

Ethical Knitting



The Ethical Knitting Guide to

Saving Money and Living as Cheap and Green as possible

1. Plan – Everyone needs a plan, most people don't bother and go nowhere. With a plan you can start to make choices about where you want to be and when. Get the whole family involved and brainstorm ideas together. Your plan can be for a years time or 10 years time, it's up to you. What's important is that you have one.
2. Draw up a budget. Pull out all your old bills and work out exactly where your money is going. This step probably saves the largest amount of cash as you finally realise where it's all going and why. Go through every item, income and outgoing, and justify it's place in your budget, do you need that second job? or the magazine subscription? Or that super huge expensive latte on the way to work? This step helps you to realise exactly how much money goes towards your energy consumption.
3. Adopt one money saving measure every day. Take lunch to work with you instead of buying it. Install energy saving lightbulbs at home. Start a compost bin. Do you need the car today, or is it nice enough to cycle to work? Should you put the heating on in September or will an extra jumper be sufficient? Many of these measures save packaging as well as money.
4. Start growing your own food. Perhaps 40 acres and a mule is out right now, but why not try growing mustard and cress for those packed lunches, and nothing beats homegrown cherry tomatoes. Try growing herbs in pots on your kitchen windowsill before you tackle the garden. If you feel like doing something big consider growing fruit as this tends to be very easy and will cope with being left for a while when you start to tackle other things. Apple and pear trees are very easy to come by, growing gooseberries is very simple and they contain a lot of vitamin C.
5. Stop buying things because you 'need' them and join your local Freecycle list. Freecycle is a great way to get rid of all those things just sitting there accumulating dust and taking up room in your spare room or garage. If you need the cash you could try selling things on Ebay or through your local small ads first. Freecycle will also help you get the things you really need for free and without the packaging.
6. Learn to cook. Meals start with a dinner gong not a 'ping' from the

microwave. Find out where your local fruit and veg market is and buy your ingredients from there, if you're not confident with your skills then dig out those cookbooks or even pick up some skills from the tv.

7. Use your library. You contribute to your local library service through your council tax, so as you've already paid for it get the most for your money. As well as books, today's libraries have CDs, videos, DVDs, magazines and even toys for loan, cutting your expenditure even more and helping the environment by reducing packaging and manufacturing of so many of these disposable items. If you need a book that the library doesn't have try asking for an inter-library loan, for one pound almost any book in the land can be yours. Many libraries also accept donations of unwanted toys, books and CDs. If you want to really cut back libraries also have free internet access.

8. Think self-reliance first. If you break something or it dies on you, don't automatically heave it into the bin and buy a replacement. Try to think laterally first. Is there anything I can do to fix this? Will someone on my Freecycle list have the part? Is there an alternative way of getting the same result as using the item that's broken? Can I use the broken item in a new way?

9. Remember the three 'r's: Reduce, reuse, recycle. This helps to cut your rubbish as well as your expenses.

10. Think positive. You won't do all this overnight so keep in mind the old saying, "The longest journey starts with the smallest step".

Alice Wood is a writer, chess player and knitter based in the North East of England. She runs ethicalknitting.co.uk and scca.org.uk and is owned by one cat.