

# EASY WAYS TO

## IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY

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### SWITCH TO A GREEN ENERGY SUPPLIER

Renewables reduce the production of carbon dioxide and the release of other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Search online for the best deal and look for companies that provide 100% renewable electricity

### HEATING

Reduce the temperature on your thermostat by one degree and you'll find a significant reduction in your bill, while barely noticing the difference.

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### GET A SMART METER

These show you exactly how much energy you are using and how much it costs. If you already have a smart meter, track your energy use over a week to see where you could reduce.

### DRAUGHT EXCLUDERS

Lots of heat can be lost from gaps under doors and windows. Use a self adhesive foam or rubber draught seal on small gaps around window frames and look for brush type seals for letterboxes

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### COOKING

Keep the lids on saucepans to help food cook quicker, put frozen dishes in the fridge overnight rather than defrosting in the microwave, fill the kettle or pan with only the amount of water you need.

# EASY WAYS TO

## DECLUTTER

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### IN THE BEDROOM

Donate any used, clean bedding and blankets to local homeless shelter or animal rescue. Donate clothes to the charity shop or arrange a clothes swap with friends.

### IN THE BATHROOM

Clear out any out-of-date medicines and return them to the pharmacy - don't flush down the toilet where they can enter the water supply. Donate beauty gift packs to charity.

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### IN THE LIVING ROOM

Clear out magazines and papers for recycling. Cancel subscriptions or get an online subscription. Donate any unwanted CDs, DVDs or books to charity, libraries or schools.

### IN THE KITCHEN

Clear out that kitchen drawer full of rubbish (everyone has one!). Recycle takeout menus and junk mail. Donate kitchenware to charity or sell at a car boot sale.

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### TOP TIP

Ask yourself 'when did I last use this?' if it was more than a year ago, then let it go.

# EASY WAYS TO

## REPURPOSE OR UPCYCLE

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### PAINT IT

Painting an old piece of furniture with a couple of coats of mineral or chalk paint really gives it a new lease of life. Both are non toxic and low in volatile organic compounds (VOCs)

### UPHOLSTER IT

Use an old sweater to upholster a bench or a footstool. Spread the sweater on the ground, turn the furniture upside down on top of the sweater. Wrap the material around the furniture and staple the fabric tightly underneath. Trim the excess.

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### GARDEN PLANTERS

Turn pieces of enamelware into planters. Mugs, bowls, storage jars and teapots look great planted up with herbs. Drill a couple of holes in the bottom and a handful of gravel to help with drainage.

### HANGING BASKETS

Use old woolen sweaters to line hanging baskets or containers. They have great moisture-retaining qualities, particularly during hot weather when plants need extra water. The sweater can be composted afterwards too!

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### TOP TIPS

Preparation is key

Spend a few extra pennies on good brushes - cheap ones leave bristles!

Save old/odd socks - they are great for applying wax to furniture (providing they're not too fluffy!)

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# HOW TO ...

## MAKE A BEE HOUSE

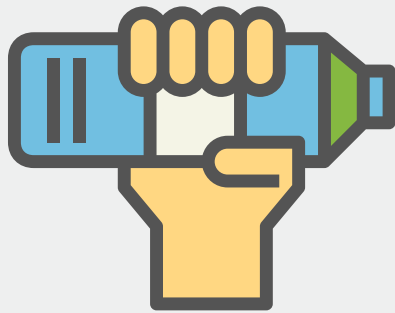
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### YOU WILL NEED

- One old, clean 2 litre plastic bottle
- Bamboo canes (different widths are best, so the holes vary in size)
- Saw or secateurs (pruning shears)

### STEP 1

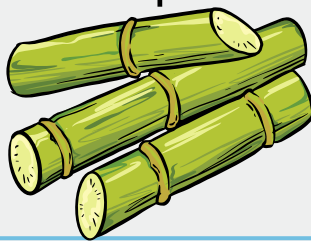
Cut the top off the old plastic bottle



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### STEP 2

Cut the bamboo canes to the same length as the depth of the bottle.



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### STEP 3

Pack the bamboo canes tightly into the bottle. Place in a sunny, dry, sheltered spot, 1m above the ground.



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### TOP TIPS

Bee populations are in decline due to loss of habitat, pesticides, invasive species and the effects of climate change. Why not plant some bee friendly plants in your garden to help regenerate bee populations. Honeysuckle, Jasmine, wisteria, chives, rosemary and fruit trees all attract bees.

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# EASY WAYS TO

## MAKE NATURAL CLEANING PRODUCTS

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### WINDOW CLEANER

In a 1 litre spray bottle, add 300ml distilled white vinegar to the same quantity of water. Shake to mix well. Spray directly onto your windows and use a damp cloth to wipe down.

### TOILET CLEANER

Add 250ml of distilled white vinegar to a spray bottle and liberally spray the toilet seat, lid, bowl etc. Leave for 5 minutes. Add a small handful of bicarbonate of soda to the bowl and scrub with a toilet brush. Use a damp cloth to wipe the vinegar spray from the seat.

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### DRAIN CLEANER

Pour a little bicarbonate of soda down the plughole and leave for 20 minutes. Run hot water down the drain to clear.

### OVEN CLEANER

Make sure the oven is off and cool. Sprinkle a thick layer of bicarbonate of soda over the bottom of the oven. Lightly spray or sprinkle some water over it and leave for an hour. Use a scouring pad to wipe away and lift off burnt-on food and stains.

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### DUSTBINS

For stinky bins, simply sprinkle a little bicarbonate of soda on the base and around the sides. Leave for 20 minutes. Lift off the remnants with some paper towels and wipe over the surface with a damp cloth.

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