



craft a greener home

Make your house more **eco-friendly** this Earth Day with easy, fun crafts and creative tips from our readers.

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towel tags

Here's a way to be sure everyone knows whose towel is whose so that they stay on the hook and out of the laundry hamper longer.

Use a **permanent, waterproof ink pad** to stamp a name onto **cotton twill tape**. Trim the tape with **pinking shears** (to prevent fraying), so that there's about $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches extra after the name and a few inches before the name. When the ink is dry, set it by covering the tape with a cloth and pressing it with a hot, dry iron. Fold both edges of the tape under about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch and crease the folds with the iron. Sew the folded edges to the towel.



snack packs

Repurpose a milk or juice carton into a reusable snack container. For an eco-friendly trifecta, fill it with treats from your supermarket's bulk bin!

Start with a clean, dry **half-gallon carton**. Measure, mark, and cut the carton so three sides are 4 inches tall and one side is 7 inches tall. Trim the tall side into a curve. Pinch the front and back panels together while tucking in the sides of the carton, as shown. Fold the curved flap over the front of the carton. Cover the outside with **colored duct tape**, if you like. Add an **adhesive-backed Velcro square** to the inside of the flap and the front of the carton.



name a napkin

Cloth napkins aren't just for special occasions anymore. Personalize a set or two with each family member's initial and have your crew use theirs for several meals, then pop them all in the wash.

For each, cut a 5-inch square of **Con-Tact paper**. Trace and cut a 2½-inch circle from the center. Trace a printed letter on the circle, and cut that out. Peel the backing from the square and the letter and adhere both to a prewashed **cloth napkin**. Dip a foam or **stencil brush** into a shallow dish of **fabric paint**, then dab (don't brush) the paint onto the napkin. After the paint dries, peel off the Con-Tact paper. Set the paint according to the manufacturer's directions.

make the switch

A cute felt critter reminds kids to hit the lights every time they're leaving the room.

Download our **owl template** at familyfunmag.com/printables. Trace and cut out the shapes from **felt**. Cut a copy of the largest piece from **cereal-box cardboard** and adhere it to the matching felt shape with **tacky glue**. Use a **craft knife** (an adult's job) to cut out the rectangle for the switch. Assemble the felt pieces with tacky glue and let dry. With **letter stamps** and a **black ink pad**, add a message to the white felt word balloon. Attach the owl to the switch cover with **glue dots**. To protect your wall's surface, use **removable double-sided tape** to mount the word balloon.



READER TIP

“My kids turn clean brown paper bags into gift wrap. We cut them open and experiment with stamps and ink pads. The kids love stamping, and our family members receive a more personal gift.”

Meredith Lewko Methuen, MA

READER TIP

“We kept forgetting to bring our reusable bags to the store, so I decided to make them unforgettable. I purchased a few plain canvas bags, and my children decorated them with paint, markers, glitter, sequins, and more. Now we always remember our bags, because the kids are so excited to show them off!”

Jessica Arsenault Rivenburg Ilion, NY

paper monster

Turn two grocery bags into a friendly monster that wants nothing more than to be fed with paper scraps. Once it's full, pack up the whole shebang and send it to the recycling center.

Cut a large oval hole in a large **brown paper bag**. Use a **glue stick** to attach a row of pointy, **white paper** teeth inside. Add paper eyes. Open a second paper bag and slip the first bag over it, overlapping the edges an inch or two. Seal the seam with **masking tape**.



scrap saver

Make it easy to reuse those single-sided school flyers, computer printouts, and office memos by stacking them, blank side up, in accessible bins.

For each bin, assemble a sturdy **cardboard shipping box**. Cut off a portion of it at an angle, as shown. (Our shorter top panel is 7½ inches, the bottom panel, 9 inches.) Use **double-sided tape** to cover the boxes with **patterned paper**. Use **letter stamps** (or a marker) to print “scrap paper” onto the top half of a piece of **cardstock**, fold the bottom half back, and tape the label in place.



time out!

This cheerful whale can help reduce the length of your family’s showers by giving a friendly “ding!” when it’s time to finish up. Bonus: Using the timer just might make the morning routine go more smoothly.

Download the whale **template** at familyfunmag.com/printables. Cut one whale shape from **felt** and a second backing shape from **cereal-box cardboard**. Join the two with **tacky glue**. Attach the eye and adhere the whale to the **timer** with **glue dots**. On the timer dial, adhere a red felt arrow at your target shower length (time your shower, then try reducing it by a minute or two). Glue a matching arrow on the whale, pointing to zero. ✽

READER TIP

“We were using an overabundance of paper towels in our house, especially in the bathroom. So I cut up a bunch of old T-shirts and towels and put the pieces in a container on a bathroom shelf. We use them to dry mouths after toothbrushing and to wipe up spots from the sink and floor. Afterward, we just throw the rag in the laundry basket.”

Miranda Bailey Burbank, OH

