

How to live a more Circular Lifestyle

As the name suggests a Circular Economy is a system that aims to eliminate waste and make use of existing resources. The current linear system is no longer working for businesses, people or the environment. We take resources from the ground to make products, which we use, and, when we no longer want them, throw them away, take-make-waste- this is called the linear economy (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017).

The most sustainable things we have are the items we already own or are already in existence. However, we know it is impossible to not want new things and most people enjoy the dopamine hit of buying something new, this predominately applies to wants rather than needs. So, how can we use our purchasing power in a responsible way, to reduce waste, but also have all the things we would like in our modern-day society. Responsible consumption is essential and below we have listed some ideas of how you can be a more responsible consumer.



Circular economy model (Source: WRAP, 2020)

Refill

Refilling not only means you are able to re-use existing packaging; you are also able to reduce waste by not buying new packaging. We have all become more aware about the issues with the disposal of plastic in recent years. Some larger supermarkets realised a change in the way consumers buy items was needed due to customer demand and have started trialling small- scale refill schemes and re-usable packaging. However, it is often small independent refill stores or local markets that have the best refill options for food, toiletries, cleaning products etc. Refilling tends to be cheaper as you are avoiding the cost of buying the packaging, which is included in the retail price of a product.

Mend & Repair

This seems very basic, but I'm sure we all have items in our house that could easily be repaired and used again. This issue is especially prevalent for clothing. If you are not crafty yourself, go to your local drycleaners for clothing alterations and repairs or UK wide store Timpson's offer all sorts of repairs including clothing, mobile phones and watches - more info [here](#).

Buy Preloved

Buying used items has become a trend over the last few years as people have become more aware of the environmental and social impacts of fashion. There are many ways you can buy second-hand, whether you like finding hidden gems in charity shops or prefer to search for

specific items/brands through websites and apps such as Depop. Organising a clothes swap can also be a fun way to get *new* clothing – why not try organising one with friends or colleagues, you can even do one online!

Furniture is also great to buy second hand, depending on your taste this can be done through auctions or larger furniture charity shops, which is often a cheap way to get classic furniture pieces. Facebook marketplace is also a quick and easy way to furnish a home, again often a lot cheaper than buying new items. Home furniture giant Ikea are launching a second-hand section, where they will buy back furniture which customers will be able to purchase – more info about this initiative [here](#).

Upcycle

Following on from buying preloved, you could buy something second hand that needs repairing or re-decorating. This is a great option and examples include scrubbing down and repainting furniture, changing knobs on drawers or adding embroidery to plain clothing items. More tips on upcycling available [here](#).

Donate or Sell

One thing to think about and ask when you donate items to charity shops is what happens to items that you donate which do not make it to the shelves as you don't want it going to landfill. Oxfam have a great initiative; at their recycling plant they use damaged or low-grade items that cannot be sold in their stores to make other items like mattress stuffing - more info [here](#).

Where to donate:

Furniture

- British Heart Foundation can do free pick-ups, info [here](#)
- Phone your local charity shop that sells furniture as see if you can drop furniture pieces off (always check first) and check if they could collect large pieces

Clothing

- [Traid](#) – free home collections and they also have a drop off point in Anthropology, Regent Street
- [icollectclothes](#) – free home collections of clothing and homeware
- Local charity shops in the central London area - Salvation Army, Princes Street

Where to Sell / Buy:

- Gumtree
- eBay
- Facebook marketplace and swap/sell pages
- Depop (clothing)
- Vinted (clothing)