

# Reuse - It's Making a Comeback!

Reuse extends the life of an item by using it more than once, either for the same function or a new purpose. In contrast, recycling is the breaking down of the used item into raw materials, which are used to make new items.

Reuse includes:

- **Conventional Reuse**, where the item is used again for the same function for which it was manufactured (e.g. water bottles, shopping bags, hand-me-down clothing)
- **Creative Reuse** (also known as upcycling or repurposing), where the addition of creativity brings a new function (e.g. old skis ⇒ Adirondack chair, candy wrappers ⇒ handbag)
- **Salvage/Reclamation** is generally when old building materials are transformed into new building materials with minimal processing (e.g. bug-damaged wood ⇒ new furniture or home décor)
- **Adaptive Reuse** is when an old or disused building is refurbished for an entirely new purpose (e.g. defunct hotel ⇒ seniors housing complex, empty big box store ⇒ a community center)
- **Repair/Refurbishing/Remanufacturing**, where an item is reconditioned and used for the same function (e.g. retreaded tires, refurbished computers)



## Reuse Resources

- **Reuse Alliance**  
reusealliance.org – Reuse Alliance is a national nonprofit that is working to educate individuals and organizations about the social, environmental, and economic benefits of reuse. Reuse Alliance acts as a conduit that builds relationships between individuals and organizations interested in reuse; develops informational resources that increase public awareness and access to the reuse sector's innovative waste prevention services; and provides training that strengthens the capacity for individuals and organizations to reuse our materials resources.  

- **The Environmental Finance Center (EFC) at Syracuse University**  
efc.syracusecoe.org – The EFC is an environmental nonprofit that works with local governments and technical assistants in EPA Region 2. The Environmental Finance Center hosts trainings and webinars, creates educational publications, and provides technical assistance to communities looking to become sustainable materials stewards.  

- **Finger Lakes Reuse**  
fingerlakesreuse.org – Finger Lakes ReUse is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping our communities benefit from reuse by reducing waste, relieving poverty, and teaching job skills. FLR operates a ReUse Center open to the public 7 days a week (accepting and selling quality used furniture, salvaged and surplus building materials, housewares, computers and home electronics,) provide Deconstruction Services as a green alternative to demolition, and offer a computer reuse & refurbishment program, the eCenter.  


# The Reuse It! Guide

## Simple Ways To Reduce Waste Through Reuse



Developed By:



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## Reuse – It’s Got “Triple Bottom Line” Benefits!

In sustainable business practices, the “triple bottom line” refers to economic, environmental, and social benefits. Taking materials and reusing them, instead of recycling, saves time, money, energy and resources. Some of these benefits include:

- **Economic benefits**, such as job creation, tax benefits, and offering low-cost, quality products to individuals, schools, non-profits, and small businesses.
- **Environmental benefits**, such as waste diversion, reduced raw materials extraction, energy savings, and avoidance of greenhouse gas emissions from production and transportation. Reuse is better for the environment than recycling because it generally requires less energy and natural resources.
- **Social benefits**, such as providing clothing, food, and furniture to individuals and organizations with limited means.

## Reuse – It’s Everywhere!

Almost anything can be reused, repurposed or remanufactured, including:

- Appliances
- Architectural Salvage
- Art Supplies
- Building Materials and Lumber
- Clothing and Shoes
- Computers
- Fixtures and Fittings
- Furniture
- Home Electronics
- Industrial Discards
- Office Equipment and Supplies
- Sports Equipment
- Textiles
- and so much more ...

**You can start reusing right away—all it takes is a little extra thought!** From now on, before you buy something, ask yourself “Do I HAVE to buy this new? Could I buy it from a local resale shop? Better yet, can I repair what I am replacing, or do I already have something at home that could serve the same purpose?” You’ll be surprised how often reuse is an easy option. For example:

- Surplus moldings are well suited for creating picture frames;
- A used kitchen cupboard is easily transformed into a free-standing linen cabinet;
- A door mounted on the wall horizontally serves as an attractive headboard;
- If you’re the creative type, you can make jewelry, sculptures, mosaics and other art pieces out of all sorts of used materials.

Likewise, before discarding something, think of the potential for its reuse, either by yourself or others. There are all sorts of ways to let others get value out of your old stuff:

- Donate to local nonprofit organizations that specialize in reuse
- Host a yard sale—by yourself or with friends
- Sell used items in a local consignment shop or via eBay
- Use online marketplaces like [www.Craigslist.org](http://www.Craigslist.org) and [www.FreeCycle.org](http://www.FreeCycle.org)
- See what items Terracycle is collecting at [Terracycle.net](http://Terracycle.net)

## Waste Prevention Tip: Make Your Computer Last Longer!



- Delete files you know you don’t need.
- Defragment your hard drive in Windows.
  1. Right-click on ‘My Computer’
  2. Select ‘Manage’ from drop-down list
  3. Select ‘Disk Defragmenter’ from ‘Storage’ list, under ‘Computer Management (Local)’
  4. Highlight the hard drive ‘Volume’ you would like to defragment, e.g. (C:)
  5. Click the ‘Defragment’ button at the bottom of the window.
- Install critical updates and service packs.
- Regularly update/scan with Anti-Virus software.
- Physically clean the computer with a vacuum—With the computer’s power unplugged (and battery removed if cleaning a laptop), you can clean the vents and insides with a vacuum cleaner (hose attachment, ideally with a stiff brush). You can also use a can of compressed air but wear a face mask if it’s particularly dirty! Before plugging the computer’s power cable back in or putting the battery back into a laptop, push and hold the power button for 10 - 15 seconds then release to discharge any static electricity that vacuuming may have generated inside the computer.

## Reuse – It Saves You Money!

By buying from a reuse shop instead of a typical retailer, you can save 50%-90% off retail. Repairing what you already have instead of replacing it can save you even



more, so buy repairable items and get the most possible life out of what you already have. For tips on how to get the most life out of your computer, refer to the inset box above.

## Used vs. New: A Side-by-Side Comparison



	New	Used
Price	\$300	\$60
New materials needed	Wood, glue, nails, springs, twine or nylon webbing, animal hair or polyurethane foam padding, interior fabric, thread, exterior fabric or leather, anti-stain chemicals, fossil fuels to power the production process	Furniture cleaner, materials needed for small repairs
Transportation needed:	Raw materials shipped from international locations to the manufacturing facility; Product shipment from the manufacturing facility to distribution centers, from distribution centers to retail stores, and from the store to your home	From the resale store to your home
Expected lifespan:	20 years	15 years in good condition