



Part

I

**Funky See,
Funky Do:
How Discarded
Items Can Take on
New Life**



Castoff Call:

I Love Trash and Why You Will, Too



What types of castoffs can be upcycled? Just about any—although, granted, some materials are probably best left in the trash (used hypodermic needles come to mind). Here are a few ideas to get your creative juices flowing:

- **Cardboard packaging.** Cereal boxes, beer cases, and similar packaging can experience new life as notebook covers, CD cases, envelopes, and the like.
- **Plastic bags.** There are a zillion ways to reuse the plastic bag you once employed to lug your groceries, store your bread, and pamper your produce—none of which include picking up dog poop. Instead, try fashioning them into a nifty clutch or tote. As for the doodad used to clamp your bread bag together: Why not repurpose it as a charm for a bracelet or some earrings?
- **Containers.** Sometimes a cigar box is just a cigar box. But other times it's a great foundation for a jewelry box, a gift box, or even a purse. Other containers—think

coffee tins, oatmeal canisters, and the like—can serve similar purposes.

- **Glass bottles.** The beauty of glass is evident, even when said glass is designed merely to contain your root beer. Glass bottles are the perfect materials for any number of upcycling projects from vases to wind chimes and beyond. Plastic bottles, too, can be upcycled into an array of nifty items.
- **Bottle caps.** Bottle caps, which are groovy in their own right, can be fashioned into magnets, earrings, and more.



Bottles are beautiful in their own right.



Colorful and interesting, bottle caps make great crafting materials.



- **Corks.** Why should the fun end just because the party's over? You can use the corks from your last celebration as fuel for myriad projects ranging from bulletin boards to bracelets.



Corks are an excellent project ingredient.

- **Cans.** Tin and aluminum cans make great fodder for projects, including candles, pendants, mosaics, and beyond.
- **Ephemera.** If your Great-uncle Morty has saved every issue of *National Geographic* since 1962, rejoice. You'll be rich in materials for upcycling when he finally decides to clean out his house. Ephemera such as magazine pages, sheet music, postage stamps, theater programs, ticket stubs, greeting cards,



Cans can be upcycled in any number of ways.

postcards, flashcards, wrapping paper, matchbook covers, maps, old books, wall calendars, and the like can embellish photo frames, bags, clocks, jewelry, and more.



Breathe new life into tired old books.

- **Photos.** Like ephemera, photos are natural choices for embellishing any number of items—but why stop there? Old-school photographers can find new ways to display their work by employing photo negatives in projects ranging from lamp shades to night-lights to bookmarks. Slide negatives, too, can serve many purposes—think notebook covers, mobiles, and more.
- **Toys and games.** Just because your Monopoly set is missing half its property cards doesn't mean it's "game over." A game's pieces can easily be transformed into charms for a bracelet,

Board games contain loads of cool pieces that are prime for reuse.



necklace, or earrings. The game cards (not to mention regular playing cards) can become magnets and greeting-card decorations; and the game board can be transformed into a tabletop, a clock, or even coasters.

Likewise, toys that are no longer in demand can be upcycled into any number of nifty knick-knacks.



Put those old odds and ends to work.

- **Odds and ends.**

Who *doesn't* have a drawer full of castoff buttons, craft bits, beads, and assorted odds and ends? These doodads can serve any number of crafty purposes, embellishing bags, boxes, and beyond.

- **Clothes.** From sweaters to scarves, T-shirts to ties, clothes can be upcycled in any number of ways including bags, sashes, and cuffs.
- **Tools, hardware, and other manly stuff.** Just because the tools you inherited from your grandfather are as rusty as Britney Spears's lip-syncing skills doesn't mean you should chuck them. Tools and hardware make great wind-chime and sculpture components (as do kitchen utensils). Other garage/manly paraphernalia that can be upcycled include old license plates, electronics components, keys, tarps, and webbing from old lawn chairs.
- **Record albums.** LPs make great place mats, and can even be converted into bowls or coasters. Album covers can be adapted into notebooks or even used

Forage for Storage

As soon as you accumulate even a modest collection of materials for upcycling projects, you'll see the need for keeping them organized. Failure to implement some type of system results in chaos; unless you're an anarchist—which, given this book's demographic, you may well be—you'll go mad. Fortunately, you can channel any number of items you've retained for your upcycled crafts for use as organizational tools. Coffee tins make great containers for bottle caps, corks, and various odds and ends; cereal boxes are the perfect size for storing ephemera; Altoid tins, tic tac boxes, prescription pill bottles, film canisters, and the like work beautifully for needles, safety pins, and other wee bits; and cardboard shipping boxes can handle just about anything else. Plastic plates—the kind with little dividers so your kid doesn't throw a temper tantrum when his ketchup fuses with his alphabet chicken nuggets—are great for holding your supplies as you work (as are frozen dinner trays, deviled-egg and ice cube trays, muffin tins, sushi boxes, and the like).





Space Case

Regardless of what type of upcycling project you have chosen to undertake, you should take steps to ensure your physical comfort while working. In particular, you'll want to make sure your work space has adequate lighting. Also, ensure that your seat (your chair) has adequate cushion for your seat (your derrière). Good posture is also key. That's not to say you should work with a book on your head, but do make an effort to sit up straight. Finally, if you're like me, you probably don't have a lot in the way of brain cells to spare—meaning you should ensure that your work space is well ventilated, especially when applying sealants, solvents, and certain adhesives.

to construct boxes, carrying cases, and the like. LP adapters (the little doodads you or your parents used to play 45s on a record player) make great charms for jewelry.

What a Tool

If this were a book on, say, knitting or stitching or underwater basket weaving, a section on precisely what types of tools are required would be in order. But it's not. If upcycling is your bag, you might be called on to saw, snip, stab, sand, sew, solder, stitch, or staple—depending on what type of project you have in mind. This means that no single set of tools will suffice. Indeed, an upcycling project might employ any of the following:

Note: For specifics on tool requirements, see the “Materials” list at the beginning of each project in this book.

- **Power tools.** Drills, especially, are useful for upcycling projects. Also handy,

depending on the materials involved, is a grinder.

- **Hand tools.** Especially when creating jewelry or working with wire, various hand tools (such as needle nose pliers, round nose pliers, etc.) become critical. Hammers, saws, wrenches, and other hand tools may also prove useful.
- **Cutters.** Various types of cutters frequently come into play in upcycling projects. These include simple scissors, shears, paper cutters, wire cutters, craft knives (such as the X-ACTO brand, recommended for many of the projects in this book), tin snips, metal shears, and bolt cutters.
- **Household.** Some projects call for the use of household appliances, such as your oven, washer/dryer, and iron.
- **Sewing tools.** Many upcycling projects require the use of a sewing machine,

along with other sewing accouterments (think thread, pins, seam ripper, etc.). At the very least, you'll want to keep some needle and thread handy.

- **Soldering equipment.** A soldering iron, solder, flux, and burnish tool are required for many types of projects.
- **Measuring tools.** A ruler and/or measuring tape will be required for many types of upcycling projects.

- **Adhesives.** Many products make use of a range of adhesives, from basic Elmer's variety glue sticks to rubber cement to hot glue to spray adhesives and beyond.
- **Sealants and solvents.** Your upcycling creations may occasionally call for the use of resin and sealants. (Note that you'll also want to have various paintbrushes and sponges handy for application purposes.) Solvents, too, may occasionally be required.



LUCKY AVE.
RENT \$18.
1 House
2 Houses
3 Houses
4 Houses
With HOTEL \$
Mortgage Value
Houses cost \$1
Hotels, \$150. pl
If a player owns
any Color Group, the
on Unimproved Lot

Community Chest
DOCTOR'S FEE
PAY \$50

TITLE DEED
NO. CAROLINA
With 1 House RENT \$26.
With 2 Houses
With 3 Houses
With 4 Houses
With HO
Mortgage
Houses
Hotels, \$
If a pl
any Color
on Unim

ELECTRIC COMPANY
If one "Utility" is owned
rent is 4 times amount
shown on dice.
If both "Utilities" are
owned rent is 10 times
amount shown on dice.
Mortgage Value
\$15.

