

Most of us have mastered recycling items in our curbside toters. Now we are looking at other items in our trash.

When we wash our hands at home, we use terry cloth towels to dry off. When we wash our hands at a public restroom, our drying choices are paper towels or hand drying machines.

At a recent Green Festival in Seattle, my sister picked up two green alternatives to those throwaway paper towels.

PeopleTowels (www.peopletowels.com) are touted as a sustainable, reusable, personal hand towel made from 100 percent organic, fair trade cotton. Carrying and using your own personal PeopleTowel would cut down on the thousands of paper towels that each American uses annually. I did a test drive and found that it works well and dries quickly.

There are traditional alternatives to the People Towel: a handkerchief or a bandana. When I backpack, I carry a bandana and a small pack towel that work well for the week-long trip.

The most environmentally correct solution is to simply give your hands a shake and let dry naturally.

Another interesting product is the SKOY (www.skoycloth.com). Made in Germany, the SKOY cloth is designed as an alternative to paper towels or sponges. This seven-inch square is made from cotton and wood-pulp cellulose and is said to replace 15 rolls of paper towels. The SKOY is biodegradable in your backyard compost pile at the end of its usable life.

The Skoy lead me to search for how sponges are made. Sponges for our kitchens are mostly made from wood pulp known as cellulose. So my next worn out sponge will get the backyard composting treatment to see how long it will take to break down.

Sea sponges are a natural alternative that are harvested from the ocean floor.

They have the ability to regrow lost parts. Pieces broken off by water currents can settle in another location and grow into a clone of the parent sponge.

Other interesting products included reusable plastic moving boxes from www.frogbox.com and www.karmaboxx.com. If you are looking for a new roof, you may want to consider recycled rubber tire roofing (www.stateroofing.com).

The greenest part of the festival was the downloadable program that lists all the websites for green products and services. For more information, go to www.greenfestivals.org and mark your calendars for November 5 through 7 for the San Francisco Green Festival.
Good Green Fitness

Environmentalist Ed Begley Jr. has his bicycle connected to a small generator that runs his toaster.

Robert Kravitz has taken that idea one step further. In his Go Green Fitness gym in Orange Connecticut, he has 25 exercycles connected to the local electric grid. These bikes can produce up to 800 watts of power in one hour. Currently, the local power company is giving back to him about \$60 per month to this people-powered gym.

Just think of all the gyms in the states and how much power that could produce to lessen our dependance on oil and coal.
Curbside recycling tip

Do not place any plastic bags in your blue recycling cart. Take them back to the grocery store or throw black and large ones in the trash.

*VALCORE Recycling Board
Secretary Jane Bogner's "A Sorted Affair" is published every other week in the Times-Herald. For recycling information call VALCORE Recycling at 645-8258 or visit www.VALCORErecycling.org.*

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