

BE A

SUSTAINABLE

ONE UNBOXING CAN REVEAL A LOT: CELLOPHANE WRAPPING, EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CARDBOARD CONTAINERS, PAPER PAMPHLETS, MULTIPLE PLASTIC COMPONENTS—AND THAT’S BEFORE YOU EVEN REACH THE PRODUCT ITSELF. ALL THAT EXCESS ADDS UP: PACKAGING AND CONTAINER WASTE ACCOUNT FOR 21 PERCENT OF THE MATERIAL IN U.S. LANDFILLS, ACCORDING TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY. BUT THANKS TO A GROWING NUMBER OF ECO-MINDED BRANDS, YOU DON’T HAVE TO PICK BETWEEN YOUR SKIN-CARE STASH AND HELPING THE PLANET.

HERE’S YOUR GO-GREEN GUIDE.

BY MADDIE ABERMAN
PHOTOGRAPHED BY JEFFREY WESTBROOK
PAGE 138

BEAUTY

JUNKIE

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

In a nutshell, it means fulfilling the needs of the current population without getting in the way of future generations. So when it comes to the beauty industry, every step of a product's life is factored in, from ingredient sourcing to production—and, of course, what we do with our products once they're done.

ECO SOLUTIONS BEGIN LONG BEFORE A PRODUCT HITS SHELVES. BRUSH UP ON THREE STEPS THAT REALLY MATTER:

SOURCING

Traceability (tracking something back to its origins) is a major issue when a brand is acquiring raw ingredients, especially if it's purchasing items like palm oil and cocoa butter, which have been linked to poor labor practices and deforestation. If a product contains fair-trade ingredients (more on what that means at right), that's a sign of good traceability. Without that certification, it's hard to know where a product is from, who's harvesting it, or the employees' working conditions.

BRAND DOING IT RIGHT Lush buys exclusively fair-trade, organic cocoa butter. "We end up paying more than we would for conventional, non-fair trade butter, but we can feel good about the social and environmental impact," says Heather Deeth, ethical buying manager at Lush.

PRODUCTION

Manufacturing plants generate immense waste and leave a big carbon footprint. In fact, the industrial sector accounts for about 22 percent of all U.S. energy consumption

(manufacturing is the culprit for about three-quarters of that). To offset emissions, many companies are striving for a carbon-neutral state. This means they either release no carbon dioxides (CO₂) into the atmosphere, or any CO₂ that is released is balanced out by a reduction elsewhere.

BRAND DOING IT RIGHT Aveda's energy comes in the form of wind, a clean, renewable source of power that doesn't emit any CO₂ into the air. The brand's wind turbines generate 100 percent of the energy used to create products.

SHIPPING

Products don't magically appear in stores. They need to be shipped from their production sites to shops around the country or the world. Whether they get there by ground, air, sea, or all of the above, each transportation method takes energy. **BRAND DOING IT RIGHT** Kevin Murphy's rectangular products are designed to be packed tightly together, allowing more products to fit in a single box. In fact, the box-shaped bottles use 40 percent less resin and require fewer boxes than their standard cylindrical counterparts.

LOOK FOR THESE SEALS



FAIR TRADE
Ingredients must be purchased with fair pricing and working conditions while building long-term relationships.



CERTIFIED B CORPORATION
These corps have strong social and eco standards, are transparent, and hold themselves accountable.



USDA ORGANIC
Ingredients are produced organically, have no genetic modification, and are overseen by the USDA.

APPROXIMATE UNITS OF PACKAGING PRODUCED BY THE GLOBAL COSMETICS INDUSTRY EVERY YEAR, ACCORDING TO EUROMONITOR

BILLION

120

SMART SWAPS

Next time you're scanning the aisles—or your feed—look for one of these alternatives to traditional plastic.

1—LESS PLASTIC

Thanks to a water-resistant paper jacket, the plastic lining of this leave-in conditioner can be much thinner. It uses 60 percent less plastic than a standard bottle. **Seed Phytonutrients** Moisture Leave-In Treatment, \$26, sephora.com

2—REFILLABLE

The heavy jar you expect with premium skin care is now reusable. Instead of repurchasing the full container, pop out the interior pod and replace it. **Lancôme Absolue** Revitalizing & Brightening Soft Cream, \$208 for initial jar, \$166 for refill, lancome-usa.com

3—NO PACKAGING

Thirty-five percent of Lush's products are sold without packaging, including this solid face oil. Because the most earth-friendly packaging is no packaging at all. **Lush Light Touch Naked Facial Oil**, \$13, lushusa.com

4—POST-CONSUMER RECYCLED (PCR) MATERIAL

Recycled plastic is broken down into pellets that are used to create new containers, like for this shampoo. All the brand's bottles use 100 percent PCR, so no new plastic is needed. **Love Beauty and Planet** Prevent and Preserve Sulfate-Free Shampoo, \$7, lovebeautyandplanet.com

5—GLASS

Glass is infinitely recyclable, unlike plastic or paper, so you can feel good every time you reach for this brightening facial oil. **Captain Blankenship** Rose & Pomegranate Face Oil, \$38, captainblankenship.com



HOW TO RECYCLE YOUR #EMPTIES

1-EMPTY, RINSE, AND DRY THE CONTAINER

These extra steps might sound tedious, but they can prevent your products from ending up in a landfill. Your local recovery facility sells your recyclables to a third party that handles all the processing. A load that is dirty or damp can be turned away and sent straight to the trash, so consider going the extra mile and peel off the labels. “Recycling facilities have a certain percentage of contamination that they will accept,” explains Shannon Bergstrom, sustainability manager at Recycle Track Systems, but it’s best to keep contamination to a minimum to be safe.

2-CHECK YOUR LOCAL GREEN LAWS

Depending on where you live, your state might mandate dual-stream (separating your metal, glass, and plastic from your paper) or single-stream (it can all go in one bin) recycling. To make matters more confusing, what is considered recyclable is also not consistent from region to region. Bergstrom recommends checking your government’s website for info, especially for plastics, which are common in beauty products. Speaking of which...

3-KNOW THAT ALL PLASTICS ARE NOT EQUAL

“Rigid plastics, like shampoo bottles and moisturizer jars—really, anything that keeps its shape—are recyclable,” says Bergstrom. “But soft plastics, like product wrapping or even shopping bags, are not readily recyclable.” As a best practice, keep your plastics separate so you can sort through them easily and get the most accepted material into the recycling bin and out of landfills.

4-SIZE MATTERS

Anything smaller than your fist should go in the trash bin. “Too small and it will fall through the recycling plant’s infrastructure and is less likely to be recycled,” explains Bergstrom, who also recommends leaving on any caps and nozzles so they don’t get lost. For smaller beauty products, try niche recycling companies like TerraCycle, which specializes in hard-to-recycle products and provides easy-to-use, free shipping labels thanks to its partnership with Garnier. Many brands also have take-back programs, like Origins stores, which accept cosmetic empties from any brand. Brands like Lush and M.A.C even offer perks for bringing back certain empties.

5-TRIPLE-CHECK YOUR SORTINGS

As a general rule, Bergstrom says, when in doubt, throw it out. It might seem counterintuitive, but putting questionable items in your recycling bin can contaminate an entire load, leading it right to a landfill.

Good news! Products housed in containers made from aluminum (such as Grown Alchemist Purifying Body Exfoliant, \$37, grownalchemist.com) are recyclable everywhere. Once they are empty, cut open the tubes to make cleaning them much easier.

WHAT ABOUT METAL TUBES?

POUNDS OF TRASH PRODUCED PER PERSON EACH DAY IN THE U.S.

4.5



SYMBOL CERTAINTY This triangular trio of arrows, also known as the mobius loop, can be found on the bottom or side of products. If you spot it, that means the item is recyclable *if* (and that’s a big if) the material is accepted in your region. And if the logo has a numbered percent inside, it indicates the amount that was made from recycled material.

STYLING: JULIE FLYNN AT HALLEY RESOURCES, STYLING ASSISTANT: RICK HOLBROOK

CAN YOU RECYCLE IT?



PUMP BOTTLES

Partly. Inside that plastic pump is a non-removable metal spring that makes recycling nearly impossible. It’s best to toss the pump, but the rest of the bottle should be good to go.



NAIL POLISH

No. It falls into the hard-to-recycle category and is best left to the pros at take-back programs.



COMPACTS

No. Especially if it includes a mirror (the reflective coating makes the glass non-recyclable) or a magnetic closure (magnets are never recyclable).



HAIR SPRAY

Yes. Just make sure the can is empty first, otherwise it’s considered hazardous waste, which requires a separate disposal process.



LIP GLOSS

No. The tubes are often too small for traditional recycling plants, plus the applicator can include upwards of three different materials, which are almost impossible to separate and sort before being recycled.



BRUSHES

No. Like gloss, they are made from multiple materials, which are glued together. Instead, take good care of your existing brushes so you’ll need to replace them less often.