

# Caring for Creation Challenge: Upcycle Clothing

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This series is a small effort to encourage readers to learn more and think about ways that we each can contribute to caring for creation, God's gift to us.

## **One Way to Care for Creation: Recycle unwanted clothing**

### **How to Recycle or Upcycle Clothing That's Still In Good Condition**

#### **1. Clothing Swaps**

Host a clothes-swapping party with your friends, or share photos of items you think might suit a friend or family member, telling them you thought of them and wondered if they'd like the item you're ready to part with. Many brands like tonlé host clothes swaps on their own platforms now, too.

#### **2. Re-selling**

Why not earn some money from the clothing and accessories you no longer want, and ensure they go directly to a good home rather than to landfill? There are many different re-selling apps to choose from; you're spoiled for choice.

#### **3. Investing in clothes from circular fashion brands**

Supporting brands that use recycled materials, or better yet, use recycled materials and also give their customers the ability to send their clothing directly back to be recycled by the company, is a powerful way to ensure the future is circular and waste-free.

Basic Revolution is a great example of a company doing this. Finding a resource that can truly recycle old clothing (especially things like hole-y socks!) is incredibly difficult since they'll likely just get thrown away.

Basic Revolution, however, is helping to fill that void and provide sustainably and ethically made basics that include clothing recycling for your worn-out basics. So when you purchase a pack of socks, for example, you can send your old items to them to be broken down and turned into insulation or (if still in good condition) to be sorted by their recycler and then given to charities to be reused.

#### **4. Donating good quality items**

Donating good quality clothing to clothing banks or charitable organizations is a good option too, as long as you make sure you're not just using them as dumping grounds. A good rule of thumb is to do a gut check and if you don't think you'd be able to sell a piece on a re-selling app, it might not be re-sellable for a charity, either.



## **How to Recycle or Upcycle Clothing That's Damaged or Worn**

### **1. Teach yourself some basic mending skills**

Whether you go for invisible or visible mending, there's a lot to be gained from taking the time to sew on buttons, darn holes, and patch fraying places in your clothing. You can keep things simple or get creative and experimental—it's totally up to you and what works for your style.

### **2. Outsource your mending**

Not handy with a needle and thread, or short on time? There are plenty of professionals out there who can help you if you don't have the time or inclination to learn yourself. The repair economy is a growing sector, and it's great to encourage this if you can.

### **3. Upcycle your old clothes at home**

If you're a crafty type (or know someone who is), there are plenty of fun ways you can re-use old fabric in your home.

### **4. Recycle responsibly**

If all else fails, recycling should be our last resort, instead of just throwing fabric in the trash. Just make sure you've taken the time to look into the best local recycling options for the type of fabric you'd like to recycle.

## **8 Inspiring Upcycled Fabric Projects For Your Home**

Once you're ready to embrace a little in-house recycling, it's a great idea to invest in your very own rag basket where you can keep any discarded clothing that's beyond repair and can now be used for household cleaning and craft projects. It can help to have a sewing machine, but you can do a lot with a simple needle and thread.

### **1. Patching**

Sometimes, using a contrasting fabric to patch a piece of fraying clothing can be a fun style statement. If your style is more minimalist, you can always try this on kids' clothing first, as their clothing is usually more colorful, and it might feel like the stakes are a little lower, too.

### **2. Alternative window dressings or framed art**

I was really inspired by the creativity of my neighbor when I saw that she'd created lace stained-glass-style window panels with old pieces of lace she'd saved over the years; they make a beautiful alternative to privacy blinds or lace curtains. Even if you don't have the skills or inclination to try something like this yourself, you could consider commissioning something similar from a local artist.

### **3. Quilts**

Quilting may be a rather complex art, but it's also a lovely way to reuse old clothes with sentimental value. If you're a beginner to quilt-making, keep things simple with simple squares of fabric, and go from there.



#### **4. Rag rugs**

Rag rugs, also called Toothbrush or Amish style rugs, are a classic way to recycle old clothes at home. It may look intimidating at first, but video tutorial from sources such as Barri-Jayne Makes will teach you the basics.

#### **5. Cushion covers**

Atia Azmi of The Bright Blooms makes a lot of her own clothing from scratch, but points out that you don't have to be as ambitious as she is to create something new for your home from old or unwanted clothes. Save sweaters you accidentally shrank in the wash (we all do it) and turn them into cushion covers, cardigans, or mittens.

#### **6. Wrapped clothes hangers**

Take inspiration from Kristen, founder of Upcycle My Stuff, and give your ugly plastic clothes hangers a pretty makeover by wrapping strips of fabric tightly around them, securing them with glue—no sewing needed.

#### **7. Hair scrunchies**

While scrunchies are back in style, why not use some old fabric scraps to make yourself or your kids a brand-new hair accessory? All you need is a small amount of attractive fabric and some elastic for one of the simplest sewing projects out there.

#### **8. Bunting**

Fabric bunting is one of the easiest craft projects to try with old fabric, and if you like the results, you can keep it after every celebration and re-use it again and again. Tassel bunting from Upcycle My Stuff is no-sew, so you won't even have to get a needle and thread out.

#### **Two websites to explore:**

[Sustainably-Chic](#) – according to the web site, “Sustainably Chic is the ultimate online destination for sustainable fashion, green beauty & eco lifestyle. It's a place where fashion can exist responsibly, so we can enjoy the art and love behind the things we wear & use every day. This blog was established in the summer of 2014 by a gal who just couldn't keep her mouth shut...”

[Upcycle My Stuff](#) – according to the web site, “I have a passion for reusing, repurposing and adding value to things that might otherwise end up being thrown away – which is what upcycling is all about. My current passion is upcycling through sewing & quilting scrap fabric and reclaimed materials but I also love other types of upcycling too and because of that the site is full of upcycled crafts & gift ideas, furniture & decor ideas and of course sewing projects from bags made from upcycled denim jeans to men's shirts and more.

