

GREEN YOUR regime!

How eco-friendly is your fitness routine? Try these hints and tips to ease your conscience – and the burden on the planet

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We all know about the mind and body benefits of an active lifestyle. But what impact are your workouts and gym life having on the planet's resources? From the energy used to power gyms and produce fitness kit, to snacks packaged in single-use plastic, changes need to be made. Greenpeace estimates that 12.7 million tonnes of plastic end up in our oceans each year, and a report by the Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme reveals the UK's sports and recreation buildings spend £700 million on energy every year, resulting in annual emissions of 10 million tonnes of carbon dioxide – the principal contributor to climate change. But how can you make your workouts more eco-friendly? Read on to discover how you can green your fitness regime.



HOW GREEN IS YOUR GYM?

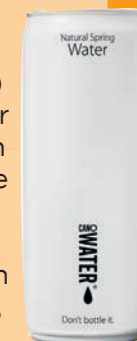
With rows of cardio machines, air conditioning and fluorescent lighting, traditional gyms are an energy bill's worst nightmare. But innovations in equipment and design could change all this. Eco fitness equipment company SportsArt (gosportsart.com) has created a range of sustainable treadmills, bikes and cross trainers that each generate up to 200 watts of electricity per hour by converting up to 74 per cent of the kinetic energy produced from your movement into electricity. To put this in perspective, a desktop computer uses 400 watts an hour and a hair dryer 1,200 watts an hour, while a circuit of 10 SportsArt machines could generate an annual saving of £1,300 of electricity in one gym. Leading the way in eco-friendly gyms is Terra Hale (terrahale.com) with three London locations, all kitted out in recycled materials, from rubber studio floors to reclaimed wood walls – which are also covered with air-filtering plants such as ivy. Its rowing machines use water for resistance instead of electricity, and the Shepherd's Bush studio is London's first human-powered gym, harnessing members' energy on Spin bikes to power the facilities (each class generates 1,500-3,300 watts and cuts about 165g of CO₂ emissions). Eco Gym (eco-gym.co.uk) also converts human energy into electricity, reduces water consumption and discourages harmful waste at its Brighton and Lancing, West Sussex locations. And gym chain 1 Rebel (1rebel.co.uk) is eliminating single-use plastic cups at water cooler stations.

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90%
of exercisers
drive to the gym...

REHYDRATE RIGHT

With research showing that some 38.5 million plastic bottles are bought across the UK each day, and 15 million of these go straight into landfill, the war against plastic bottles rages on. Investing in a reusable water bottle for workouts helps the environment, your bank balance, and your health if you choose one that's BPA-free. Plus, statistics suggest that carrying a refillable water bottle means you're more likely to drink the recommended one to two litres of fluid a day. Great BPA-free water bottle brands to try include S'Well (amara.com), Bio-synergy (bio-synergy.uk) and Hydro Flask (amazon.co.uk), but if you leave yours at home, look out for CanO Water (£1 for 500ml, Tesco). This still or sparkling mineral water in a recyclable aluminium can with resealable lid was created by three friends in 2015 after seeing a plastic-strewn beach in Thailand. Nearly 75 per cent of all aluminium ever produced is still in use today, with the UK recycling 72 per cent.



|Help Mother Nature|

Tampons are handy for active women who refuse to compromise their workouts during their period. But flushed tampons end up in sewer systems and waterways. The Ocean Conservancy collected 27,938 used tampons and applicators from beaches around the world in one day in 2015. Disposing of them in waste bins isn't much better – it's estimated that every year, over 45 billion period-related products, including unrecyclable plastic applicators and packaging that take centuries to break down, end up in landfill. Plus, turning wood pulp into soft, cotton-like fibres to make them is resource- and chemical-intensive. Harvard scientists claim a year's worth of period products leaves a carbon footprint of 5.3 kg CO₂. So what to do? Non-applicator tampons reduce waste by 58 per cent. Organic cotton tampons and pads are (slowly) biodegradable. Best of all, a menstrual cup, such as INTIMINIA's Lily Cup One (£19.08; intiminia.com), is reusable for up to 10 years, and free from nasties, so you can wear one for up to 12 hours without risk of toxic shock syndrome.



CARRY WITH CARE

Keep your muddy trainers, wet swimming cossie and sweaty gym kit separate from the rest of the contents of your gym bags in a single-use plastic bag? Online sports fashion emporium, My Gym Wardrobe, has teamed up with BAGGU to produce a range of strong, washable, reusable shopping bags (£10 each; mygymwardrobe.com), made with 40 per cent recycled materials. For an even more stylish alternative, check out athleisure and lifestyle brand, La Pochette, which makes sustainable bags including this lightweight Sweat Bag, (£35; lapochette.co), made from recycled fibres that are water-resistant, anti-bacterial and deodorising.

PICK PURE PROTEIN

They may power your workouts, but are your sports supplements draining the world's energy? Almost every product in the £400 million UK sports supplements market involves plastic packaging, from tubs and scoops to plastic-laminated bags. And convenience-based products are some of the worst offenders (the ready-to-drink protein shakes market has grown by 20 per cent in several years). But it's also about the raw ingredients. 'Products from the supplements industry tend to be more processed than raw foods, meaning more energy is spent producing them,' says Joe Welstead, ex-professional swimmer and co-founder of ethical sports supplement brand, Motion Nutrition (motionnutrition.com). 'While pea protein requires over 3,000 litres of water to produce 1kg of protein, rice protein requires almost 10 times more. We use FSC approved boxes, non-toxic and vegetable based inks, water-based laminates rather than plastic-based ones, and individually-wrapped sachets made of sustainable, compostable wood-pulp for our "grab and go" protein powders, such as the Fresh Blueberry Morning Shake (£24.99 for 12).' Other green brands include The Proper Food Project (theproperfoodproject.co.uk) and Super U (superu.co.uk). If you want to ditch packaging, make your own protein powder with ground chia, hemp or pumpkin seeds.

CLEAN UP YOUR ACT

Take a look in your bathroom – and your gym bag – and you're sure to find a plethora of plastic in the products you use, from shampoo, conditioner and shower gel bottles to deodorant and disposable razors. While nobody's suggesting you ditch your post-workout showers to help the environment, it might be time to embark on an eco-friendly cleansing routine. Switch to products in recyclable packaging or even glass – Aesop, Tata Harper and Beauty Kitchen are all great brands to try. Alternatively, forgo packaging altogether and buy soap bars and solid shampoos. Lush is pioneering this zero-waste, 'naked' style packaging. We also love Ethique (ethiqueworld.com), the world's first zero-waste beauty brand dedicated solely to producing handmade solid beauty bars in place of liquid products. Created by British-born biochemist Brienne West, they've already saved over 3.3 million plastic bottles from production (and landfill), and the cruelty-free, vegan and 100 per cent sustainably sourced face, hair and body bars last up to five times longer than their traditional bottled counterparts.



OF THE BEST...
ECO-FRIENDLY
YOGA MATS



1

YATAY YOGA CORK
MAT, £59.99;
YATAYYOGA.COM



2

EKOTEX EKO STICKY
YOGA MAT, £19.99;
EKOTEXYOGA.CO.UK



3

MANDUKA EKO
YOGA MAT, £80;
YOGAMATTERS.COM

LEFT: Silou London Emma Crop, £99; Giselle 7/8 Leggings, £159. RIGHT: Silou London Phoebe Unitard, £189 (siloulondon.com)



SUSTAINABLE STYLE

With sales of athleisurewear showing no signs of slowing down (UK sales of sportswear reached a record high of £2.5 billion last year, while Morgan Stanley predicts global sales will hit \$350 billion by 2020 and steal the market share from non-athletic apparel), ethical, sustainably produced gym kit is becoming big business. You'll now find everything from cossies to sports bras made from recycled ocean plastic, regenerated fibres and organic cotton and often, these innovative, functional fabrics have additional features, including sun protection and antibacterial and odourless properties so you can wash them less to reduce water waste. For swimwear, check out Deakin & Blue (deakinandblue.com), Speedo (speedo.com), AllSisters (allsisters.com), and Batoko (batoko.com). For workout wear, try Adrenna (adrenna.co.uk), Sports Philosophy (sportsphilosophy.com), Silou London (siloulondon.com), Peak + Flow (peakandflow.com), Patagonia (patagonia.com) and Nimble (nimbleactivewear.com). For yoga, we love Manduka (manduka.com), Asquith (asquithlondon.com), and Starseeds (starseeds.eco). Now you'll never have to skimp on style in order to do your bit for the planet.

Riley Studio 'Feel Good' Classic Hoodie, £80; Zip Track Pant, £120 (riley.studio)



Bjorn Borg Calina Tights, £50 (bjornborg.com)



Peak + Flow Peak Shorts, £50 (peakandflow.com)



Nimble Hold Me In Sports Bra, £60 (nimbleactivewear.com)



Batoko Cockatoo Swimsuit, £40 (batoko.com)



O'Neill Blue Hybrid Meshmix Legging, £59.99 (oneill.com)



Patagonia Capilene Cool Trail Tank Top, £35 (patagonia.com)



Jack Wolfskin Starry Night Jacket, £90 (jack-wolfskin.co.uk)



Deakin & Blue Swimcrop Bikini Top, £65; Regular Bikini Bottoms, £35 (deakinandblue.com)



STRIDES AHEAD

Given that the production of a typical pair of running trainers generates 30lb of emissions – the equivalent of leaving a 100 watt bulb burning for a week – there are few sustainable options when it comes to workout shoes. The few exceptions come from Adidas in the form of this Terrex Parley Shoe, (£129.95; adidas.com), in collaboration with Parley For The Oceans, whose trainers repurpose millions of pounds of plastic that would otherwise pollute the world's oceans, or from Vivobarefoot which is on track to use 90 per cent sustainable materials in its products by 2020, and makes trainers for gym workouts, road running and hiking, including the Primus Lite vegan trainer (from £100; vivobarefoot.com).