

Planetary Wellbeing

- Cut Pollution & Toxicity
- Ensure Animal Wellness
- Guard Water Resources
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- Protect Biodiversity

Reduce Resource Consumption

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Mani Madness



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Start a Tool Lending Library

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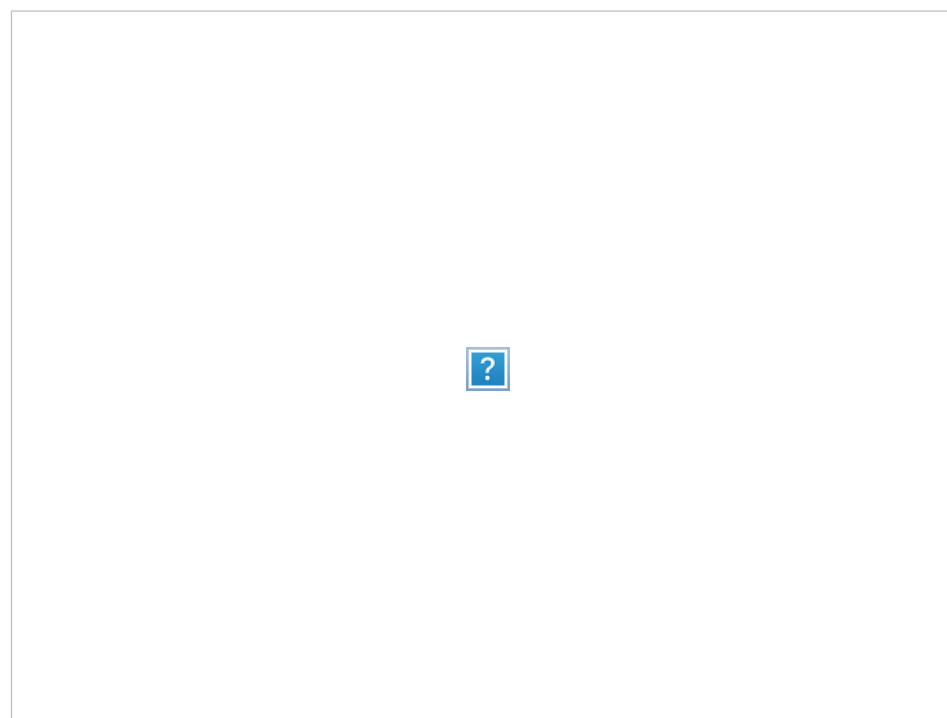
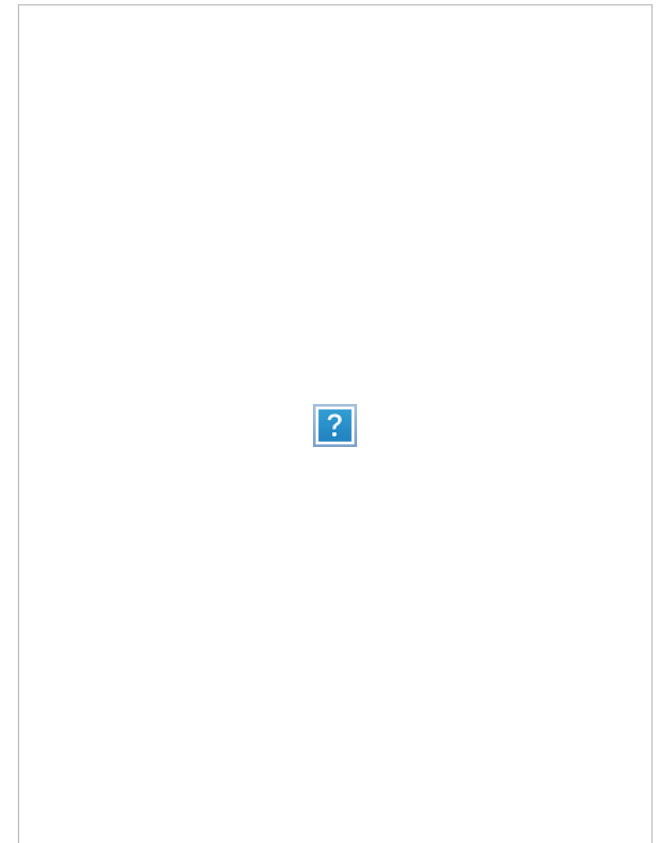
When you're standing in the home improvement store, do you ever find yourself asking, "Do I really need that jackhammer for this one-time sidewalk removal project?" If so, you're not alone. So many of us purchase tools that, in the moment, seem like an absolute necessity, only to find that they collect dust for months or years before they're ever used again. One-time and infrequently used tools are not only an expense you can live without, they're also a drain on the planet.

That's where neighborhood tool sharing comes in, and tool lending libraries are the system by which tool sharing is done best. Much like book lending libraries, tool lending libraries are essentially collections of tools – from power drills to hammers to leaf blowers to jigsaws – that are organized and stored on a community level, and then lent out to participating community members for little or no cost. They're a great resource for getting the job done, whether you're working on an eco-friendly remodel or a [home energy retrofit](#).

Tool sharing is becoming so trendy that even NASA is getting into it as part of Obama's SAVE initiative which gets government employees to present ideas for cutting federal expenses. The [SAVE Award](#) went to Matthew Ritsko of Maryland for his idea to create the high tech tool lending library for NASA flight projects. ^[1] Surely if NASA can do it, we can, too!

Quick Guide: Basics of Neighborhood Sharing and Lending Libraries

- **Save money:** **It all costs money:** everything from power tools to specialized carpentry tools. In a slow economy where everyone is looking for ways to reduce their annual costs, tool lending libraries fill a void for those who want to be able to fix things around the house without shelling out hundreds of dollars every year to own the tools they need. Late fees notwithstanding, tool library membership fees are usually extremely low compared to purchasing your own tools, ranging from free to \$50 per year. ^[1]
- **Reduce home clutter:** If you've ever tried to organize a pile of tools, you know they can take up a lot of space. Whether you live in an apartment or a home without a garage, you may not have the space to store all of the tools you could use from year to year. A tool lending library solves that problem, too!
- **Have a smaller home:** Of course, if you don't need a special area or room to store your tools, that may mean you can own or rent a smaller home. Not only can this reduce your monthly rental or mortgage costs, it can also cut your energy consumption since energy is needed to heat and cool most rooms in the home.
- **Cut resource consumption:** Every new tool requires resources to create – from steel to plastic to aluminum to PVC to rubber. When you check tools out from a tool lending library, you're reducing the amount of resources you require to get the job done. That's one of the big benefits of collaborative consumption.
- **Learn how to use tools:** Many tool lending libraries provide free or low-cost tool-use seminars and workshops to help you learn how to make use of their tools. This can be a great resource if you've always wanted to learn about carpentry or how to fix your own toilet.



Take Action! Participating in or Starting a Tool Lending Library

1. **Find a tool lending library in your community:** Wikipedia has a [List of tool-lending libraries](#) organized by country and state, with external links for most of the programs. This is a great database of many of the projects already underway – check to see if there's one in your neighborhood!
2. **Start your own tool lending library:** If there isn't a tool lending library already started in your community, why not start one on your own? This [Tool Library Starter Kit](#) includes all kinds of advice and resources for getting your own library going. The New American Dream and Shareable.com have put together a [Guide to Sharing](#) as well to help you on your way. Alternatively, join the Google [National Tool Library Group](#) to see what's going on in your community and find out how to make neighborhood tool sharing part of your life.
3. **Organize your tool library with the right software:** Whether you're volunteering with a tool lending library that's already up and running or looking to start your own, check out these software tools which will help you keep your tools and members organized: [Local Tools](#) and [Tool Librarian](#).

Dig Deeper: Tool Sharing

- Learn from a pioneering organization in the field of tool sharing: The Center for a New American Dream. They've put together an informative [Webinar Series: How to Start a Tool Library in Your Community](#) that's available free to anyone.

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