

## **Environmental Tip of the Month**

February 2021, Gillian Banner

### **We all need mending.....**

Mending is such a gentle, hopeful word. It has several meanings. A broken bone mends; we aim to mend damaged relationships; as children we are encouraged to mend our manners when we are inconsiderate or impatient. Mending is the opportunity to make good something that has been damaged, perhaps to a very significant extent, but that is not yet 'beyond repair'.

This month's eco tip is an encouragement to give thought and time to mending your garments, if you don't already. Mending plays a central role in the rise of the slow fashion movement, the popularity of BBC programmes such as The Great British Sewing Bee (and that other lockdown hit, The Repair Shop) and the rediscovery for many people of the pleasures of 'memade' clothes. At its simplest, replacing a button, or fixing a hem, is something most of us will have done: it's the matter of a needle, cotton and a few minutes to restore tidiness. But taking the opportunity to repair a significantly damaged dress or shirt or to darn a growing hole in a jumper, often requires more effort.

Sometimes, we are discouraged by the knowledge that we won't be able to return the garment to its perfect, pre-damage condition. The philosophy of visible mending can come to our rescue here. There are many exponents of this approach to mending and it is particularly forgiving for those of us who have less than perfect control of our attempts at repair, as it embraces the value of the mend or darn, seeing it as a thing of beauty in itself. There are thousands of mender bloggers, such as Tom of Holland, along with YouTube videos, ready to assist the hesitant novice as he or she undertakes to repair a garment and restore its wearability. I've included a few suggestions below.

Of course, mending is not at all a new idea. But, for a while, it fell out of favour with many, as access to cheap, disposable fashion meant we didn't have to repair but could afford simply to replace. Now that we know the true cost of the fast fashion clothes industry, there is an added incentive to buy better, buy fewer, and prepare to repair.

Apart from saving money and diminishing environmental impacts, mending is creatively satisfying. It somehow makes a garment truly your own. I have a Jaeger sweater,

bought at a jumble sale in Buxton over 35 years ago. It was in perfect condition when I bought it but has, like most sweaters, succumbed to age, especially at the neck and elbows. The repairs I have made are functional and by no means invisible, but yet, the sweater pleases me, as its rather clunky 'scars' seem testament to the history we share.

Here's to a creative, mending month ahead.

Gillian Banner

<https://tomofholland.com/about/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/style/visible-mending.html>

<https://eco-age.com/magazine/most-common-ways-mend-your-clothes/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08l581p>



A 67 year old bear who has seen much love and some pretty darning.