

# Make Salad Dressing

## Why?

At this time of year we may up the amount of fresh food we buy, particularly salad and various condiments to go with it, these are likely to come in lots of plastic!

Growing your own salad leaves is a great project, but if you want a quick fix making your own salad dressing is very easy and quick. Keep a few jam jars washed out ready for your creative experiments.

## You will need:

Basic dressing:

- olive oil
- a herb
- crushed garlic

Or you can start with balsamic vinegar as your base and add chilli, mustard or even maple syrup...

For a creamy option you can start with some vegan mayo, add some lemon juice and herbs and off you go.

The easiest way to make dressings is to keep a washed out jam jar and lid - add all the ingredients shake like Tom Cruise in Cocktail...

Keep chopped up herbs in the freezer until you need them



# Get involved



## Why?

One great way to support a local organisation or charity is to offer an hour of your time to help run a stall at one of the million summer fetes and fairs.

You can find out about events in your local area from local free papers and magazines, searching the Events tab in Facebook or looking in local shops and businesses for posters and flyers. If you have a real passion for a particular charity or cause you can go to their website or call the local branch and ask about local events.

If you have a particular skill to offer that is even better - like face painting, crafting, making cakes etc. It could be that they need help to set up the stall, create a poster or sign or to transport people or equipment (these are good if you are not a 'people person').

Whatever you feel you can offer, volunteers are essential to the smooth operation of such fetes and you should be welcomed with open arms.

If you don't have a favourite organisation to contact, you can look for volunteering opportunities via the [gov.org](http://gov.org) site and [do-it.org](http://do-it.org) and searching for 'volunteering'.

## You Will Need

- A least an hour of your time
- Any equipment you are offering to share your 'skill'

## Volunteering could involve:

- Feeding and caring for animals
- Reading to people
- Helping with tasks like washing up or laundry
- Working in a shop/cafe
- Offering your skills at a repair cafe

If you can't commit time consider registering to support people with vision problems all around the world by using the ['Be My Eyes' App](#).



# Try some local food

## Why?

Because food grown locally has more nutrients and has a smaller carbon footprint than food shipped from the other side of the world. Local food tends to be seasonal too and that can mean it is a lot cheaper.

Taking just enough money means you will have to choose one thing over another thing but you will not over spend.

When I tried this challenge I was surprised to get a reasonable amount for my money. A loaf of very good bread, some cheese and some salad was well within budget. Try looking for things you can't buy in a supermarket or where you normally shop.

If you have a local Farmers Market or stall here are some tricks to save money. If you don't know how to cook something just ask the stall holder, they are usually full of great recipe ideas.

Be flexible, Go with an open mind, try new things.

- Go early to get the best choice.
- Go late to get last minute bargains.
- Ask the stallholder for a deal - what can you do for a tenner?
- Ask if there are any damaged goods. Bruised apples still make great pie.
- Ask which is the best value produce
- Shop seasonally, the most economical veg will be the stuff that is in season.
- Buy things you can't find in a supermarket. Local delicacies, fresh eggs, speciality bread.....

**Challenge:**  
What can you get that is locally grown or made for £5?



# Take some pictures

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## Why?

The Summer is a great opportunity to take photos of nature bursting all around, you can hone your skills, and use your beautiful pictures to make postcards, birthday cards or just create your own gallery of vibrant colour.

It can be very healthy to have these images to go back to during the Winter months, especially if you experience seasonal mood fluctuations.

## You Will Need:

A camera - this can be in your mobile, or the traditional kind.

You could use prints of your beautiful pictures to make lovely gifts, you can also upload your images to photo sites and possibly make some money from them... search online for sites like Dreamstime, EyeEm, iStock and Shutterstock that give you a % if they sell your image for use online.



# Sleep Outside

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## Why?

This is fun at any age, get out your tent or just sleep under the stars - listen to the sounds of nature, the dawn chorus - maybe stay up and watch the sunset

There may not be many opportunities to do this depending on weather conditions and lifestyle, but it can be hugely beneficial to break out from our electronic worlds and spend time in nature.

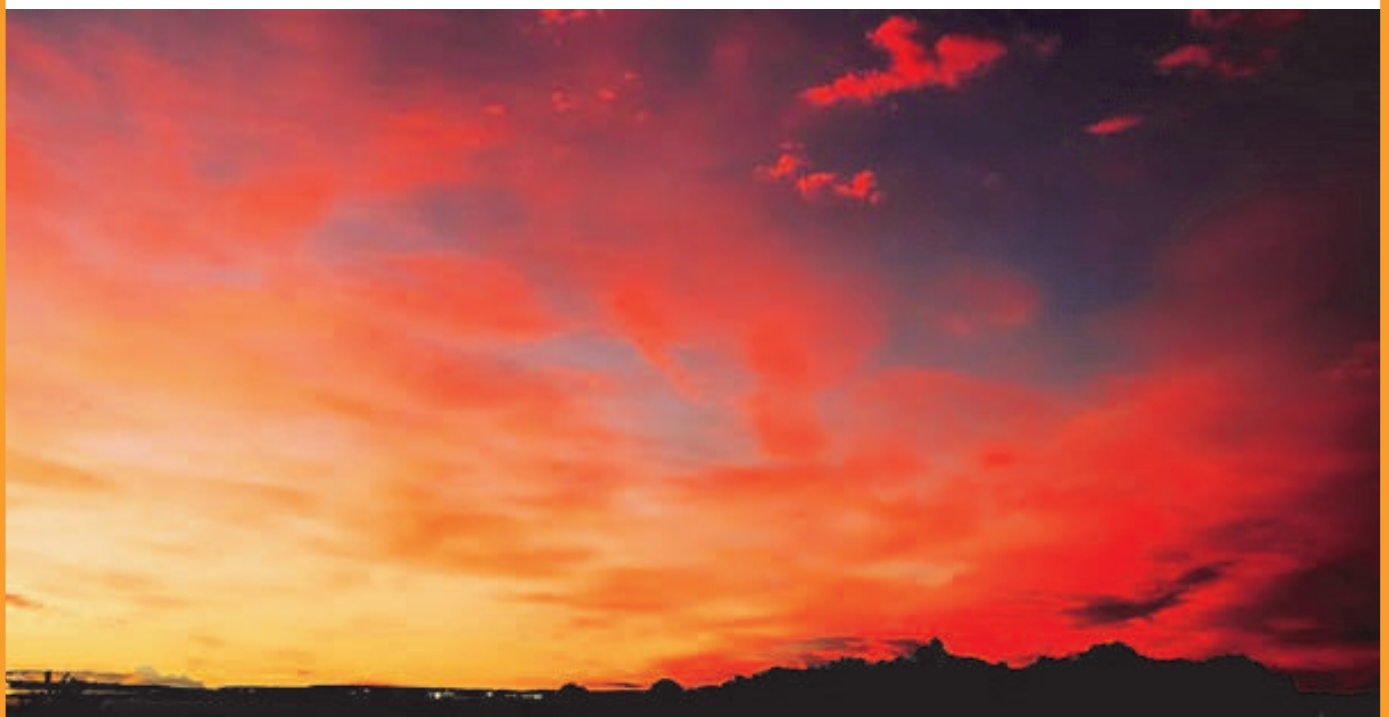
We can also work on sleep patterns and getting back in touch with our circadian rhythms - our natural inclination to sleep when it's dark and wake when it's light.

Spending some time sleeping outdoors can be a fun group experience, outside of our normal traditions, and may lead to eating outside more, and sleeping better with the extra fresh air.

## You Will Need:

- Sleeping bag/blanket
- Torch
- Tent/Cover if desired

To support people sleeping rough you could collect some sponsor money, or make a donation to a homeless charity for those who sleep outside every night.



# Walk a Dog

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## Why?

There are many health benefits to walking, it can improve general health and sleep, as well as strengthening muscles, heart health and for the dog it is an essential daily activity. The guidelines for the average adult is to walk 10,000 steps a day, or roughly 5 miles. Most people manage closer to 3-5,000 so taking a dog out could really help increase our steps.

You don't need a dog for this! But it can give us the purpose that motivates us to walk. There are lots of shelters that could do with a hand, or maybe a local person that needs a bit of help to walk their dog - remember not to walk them in the mid day heat and to check the pavement isn't too hot (use the back of your hand).

## Ideas to contact:

- Local Shelter/Rescue
- Dogs Trust
- Cinnamon Trust
- RSPCA

Remember to check with the owner or centre for any special needs the dog may have

Keep the dog on a lead if you are unsure if it will return to you when called

## You Will Need:

- A dog
- Water to drink for you both
- 30 mins or longer
- Poo bags

Walk in safe areas like a park, less busy roads

Take a few small treats with you (like carrot sticks) for when the dog behaves well

Dogs like to sniff other people and dogs. This is normal behaviour, you can say a quick 'hello' and move forward



# Outdoor Events

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## Why?

This is such a treat for the Summer, if you have a large Estate near you they are very likely to have an open air concert, film screening or similar.

You can usually take a picnic and have a great community experience. You may also find them in large open spaces like Tram Stations or Park and Ride facilities.

It can be a fun way to meet up with a large group.

## You Will Need:

- Tickets
- Picnic
- Jumper for when it gets cold late at night



If you don't have any local events you may be able to watch a film outdoors using a laptop and projector onto a sheet or wall. Could you borrow items from work, school or a local group and invite others? If you have your own laptop or tablet watching a film outside can be lots of fun, especially in a tent...

## Plastic Free Checklist for Outdoor Events:

- Reusable drinks containers
- Recyclable/Reusable food containers
- Bag for rubbish - before it flies away
- Take your own cutlery in a bag rather than use disposable ones
- Damp flannel in a bag for hands in case the loos don't have washing water
- Sun protection
- Cash



# Make Bamboo Straws

## Why?

Plastic straws are causing untold problems for wildlife and our oceans, they take hundreds of years to degrade and are so small they easily blow away. By changing to paper, metal, glass or even pasta straws you will be making a huge change to your plastic impact.

## You will need

- Clean bamboo - fresh if you can get it or from a garden centre if not
- Secateurs for fresh bamboo or a small hacksaw for dried bamboo
- Fine grade sandpaper
- A skewer

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Bamboo grows in segments with knuckle-like joins between each one. If you cut just above and just below one of these joins you get a nice hollow tube of bamboo.



Don't worry about making them all the same size, short straws are great for kids and long straws can look pretty elegant in a cocktail for adults.

Use the skewer to poke down the centre of the bamboo to make sure it is clean and empty.

Use the sandpaper to smooth off the cut ends so the straw is soft on your lips.

## Caring for your straws:

Before using sterilise your straws by boiling them in water for 3 minutes.

Bamboo straws are dishwasher proof up to a point but they can be composted at the end of their useful life.

You can buy tiny bottle brushes to clean out the insides but as long as you avoid any thick or sticky drinks a swoosh under the tap generally does the job.





# Mend Something

save

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## Why?

Have you ever thrown something away because it was broken, ripped or stained?

There is nothing to lose by attempting to mend an item destined for the bin. If the mend works you get more use out of it. If the mend fails, you have tried something new and done something creative.

## Avoid perfectionism

Are you worried that your mend won't be good enough? Even the ugliest of Gaffa tape patches can add years of use to an item and trying to get more life out of our stuff is better than giving up and sending them to landfill.

## Go bold

Try mending with a totally different colour. If it is going to bother you that you cannot get an exact match, go for something totally different instead. On fabric you can use different textures too.

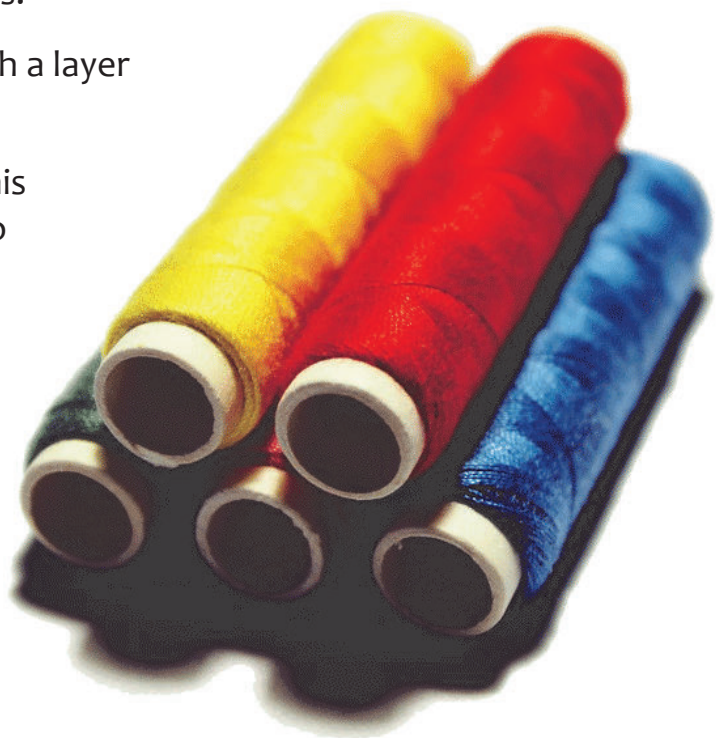
## Useful materials

Sugru is a mouldable glue that sets like rubber, is flexible, heat, cold and water resistant. It works on metal, ceramics, stone, tiles and plastic and comes in many colours. Buy online or from DIY stores.

Iron on interfacing is a thin fabric with a layer of glue that melts when you iron it.

There are double sided versions of this so you can literally stick patches onto garments if you don't like sewing.

Gaffa tape comes in many colours and is a super tough, slightly stretchy thick tape that is weather resistant up to a point.



# Air Dry Clothes



## Why?

In the hot weather of Summer it's great to get lots of laundry done, and air drying is cheaper than using a tumble dryer and much better for the environment. Other benefits include:

- On sunny days white clothes bleach in the sunshine
- Clothes smell better when air dried
- Hanging clothes on the line is good for your waist line
- You can dry heavy things like denim jeans, dressing gowns more quickly
- You can dry delicate items that can't go in a tumble dryer
- It's quiet
- You can dry large items that don't fit in a tumble dryer

If you need new pegs you might look for plastic free alternatives like wooden ones, these will last longer if you don't leave them outside in the elements.



# Try a Bike

enjoy

save

## Why?

As we look at our own health, and at environmental issues like air pollution using a bike more is a great way to hit lots of these goals. It also a great way to save money compared to other forms of transport. You may have one gathering dust in the shed?

If you don't have a bike they are commonly found on recycling groups, you could borrow one before investing or a lot of cities have bikes you can hire really cheaply now.

Remember to wear a helmet for safety, and to cover arms and legs in case of a fall. There are maps with cycle paths and cycle routes available in most Tourist Information Centres and for better air quality you can stay off main roads as much as possible.

For more information and encouragement, Sustrans are working to create a UK network of cycle paths and have an informative website. It's nice to cycle somewhere with a purpose, maybe take a picnic with you in a backpack so you can have a rest when needed.

If you need to build up to a bike ride, you can start with a scooter... or dust off a pair of roller boots...

## You Will Need:

- A bike
- Headgear
- Water bottle/Drink & Snack



# Compost



## Why?

Food waste is a major part of our daily rubbish, we can tackle it at one end with our shopping habits and at the the other with a compost bin or a wormery.

Well balanced compost will also save you having to buy potting soil for your garden.

You can use a paper bag to collect vegetable peelings etc in the kitchen and then transfer it to a larger outside bin. If you have space you can create your own composting heap with old pallets.

## Compost Maintenance

Make sure you keep the moisture level of your compost even, and add a good balance of things.

You can water it if needed using grey water that has been used before if possible.

## You can compost:

- Coffee grinds
- Loose tea leaves (non-plastic tea bags)
- Vegetable peelings
- Fruit cores and stalks
- Leaf litter
- Green garden cuttings
- Shredded paper
- Grass clippings
- Broken up egg shells
- Male urine



# Upcycle Something

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## Why?

Rather than disposing of small amounts of paint, this is a nice way to use them up. Make sure you dispose of paint very carefully following all instructions - it's much easier if you buy non-toxic paint to start with! Your local tip will have a paint recycling section, and you can often find local groups that can put odd ends of paint to good use.

A new coat of paint can sometimes give a tired item a new lease of life, or make a nice gift.

## You Will Need:

- Soapy water
- Fine Sandpaper
- Paint & Brushes
- Newspaper/cover

Make sure your surface is able to 'take' the paint, it may need a good clean and a fine rubbing to create a slightly rough surface.

Paint carefully using appropriate brushes and washing them carefully for future use.

Leave to dry on a suitably covered surface

Enjoy your work!



## A tester pot should cover:

- Bedside table
- Couple of picture frames
- Small book case
- Small shelf
- Shed door
- Garden chair
- Garden pots



# Save Water



## Why?

The Summer is a tricky time to save water, as we are likely to be using more to drink, water plants, drinking more means weeing more and flushing more, and we may also have a paddling pool for dogs or children...

## Use Grey Water

Grey water is the stuff we pour down our sinks after we have washed the dishes. It is no good to drink of course, but it still has plenty of uses from watering plants to cleaning paths. You can even use it in the toilet and save a flush.

## How to collect Grey Water

This is as simple as it can get. After you have washed your dishes simply use the water one more time. You might want to sieve the water to get rid of any bits of food then you can use it to clean paths, start off cleaning very dirty windows or doors, to pour down the loo and to water plants.

There will still be some soap residue in your grey water and that works to repel insects on plants.

Alongside re-using our grey water, another way to take more care of our water use is to use less in the first place. This will also save you money, and help our environment generally. You may consider going on a water meter to become more aware of your usage and its cost.

## Ways to Use Less Water:

Get a free toilet weight from your local Water Company - this reduces the amount of water your toilet uses for each flush and is especially important if you have an older cistern.

- Have a shower not a bath, and use a timer!
- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth.
- Keep some water in the fridge to avoid running the tap for a cold drink.
- Always fill the washing machine or dishwasher to maximise the water use.
- Use a water butt for rain collection to water plants.



enjoy

# Give Edible Presents

share

create

## Why?

Unwanted presents are a real waste of your money, and can be expensive to buy, wrap and possibly post too. By giving a consumable present people can enjoy, share and use their present giving you easier gifts to think of each time and allowing them to choose their own longer term items.

If you make the present this also feels a much more personal and thoughtful gift, as well as being able to personalise flavours and choices - although time intensive it's also probably cheaper.

Cake, wine, biscuits and chocolate all make brilliant presents that don't linger and clutter up friends homes.

Or give an experience instead, take someone out for lunch or on a day trip. Much better than an unwanted ornament!



## To make a DIY Drink Kit You Will Need:

A large jam jar and lid or Mason Jar, glass coffee jar...it's fun if it's see through.

Think of a drink that they like... add some of the ingredients to the jar unmade so they can do it themselves when the mood takes them. E.g. for a hot chocolate you could add a sachet of hot chocolate, some marshmallows, a chocolate flake and a sheet of how to make it. For a fruit smoothie you could add several fruits, a paper straw and a suggested recipe.

There is no end to the fun things you could add, for cocktails/mocktails you could use miniature bottles or fruit juice and paper straws in a decorated shoe box.



# Invest in a Bottle



## Why?

Using single use plastic bottles or cans is ok if you always recycle them, but it's even better if they aren't needed in the first place - taking your own drinks also means you can have your favourite drink, and save resources as well as saving money!

You do need to drink 2 litres or more water during the hot months:

- Dust off an old Thermos or insulated mug for hot drinks
- Invest in a metal, glass or recycled bottle for cold drinks
- Check local refill stations on [www.refill.org.uk](http://www.refill.org.uk)
- In hot weather you can add ice cubes to keep drinks cooler
- Add lemon, mint leaves or other fruit to water to add a little flavour
- Keep some water in the fridge so it's always cold
- Have a glass of water upstairs ready for when you wake up
- Add reminders to take your water bottle with you on the front door
- Get in the habit of having water with you for travelling





# Indoor Plants

create

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## Why?

Certain plants are great at helping to keep good air quality, and therefore good for our general health. You can also have a few practical plants at home e.g. Aloe Vera is an antiseptic and you can pull a bit off and put it straight on the skin.

If you live near a main road, bus stop or have lots of people having bbq's your air quality might be quite poor during the Summer when you are more likely to have the windows open.

## Good plants to investigate for cleaner air are:

- Spider Plant - super easy maintenance and you can get more plants from the off-shoots that are likely to sprout off. You may be able to get a free one if a friend has one with some shoots.
- Moth Orchid - if you'd like a beautiful flower as well as the cleaner air, this is the one for you. Orchids need special soil and some nurturing.
- Lilyturf - another pretty plant as well as useful, with small purple flowers.
- English Ivy - this is a common plant in the UK, and cheap and easy to maintain.
- The Palm Family - most of these are good at cleaning the air, but some can grow quite big so check out what will fit.
- Rubber Plant - another larger plant which may need to be repotted annually.



# Screen Free Day

save

enjoy

share

## Why?

Taking some time to enjoy the longer days and warmer weather could include a welcome break from all our electronic devices - this is particularly important if you spend more than an hour at a time looking at a screen, or spend most of your time sitting down.

Our general health can be negatively affected by too much screen time, especially in the hour before we try to sleep. It can affect our vision, hearing and social skills. Too much sitting is also very bad for our posture and general health.

Challenge yourself, friends or family to a totally screen free day.

If you find this too difficult to manage at home, then use it as an excuse for a day out, trip to somewhere new or visit to someone that doesn't have screens. You could volunteer to be a hospital visitor, to read to kids at a local school or walk dogs at a rescue centre (see above!).

If a whole day sounds too daunting, try an hour, then two, then three and so on.

You will also save money by turning off your devices for a day.

## Turn off at the plug

This doesn't obviously fit into a Sustainable Summer book, but actually it's very important - it will save you money and reduce electricity use. We've included it in our Summer book as often in the warmer weather and longer days people watch less tv and go outside more, by making sure you switch off your 'red lights' properly (rather than leaving things on standby) you may find you don't switch them back on for days!

It may also be an opportunity to do a quick audit of electrical items you no longer need, or that could be put to better use.

## Potential Changes:

Looking for non-electrical alternatives e.g. cafetiere instead of coffee maker

Making plugs easier to reach and use

Using bamboo toothbrush over an electrical one



# Make a Bug House

## Why?

Without bugs we cannot have flowers or food! They pollinate our plants, and are an essential part of our fragile eco system. They don't ask much from us in return, and although you might not want to share your kitchen with them, making a suitable home for them outdoors is easy and free!

## You Will Need:

Make a simple bug house with sticks and twigs you find on a walk or in your garden, add them to a simple pile and keep adding to make the house into a hotel over time. If possible leave some 'wild' plants in the same area, like stinging nettles that bugs love.

## Some common bugs you might see:

- Bees
- Butterflies
- Ladybirds
- Dragonfly
- Beetles
- Ants
- Spiders
- Grasshoppers



# Read a Summer Book

## Why?

Reading is a great way to relax and be transported to new and exciting places, and during the Summer to read under a tree, or curled up with the window open can be a very therapeutic experience. Reading as escapism is also a powerful tool, in a book you can travel even if you are unable to do so in your real life.

## Some suggested Summer Reads

Cider with Rosie by Laurie Lee

The Greengage Summer  
by Rumer Godden

Stormy Petrel by Mary Stewart

Ragtime in Simla by Barbara Cleverly

A Suggestion of Scandal  
by Catherine Kullmann

## Try these places for books:

A book from your shelves

A visit to the library

Borrow from a friend

A visit to the charity shop

Support an indie author with purchasing a book

Authors need 50 reviews on Amazon before their book will be shared and promoted, the best free gift you can give to an author is to write them a review, it doesn't matter how long it is, you can just say 'i enjoyed it'.



**Challenge:**  
Review a book  
online



# Feed the Ducks



## Why?

This is such fun at any age, and a great thing to do with an elderly friend, relative or neighbour - you will evoke such memories and create lovely new ones too.

Despite what you may have done as a child, ducks shouldn't be fed bread - it's really bad for them and also really bad for the water they live in. There are lots of alternatives that are much better all around and just as easy to carry with you.

## Ducks eat:

- Corn (canned, frozen or fresh)
- Duck pellets (sold online and at pet stores)
- Lettuce, other greens (torn into small pieces)
- Frozen peas (defrosted)
- Oats (rolled or instant)
- Seeds (including birdseed or other varieties)

If there are other water fowl around just be careful of small children, fully grown geese and swans can be much larger than toddlers and often aggressive and territorial, especially if they are hungry!

## You Will Need:

- A pond, river, lake, canal...
- Suitable food
- A camera to capture the moment



# Use Loose Tea



## Why?

The idea of this course is to introduce ideas and make long term changes, and that can be exciting - but we also need time for reflection and thought to keep the momentum going.

Embracing things that may take longer or have more 'steps' may be part of our new 'less plastic' reality. Tea is a good example.

To reduce our plastic use, moving to loose leaf tea is a great solution, but will require a tiny bit more effort. You will need a teapot, cafeteire or tea infuser, and you can add the used leaves to the compost.

Try enjoying the deeper flavour and greater control you have when choosing how much tea per cup you like. You may also make the move away from using milk by trying different types of tea, trying them black, or with a slice of lemon - this is particularly refreshing on a hot day.

You could also branch out into herbal or fruit teas, which when cooled can be added to a glass of ice to make a thirst quenching and revitalising change. If you find a local supplier, or somewhere that has sample or tester sizes you can give things a try before you buy a large pack, or you buy as a group and each take a share.

## Tea can help with:

- Sleep
- Energy
- Cleansing
- Tummy trouble
- Pregnancy Woes



# Walk Barefoot



## Why?

When you feel safe, it's very liberating to walk barefoot and really appreciate the sense of touch. You can do this on sand, grass or mud and feet are very washable so just have fun!

If you want to add more meaning to the process, some believe that there are healthy links to walking barefoot and experiencing the grounding and natural elements of the earth, that we can find a connection with nature and its power.

It is healthy for our feet to be allowed to take their natural shape instead of being forced into shoes, and particularly for children, to spend as much time as possible barefoot.

You can add a simple pampering session by soaking your feet in a washing up bowl or in the bath before you go to bed, by adding some essential oils like tea tree or lavender you can give hot or tired feet a wonderful cleansing treat before bed.

We really should look after our feet as they work pretty hard, if you add some tea tree oil to a simple moisturiser you can give your feet a treat at night time by rubbing a generous amount on them to soak in while you sleep. Tea Tree oil has a natural antibacterial so will also help feet that have been barefoot to keep safe.

## Make Your Own Moisturiser:

- ½ cup of shea butter
- 2 tablespoons of an oil - could be olive oil, almond oil. Coconut oil
- 3 drops of tea tree essential oil

Leave at room temperature on a hot day so they are all soft, then mix them up with a blender or elbow grease.

You can play around with the ingredients to get the right consistency for you, this is slightly greasier than other recipes, but works better on tough feet.



# Changes to make



**Things I won't buy again**

**Things I'd like to make**

**Things I'd like to start buying:**

**More ideas:**

