

## New Year, New Bathroom

Hi folks, if like me you are fond of a NY resolution, let me offer you some cute ways to land some green gains in 2024. None of these suggestions require much in the way of self-denial and all focus on the private world of your *bathroom*. Do consider how our bathroom [waste legacy](#) is stressing mother earth. I am focusing here on things that we can all do fairly easily. So here we go for seven top tips for a planet-friendly bathroom:

1. **Buy bamboo toothbrushes.** Standard plastic toothbrushes are super-slow to degrade. It is estimated that the many millions of toothbrushes ever made are still hanging around in their original form. Bamboo, on the other hand, can be composted as wood. If you smash it with a hammer it will compost even quicker. [Here](#) is an article on brush options. Many of us are in the habit of using electric toothbrushes. A good eco question is “what would it be like if everyone on the planet did the same thing as me...”. Even with sharing, that is a billion buzzing bathrooms.
2. **Switch from bottle to bar.** Virtually everything that we currently package in plastic has a lower impact alternative. For instance, many people are now using shampoo *bars* instead of liquid shampoo. Whazzat? A shampoo bar is like a bar of soap but made of concentrated shampoo. Your standard shampers is mainly water. The bar is a dehydrated version. The density of the product means it is more efficient to transport and, since solid, usually sold in a light cardboard wrapper. An other easy win is to switch from bottled liquid deodorant to a solid deodorant stick – such as [this](#).
3. **Tooth care doesn't need to come in a tube.** It is a crying shame how much plastic it takes to contain our toothpaste. The WHO recommends x6 170g tubes per person per year. That could signal 300million plastic tubes a year for England alone, destined to hang around for nearly ever. This is a good example of something that feels minor until you factor it up... [Here](#) is an article on alternatives. I for one love to freshen up the mouth and teeth of a morning, and dental tablets do the job nicely. Super cheap and, where I get mine, no packaging whatsoever.
4. **Ditch the wet wipes.** Now as a man, in the post baby-care era, I have lost contact with the point of wet wipes (except when wild camping). So if these are part of your ecosystem I am sorry to come down so heavily. But we have to stop. They are clogging the drains and filling the oceans with plastic. Yep – plastic. Wet wipes contain plastic and degrade to microplastics. [This](#) article looks at some alternatives of which, surely, the humble flannel (bamboo?) must top the list.
5. **Save water.** For most of us, our water consumption is metered – so there are savings to be made with the efficient use of water. Though the UK has enough water, it takes energy to get it to our taps. And obviously there are added advantages to using less *heated* water. Here are five ideas: i. put a displacement device in your cistern and save water with every flush – see [here](#). ii. Put an aerating head on your shower which increases the apparent volume of the water allowing you to use less – see here for a [free](#) Which? report. iii. How about spending less time in the shower? A ten-minute shower could use as much energy as a full bath. 5, 3 or possibly even 2 minutes is plenty if you get busy.

There are various [timers](#) on the market. Since you are already nicely deprived, how about a [blast of cold](#) to finish.

6. **Shaving alternatives.** The modern safety razor, with, say, five individual blades does do a nice job. But I found myself spending £75pa on a lot of plastic. About two years ago I went back to the traditional razor blade. These cost around 6p and last me x2 shaves, so that has cut my shave bill to £10 per year. There is more of a technique to this type of shaving so be prepared for some early nicks. The ultimate green shave is with a cut-throat razor with a fixed blade sharpened on a strop. If anybody is happily using one of these, can they please get in touch?

7. **Bottom care.** The Thompsons household runs a traditional toilet-paper based system – recycled of course. One [source](#) claimed it takes 5million trees to keep the UK supplied for a year, so buying 100% recycled feels like a no-brainer. Friends, having their bathroom refurbished, installed a system for using water not paper. Radical! This is the norm for 75% of the world's population and, curiously, they think we are unhygienic.

Scaled up, these simple suggestions would have a tangible impact on the UK's waste production. I would be very interested to hear about your hacks for a greener bathroom.

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