



Starting Circular Practices

A practical guide to introduce reuse, repair, material care, & circular habits into your activities.

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Summary

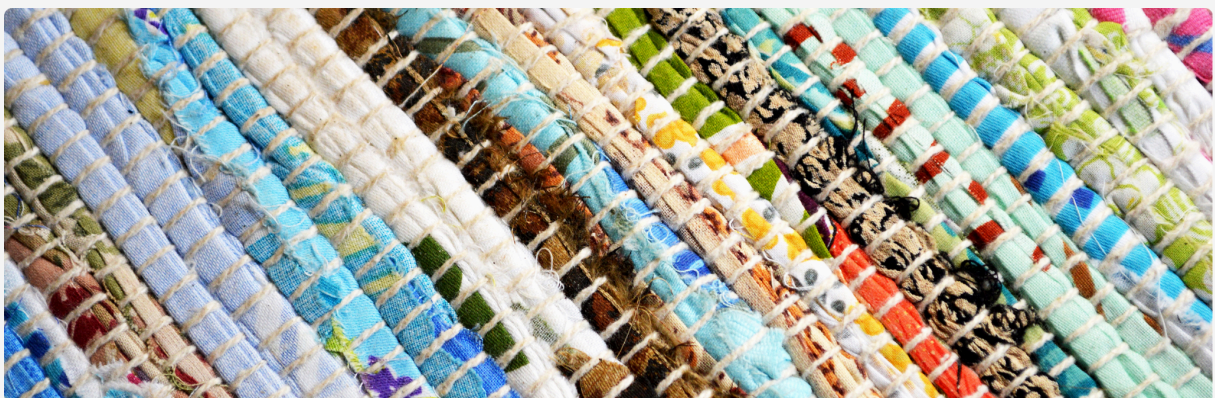
Libraries and makerspaces are already circular by nature: they share resources, value care, and support collective learning. This guide is designed to help you make those circular qualities more visible, intentional, and actionable, especially in activities focused on textiles, crafts, and basic digital fabrication.

How this guide is designed

- **Modular:** You can use one section at a time
- **Low-threshold:** No prior expertise required
- **Action-oriented:** Each section includes “what to do next”

You do not need to do everything.

Circularity works best when it grows slowly, with care.



1. What is circularity in libraries and makerspaces?

Circularity means keeping materials, skills, and knowledge in use for as long as possible; through reuse, repair, transformation, and sharing. In a library or makerspace context, this often looks like:

- Working with donated or leftover materials
- Designing workshops around repair or transformation
- Treating materials as shared commons rather than consumables

“The circular economy is a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible. In this way, the life cycle of products is extended. In practice, it implies reducing waste to a minimum. When a product reaches the end of its life, its materials are kept within the economy wherever possible thanks to recycling. These can be productively used again and again, thereby creating further value. This is a departure from the traditional, linear economic model, which is based on a take-make-consume-throw away pattern.” - European Parliament

Why it matters in public spaces

Libraries are trusted civic infrastructures. Introducing circular practices here:

- Makes sustainability tangible and local
- Supports learning through hands-on experience
- Encourages care, responsibility, and participation

Action you can take now

Start with a short internal conversation:

What materials do we already circulate? What usually gets discarded?

 Inspirational resource

[Shifting mindsets for sustainable practices with Marion Real](#)

2. First steps towards circularity

You do not need new equipment or funding to begin.

Start with awareness

- Host a short talk, film screening, or discussion on reuse or repair
- Use an existing event or workshop slot

Use what you already have

- Inventory leftover fabrics, yarns, offcuts, or tools
- Build activities around these materials rather than buying new ones

Invite the community in

- Ask for donations of clean, usable textiles or tools
- Be clear about what you can accept

Action you can take now

- ☐ Create a “materials list” poster:
What we have / What we need / What we don't take.

 Inspirational resource

[Circular making, the makers movement's role in the circular economy](#)
with Enrico Bassi

3. Building a circular culture (over time)

Circularity becomes meaningful when it is visible and shared.

- Display objects made from reused materials
- Create a small materials corner for scraps and leftovers
- Encourage participants to label projects with their material origins

Action you can take now

- ☐ Add one sentence to your workshop descriptions explaining why reused materials are used.
- ☐ Host a circular workshop in your library creative/makerspace to encourage people to get hands on with circularity.

 Inspirational resource

[Nurturing collaborative practices by \(re\)mixing materials and maker techniques](#)
with Milena Juarez

4. Collaboration and local opportunities

Circular practices grow through relationships.

- Map local repair groups, schools, or sustainability initiatives
- Invite guests for short demonstrations or conversations
- Exchange materials or workshop formats

Action you can take now

Create a simple local map (even a list on paper) of potential collaborators.

5. Resources & next steps

Use these selectively, no need to read everything!

- [Global Fashion Agenda – Upstream Circularity Playbook](#)
- [Loopholes: Circular Roadmapping Toolkit](#)
- [Creating a circular and regenerative textile sector](#) | Report from Amsterdam
- [Crafting Circularity: The transformational potential of the crafts sector](#) webinar by the [European Crafts Alliance](#)
- [Circular Classroom](#) | Interactive educational toolkit for educators and students
- [Circular Cities and Regions Initiative](#) by the European Commission

Explore further: You can also explore the **make-a-thek** website for the [extensive mapping list](#) with more than 300 searchable reference documents, workshop ideas, and examples tailored to libraries and makerspaces.

Final note

Circularity does not require perfection.

It starts with attention, care, and small, repeatable actions.

Libraries already do this every day. This guide simply helps make it visible, and shared.