

HOW TO HAVE A WASTE-LESS BATHROOM

Everything said in *101 Water Wise Ways* applies!

83. Shower-caps: pack yours when travelling so you don't have to use the disposable one in the hotel. I haven't been able to come up with a non-plastic alternative, but I **use shower-caps until the elastic perishes**, after which they go into my travel bag to wrap around shoes when packing them in luggage.

84. Ditch the disposable razors – never was a plastic gadget so inaccurately named. There is no safe and green way to get rid of them. Use good old-fashioned safety razors instead, and dispose of the blades the same way you would needle sharps. Or stop shaving: grow a beard, wax, laser your armpits (not nearly as expensive and painful as you might think) or just go natural.

85. Not only can you now **buy bamboo toothbrushes** (which cost no more than plastic ones, to my surprise), I once came across a craft collective in Zimbabwe that turned old plastic toothbrushes into crochet hooks.

86. Toothpaste: as with so many waste-waste options, you have two choices. You can find something clever but expensive via the internet (one company makes unwrapped pellets of paste that come in a glass jar). Or you make your own, once again for next to nothing (see pp. [51](#) and [86](#)).

87. Cotton earbuds: a friend who windsurfs says she sees way too many of them in the water: "It's astonishing how such a tiny thing can mar an entire stretch of beach." The biodegradable kind should definitely go on your shopping list. My tip for disposing of my remaining regular cotton buds (I bought a jumbo pack years ago) isn't going to stop the planet burning, but people really like it: I snip or strip the ends into my burn bin, and chuck the remaining plastic sticks into my

ecobricks. Once again, best to use fewer of them: use washable make-up brushes and sponges instead.

88. Lose the wet wipes and cotton puffs for cleansing the skin. Use washable flannel facecloths, like your granny did (and her skin was flawless, right?). If you must use wet wipes, make your own, or choose biodegradable ones. Never flush them (the Thames in London has a carpet of them along the bottom). I wash the non-biodegradable kinds and use them as household wipes, strainers, etc. Friends with babies tell me washable cloth wipes are far more effective than baby wipes; once again, you could also make biodegradable baby wipes.

89. Soap and shampoo bars are now available in re-usable tins, rather than plastic bottles, and the reports coming in are mostly good. They're not cheap, but are apparently long-lasting.

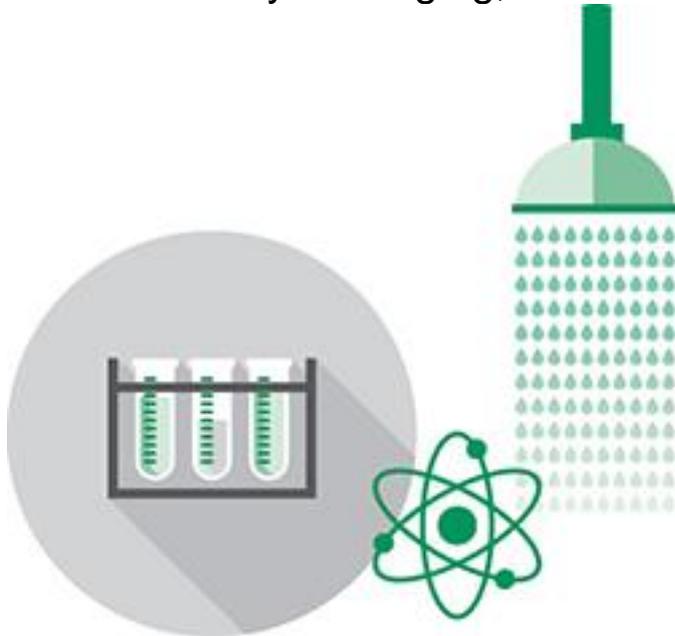
90. We'll use less of ALL this stuff if we **stop buying into the propaganda that insists we constantly wash our bodies, faces and hair**. One reason we need so many moisturisers and lotions is because we're constantly stripping our skin of its own protective oils and serums through excessive washing – once again a post-World War II phenomenon. (Since I stopped showering/washing my hair as a matter of daily routine, I've been staggered by the improvement in my overall skin and hair health.)

91. Let's face it (ha), the beauty industry, which has wrapped its tentacles around all genders in the last few decades, is a snake-oil business that flogs mostly utterly needless products for astoundingly presumptuous prices. This industry generates an excessive amount of waste. Think of all the fussy "pretty" packaging: those tiny pots, lipstick cases, plastic shampoo containers, and more.

To tackle this, be like my clever and beautiful writer/journalist friend, Kate Sidley: **go through your bathroom cupboard and**

make-up box and use up absolutely everything in it before buying anything new. Cut open those tiny expensive tubes and scrape out the contents. Same with the samples you get in magazines. If elegant local actress Grethe Fox does this, so can you.

92. When I reach **the end of a lipstick** (I hold no truck with This Will Make You Forever Young Yeah Right moisturisers, but I dearly love make-up), I scrape out the bit left behind into a special pot, add a drop of almond or coconut oil, mix, and apply with a lip brush. Because this gets added to regularly, the colour is always changing, which is fun.



93. Make your own moisturising creams and lotions. Quite a few people are trying this, to reduce waste, save costs and avoid slathering chemicals on their skin. The internet has a deluge of videos showing you how to do so easily, cheaply and safely. Interestingly, friends who're experimenting with this say the most costly ingredients are the pure scented oils – which aren't actually needed, and which can be replaced with lavender and herbs.

94. Note that **you can also create your own make-up.** This is beyond the ambit of this book, but YouTube, Instagram,

Pinterest and a thousand green beauty blogs will tell you how, in exhaustive detail.

95. Hotels and guesthouses are already addressing the problem of the sea of **little plastic shampoo, conditioner and shower gel bottles**. Trouble is, when they replace them with big bottles to be re-used by multiple guests, they have to bolt them to the shower walls to stop folk swanning off with them. Still, that's the way to go. Meanwhile, collect those miniature bottles and soaps and donate to organisations like Rape Crisis, who put them in comfort packs to give to children who've suffered unspeakable violation.

96. Some things are very tricky to dispose of safely. Certain pharmaceutical and medical waste has to be disposed of professionally: used needles and other sharps, blood bags. Ask your doctor or pharmacist how to proceed. Plastic syringes can be taken apart and their component bits packed into ecobricks. Never throw away expired drugs (most especially not antibiotics or hormones), or even worse, flush them down the toilet: ask your chemist to dispose of them for you, or take them to a hospital for incineration.

97. Periods: there is no getting away from the fact that these are a messy business. Apart from some villages in northern Kenya, where women use dried cow dung as pads, and then bury these, there is no waste-free way to menstruate. You will need either to burn or throw away disposable pads, wash re-usable pads or period panties, or use running water to rinse mooncups and sponges. The latter two options are the greenest option, with re-usable pads maybe the best for those in water-scarce communities.

98. Never flush used condoms. Researching green methods of disposing of condoms and sex toys was amusing, but not in the end very enlightening. It seems these will indeed have to go out with the garbage.

99. Here's a final bathroom, beauty-and-waste-related thought: Julia Roberts was recently asked for her single most NB beauty tip. Here it comes, from one of the most iconic and bankable faces in the world: LOOK AFTER YOUR TEETH. The best part? **She doesn't use toothpaste. She brushes with bicarb. Be more like Julia.** (See p. [51](#) for a basic toothpaste recipe.)