



Live smart

# Mend, reuse, recycle, upcycle?

Stage

6

60 mins



Skills builder



## Aim of activity

Why throw away something that's broken when you can mend it and use it again? Put your repair skills to work, save your pennies and create something new all at once.

## What you'll get out of it

- Discover how to repair different materials.
- Use repair tools.
- Use creativity and innovation to upcycle items.

## What you'll need

- Paper
- Pens
- A selection of broken, torn or stained clothing, items and accessories, 1 per person plus a few extra
- Strong glue
- 1 piece of sandpaper
- A stapler
- Duct tape
- 2 pairs of fabric scissors
- 3 or 4 needles
- Thread (any colour), 3 or 4 rolls
- Bicarbonate of soda
- White vinegar
- 2 old toothbrushes
- A selection of buttons, beads, zips, fabric patches or any other decorations
- Protective gloves (optional)
- PVA glue (optional)



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

**Girlguiding**



## Live smart

### Stay safe



- Take your time when using tools, don't get distracted, and make sure there's plenty of space around you.
- When carrying tools, walk, and point them downwards.
- Follow the safety precautions and instructions on the glue packaging. You may need ventilation, or you may need to wear gloves when applying it. Check the drying time.

### Note to leader

Include a variety of items, like shoes, handbags, accessories or clothes, and add any other repair tools you want. Girls can bring in items they no longer need from home for this activity.

### What to do

**1** Your leader will put some items that need fixing in the middle of the space. Without looking, choose one.

**2** Identify the problem with your object. Is it stained? Ripped? Can it be fixed? Choose from these three options:

- **Can't be fixed, recycle it:** How and where should you recycle your item? Should it go in a household recycling bin, in specialist bins or to a charity shop?
- **Can be fixed, mend it:** Use the materials to fix it and make it as good as new.
- **Could be something new, upcycle it:** Have a go at repurposing the item – use the tools your leader has laid out to make it into something that either looks good, has a new purpose, or both.

If you have an item that can't be fixed, pick something else from the pile until you have something you can mend or upcycle. Make sure you recycle the first thing though!

- 3** Before you get started on your upcycling and fixing, look at the mending tools you have and decide which to use. Here are some helpful hints:
- Duct tape is durable but unattractive.
  - Small items can be joined by stitching. Go over the stitches a few times to make them stronger.
  - A vinegar and bicarbonate of soda paste can remove stubborn stains. Use a toothbrush to work it in if needed.

### Try it this way

When upcycling, you can create something brand new. A damaged bracelet could be turned into a keychain, bookmark or belt. Turn a torn pair of trousers into a purse or hat, a broken toy into a hair accessory or a tattered book into a memory box. Use your imagination!

**4** When everything's been mended, gather as a group and show each other your creations. Did everyone deal with repairs in the same way?

### Take it further

Try repairing or upcycling some of your own things at home. Hold a surgery session where friends and family can bring you their broken, stained or torn items. Or at your next unit meeting, visit a charity shop with a £5 budget, upcycle what you buy and re-donate your upcycled items.