

Household HINTS

Cosy up your home with our handy tips and tricks

Small eco-friendly changes to your shopping habits can make a big difference

HOW TO... reduce your plastic waste

We are all fully aware that we should be living more eco-friendly lifestyles and using less plastic day-to-day, but sometimes it can be hard to know where to start. Here are a few tips to get you going...

- Make sure you own a reusable cup and water bottle. Drinking vessels are one of the most common pieces of plastic that sadly end up in landfill, so it is a good idea to make carrying one around with you a daily habit. Many coffee shops will offer you money off your drink as an incentive for bringing your own cup, and you can refill your water bottle for free in plenty of places too.
- Swap out your clingfilm for alternative beeswax wraps when storing food in the fridge or lunchboxes. These are 100% natural and environmentally friendly, and can be washed and reused multiple times. They're compostable once they come to the end of their lifecycle too.
- Try to avoid excessive single-use packaging. While this is still rife in supermarkets, there are ways around it. Opt for loose fruit and vegetables – which could save you money by only picking up what you need – and seek out refillable cereals, pastas, detergents and soaps during your weekly shop where you can fill up your own reusable containers. Supermarket chain ASDA will be introducing more of these plastic-free refill stations to more of its stores across the UK.
- Sign up to a milk-delivery service and get fresh milk delivered to your door in glass bottles. This type of service is seeing a modern-day resurgence in many neighbourhoods, and now you can even get other pantry favourites, such as juices, eggs and bread delivered in the same sustainable way.



Buy it once

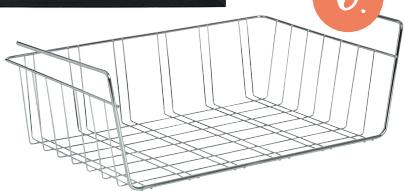
Months of working from home may have saved some of us from our daily coffee purchase but it has also left many missing that barista-quality fix. Dualit's latest Espresso Coffee Machine promises to make consistently good coffee without the fuss on our own kitchen countertops. Priced £149.99, the machine even comes with a water softener bag to reduce the limescale build-up so it should last for many years to come.



YourHome HACK

Keep your freezer stocked up with tasty mid-week meals this winter

After a long and cold day sometimes the last thing you want to do is start cooking, right? Why not batch-cook homemade meals ahead of time so you can simply pop them in the oven or microwave. These Fresh & Save glass vacuum boxes from Zwilling use a vacuum pump to seal in freshness and cost just £39.95 for a set of three.



BEST BUYS FOR... Space-saving storage

Keep your home looking neat and tidy with these clever and compact storage solutions

1. This neat frame design will keep your hallway looking organised and even features moveable hooks.

Hugin coat rack & shoe storage in black, £129, MADE.com

2. Three compartments provide ample storage space for narrow hallways, while the top can be used as a display shelf.

Broby shoe cabinet, £54.99, JYSK

3. Hang this handy storage solution off the back of a door and store up to four pairs of shoes. It's made from recycled plastic bottles too.

Hama wardrobe hanging shoe storage, £32.50, Oliver Bonas

4. Soft storage bags are perfect for putting out-of-season clothing neatly away.

Mustard soft storage bags, £22 for a set of two, Habitat

5. Store blankets inside this neat and stylish-looking footstool so you always have something cosy close by.

Hale low storage stool in Grey velvet, £99, Cult Furniture

6. These shelves help to create extra storage in your kitchen cabinets or bathroom cupboards.

Chrome shelf storage basket, £5 for a pack of two, Wilko

WE TEST...

WEIGHTED BLANKETS

Things we considered: How relaxing was it? Was it good quality? Value for money?

Microfibre weighted blanket, £24.99, Home Bargains

Designed to add soft pressure to help you feel snug and secure, this stylish grey, microfibre, weighted blanket gives you that reassuringly cosy feel. Weighing 6.8kg, the pockets hide a layer of glass beads evenly throughout. It's great for snuggling up and relaxing on the sofa, and comfortable to sleep under at night. We really felt the soothing benefits of this quality blanket.



Weighted blanket, £39.99, Homescapes

Crushed grey velvet on top with a dark-grey fleece lining beneath combine for a luxuriously soft blanket to curl up under and give your bedspread a stylish finishing touch. Weighing 6.8kg, the quilted pockets and piped lining enable the weight to be spread evenly as the blanket's reassuring pressure covers you. While it's great for a sofa doze, those who move a lot in their sleep are at risk of waking up with a heavy lump at the end of their bed; but for the price, it's very reasonable.



9/10

8/10

Silentnight adult weighted blanket, £79.99, Sleepy People

Despite the name being a giveaway, we were nevertheless a little surprised at just how heavy this blanket felt at 9kg when picking it up. However, once it was out of its packaging and laid out, it did feel instantly relaxing and wasn't restrictive at all. The cover is a sumptuously soft and breathable quilted microfibre, which proved comfortable and not too hot during the night.

At £166.99, this one is an investment buy but it's a worthwhile one thanks to its high quality.



8/10

Brentfords Adult's weighted sensory blanket, £19.99, OnBuy

There's not much to fault about this bargain buy and it certainly delivers on the relaxation front. As well as aiding a deep slumber overnight, its cocooning effect also made cosying up with a book feel extra relaxing. We were impressed by its hypo-allergenic cover, even weight distribution and blush pink hue. It was a little creased when we first unpacked it and, being handwash only, it may not be practical for some households. At 6kg, this blanket is ideal for adults (over 60kg or 9 stone 6 lb).



7/10