IT INTO A PRACTICAL, WONDERFUL SHOPPING BAG. GIVE YOUR T-SHIRT A NEW LIFE!

## MATERIALS

An old t-shirt ◀  
the heavier the material,  
the stronger your bag will be

A pen ◀

A plate ◀

Scissors ◀

A needle ◀

Some thread ◀



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Turn your t-shirt inside out.
- 2 Using the plate as a guide, draw a larger neck opening. Cut it out.
- 3 Cut off the sleeves, leaving the seams for extra strength.
- 4 Fold the bottom 5 cm of the t-shirt over.
- 5 Stitch along the top edge. You should be sewing through four layers of fabric.
- 6 Turn your bag the right side out. Admire your handy work. Now it's time to go shopping!





# SOCK MOBILE CASE

CREATE AN ECO-FRIENDLY CASE FOR YOUR MOBILE PHONE.

## MATERIALS

- Round barrel ◀
- An old wool sock ◀
- A button ◀
- Scissors ◀
- A needle and wool ◀



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Take the old wool sock and cut it in half. Use the top part of the sock.
- 2 Sew together the bottom.
- 3 Sew on the button.
- 4 Stitch a piece of wool on the opposite side of the sock. Make a loop and tie it around the button to keep your mobile safe.





# DOG'S SHOE TOY

MAKE YOUR DOG SUPER HAPPY WITH THIS NEW TOY!

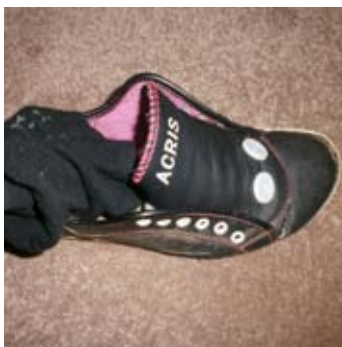
## MATERIALS

- A pair of old, used shoes ◀
- Buttons ◀
- Shoe laces ◀
- Scissors ◀
- Needle and thread ◀
- (Smelly) socks ◀  
or another source of your  
dog's favorite smell



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Take one of the shoes.
- 2 Sew on the buttons to make the eyes and the nose.
- 3 Stuff the shoe with the socks.
- 4 Cut a piece from the second shoe. Stitch it over the first shoe to keep the socks inside.
- 5 Use the left over parts of the second shoe to make ears.
- 6 Use the shoe laces to create a tail.



# HOT WATER BOTTLE COVER

DO YOU HAVE AN OLD SWEATER IN YOUR WARDROBE WHICH YOU NEVER WEAR? UPCYCLE IT INTO A COZY COVER FOR YOUR HOT WATER BOTTLE.

## MATERIALS

- An old sweater ◀
- A hot water bottle ◀
- Scissors ◀
- A pen ◀
- Needle and thread ◀



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Draw the shape on your sweater around your hot water bottle, making it a little bigger (you will need extra material for sewing).
- 2 Cut out the shape you have drawn.
- 3 Sew together the two pieces you have cut out. Sew inside out to hide the stitches.
- 4 Put your hot water bottle into its new cozy cover.
- 5 Put it in your bed and enjoy.





# JEANS BAG

*IT SEEMS THE WHOLE WORLD WEARS JEANS. THEY ARE EXCELLENT FOR UPCYCLING. THE FABRIC IS STRONG AND PERFECT FOR MAKING THE BIKE BAG.*

## MATERIALS

Old jeans ◀

Scissors ◀

Needle and thread ◀

Velcro ◀

Zip ◀

you can upcycle the one from the jeans



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Cut off the bottom of one jean leg.
- 2 Cut it open. Neatly sew in your zip at the top.
- 3 Turn the bag inside out and sew one side.
- 4 Unzip your zip. Sew the other side.
- 5 Turn your bag the right way out.
- 6 Attach the Velcro by sewing two short pieces either side of your bag. You can now secure it to your bike frame.

Your bag is ideal for keeping bike tools safe. Enjoy the ride!

- 7 Optional: Attach a strap to your bag using the belt hooks from your jeans.



# TOY FROM A GLOVE

HAVE YOU EVER LOST ONE GLOVE? NO WORRIES. YOU CAN UPCYCLE YOUR REMAINING GLOVE INTO AN ADORABLE TOY. IT WOULD MAKE A PERFECT GIFT FOR A SMALL CHILD OR A SPECIAL SOMEONE.

## MATERIALS

- An old glove ◀
- Scissors ◀
- A pen ◀
- A small button ◀
- Needle and thread ◀
- Stuffing ◀  
this could be wool, cotton  
or pieces of old fabric



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Draw the pattern onto your glove.
- 2 Cut out the pattern. You should have a tail, a head, a body, two arms and two ears.
- 3 Begin sewing the body together. Remember to turn your fabric inside out when you sew, to hide the stitches.
- 4 Fill the body with the stuffing before you complete the final stitch.
- 5 You can customize your toy with different tails to make a teddy bear, a cat or a squirrel.
- 6 Sew on a small button for a nose.
- 7 Sew on 2 eyes with black thread. Or draw them on with the pen.





# HAIR PINS FROM BUTTONS

*OLD BUTTONS DON'T HAVE TO LIE FORGOTTEN IN YOUR DRAWER. YOU CAN USE THEM TO MAKE COLORFUL HAIR PINS.*

## MATERIALS

- Strong glue ◀
- Needle and thread ◀
- Pins ◀
- Small buttons ◀  
of different shapes and colors

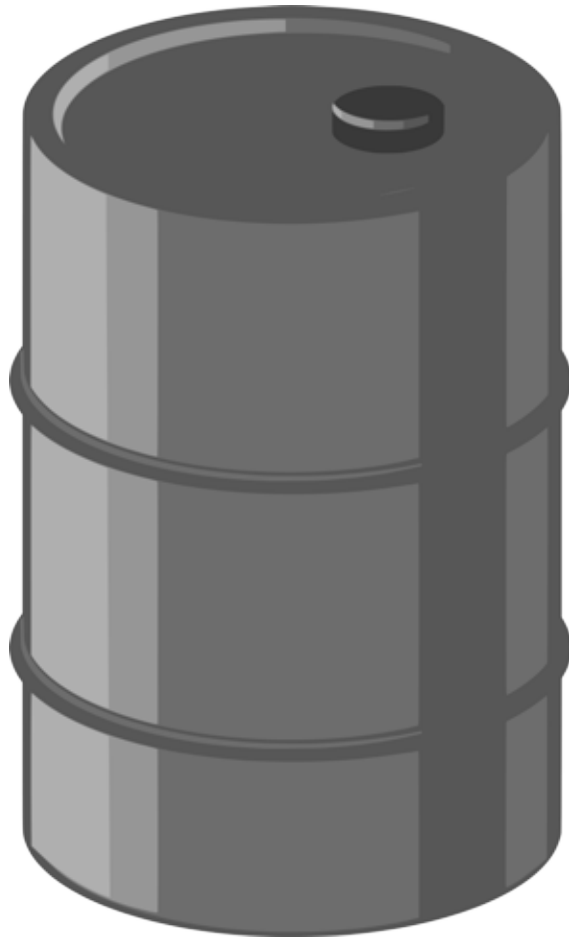


## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Using the needle and thread secure the button onto the edge of the pin.
- 2 Use super glue for extra strength.

Create a unique collection. Use your imagination!





**Metal**



# BARREL CHAIR

AN OLD BARREL CAN MAKE AN EXCELLENT CHAIR. THIS UPCYCLING PROJECT IS FOR THE ADVENTUROUS!

## MATERIALS

- Round barrel ◀
- A base for the chair ◀
- Drill ◀
- Screws ◀
- Rubber lining ◀
- Saw / Tool for cutting ◀



## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- 1 Cut out from the barrel the back and seat of the chair.
- 2 Clean, polish and smooth the pieces.
- 3 Line the pieces with rubber.
- 4 Drill the pieces onto your seat base.



# We are...



This publication was created by Youth and Environment Europe.

**Youth and Environment Europe (YEE)** is an umbrella organisation uniting European environmental youth non-governmental organisations. Since its foundation in 1983, YEE has been a platform for many organisations that study nature and are active in the field of environmental protection.

The aim of YEE is to provide a platform where these organisations can cooperate and to encourage youth to be involved in environmental protection. YEE creates an opportunity to contact other European organisations, to exchange experiences, ideas and to work together.

**Find out more about YEE:**



[www.yeenet.eu](http://www.yeenet.eu)



Youth and Environment Europe





**UP** **CYCLING**  
↑  
June 2013