



## Trashmagination Podcast #123 – Hangers

Welcome to Trashmagination, a podcast about reimagining trash. I'm Carla Brown. Today's episode is about the creative reuse of hangers – metal, plastic and wooden hangers.

How big of an environmental issue are hangers? There used to be a TV show called Waste Sleuth where they researched how to recycle challenging types of trash [<https://youtu.be/ac0bJa0n97g>]. The host visited a plastic hanger recycling company which has since closed. At that time, they were receiving 2 million plastic hangers every day, but the CEO noted that they were recycling only a tiny amount of all plastic hangers in the world, and he estimated people throw away about 40 billion hangers per year. Ninety percent of clothing is imported to the United States and almost every piece of clothing comes on a hanger.

The challenge with recycling hangers, and the reason you probably should not put them in your recycling bin, is hangers are made from many types of plastics often combined with metal and foam. It takes a specialized recycling facility to separate out those materials. If you are interested in plastic hanger recycling, I found a company in the US called JDM Sorting (<http://jdmsorting.com/>) and Tam Hangers in the United Kingdom (<https://www.tamhangers.com/about>).

But clearly, recycling hangers takes a lot of energy. A better idea is to reuse hangers. When I downsized our clothing, I took our metal hangers to our dry cleaner to be reused. Make sure you ask if they would like your hangers. The first store did not want the metal hangers. The second had a stand out by their counter where you slid the hangers down for them to reuse. Another place to bring hangers might be a thrift stores. But again, you should ask if they want your hangers before putting them in your donation.

### Are There More Environmentally Friendly Hangers?

Besides reusing and recycling hangers, another option is to purchase hangers that are more environmentally-friendly from the start.

One option is hangers made from recycled paper, such as those made by the Australian company Enviro Hanger (<https://envirohanger.com/>).

Another option is a hanger made by the company Arch & Hook. They make a hanger from recycled marine plastic which is called the BLUE hanger (<https://www.archandhook.com/home/blue/>, <https://youtu.be/p1zjsZoE3Mk>). The plastic in these hangers is collected in the world's most polluted areas, including the four most polluting rivers in the world. These rivers cause 90% of ocean plastic pollution, according to the World Economic Forum. The company Arch & Hook also makes wooden hangers from Forest Stewardship Council certified wood, and long-lasting high grade hangers from recycled materials.

### Projects to Make with Wooden Hangers

Next I'll share ideas for how you can reuse hangers. Let's start with projects that reuse wooden hangers.

Pierre Lota wrote a book about making furniture from everyday objects. The book does not appear in English, but when I translate the title, it is "Do it! 1 hour - 1 object: Furniture with style made from everyday objects." Using wooden hangers, Pierre made a coffee table ([https://youtu.be/aPn-IL\\_JZJs](https://youtu.be/aPn-IL_JZJs)) and something called a tablette which is a tray that balances on the back of your sofa (<https://youtu.be/QGUSysoHLwo>).

- [https://www.amazon.com/Do-1-Stunde-Objekt/dp/342104080X/ref=sr\\_1\\_1](https://www.amazon.com/Do-1-Stunde-Objekt/dp/342104080X/ref=sr_1_1)

Another designer who makes simple furniture from hangers is Eva Mota. I love Eva's message which involves teaching women how to use power tools and reusing wood scraps. Her resources are in Portuguese.

- Tablette or Apoio - <http://blog.evamota.com.br/apoio-para-sofa-moveis-com-cabide/>
- Table made from wooden hangers - <http://blog.evamota.com.br/mesa-de-cabeceira-moveis-com-cabides/>
- [https://www.instagram.com/p/CC\\_FUxcBZ91/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CC_FUxcBZ91/) - side table
- <https://www.instagram.com/p/B24yGNdh00E/> - side table
- <https://www.instagram.com/p/BnMtZrbjlds/> - tables
- <https://www.instagram.com/evamotas/>

I love how Eva Mota and Pierra Lota's last names rhyme, and they are doing similar creative reuse furniture but on different continents.

Another group of designers reusing wooden hangers is the Recreate Design Company in Sweden (<https://recreatedesigncompany.com/how-to-reuse-hangers/>). They have made a chandelier and a table from wooden and metal hangers. My favorite thing they made were these boxes where you attach a bunch of wooden hangers together in a square with the hanger part sticking out. These then act as shelves that you can hang one below the other from the ceiling. They also show how to make a dish rack from wooden hangers.

Finally, the last idea for reusing wooden hangers is to cut them and attach them to a piece of wood to make a coat hook rack. This is a popular idea on Pinterest and I'll link to a tutorial (<https://www.instagram.com/p/Bz5Qwpgl4wn/> - <https://www.instructables.com/Recycled-Coat-Hanger-Coat-Rack/>).

## Projects to Make with Metal Hangers

Next let's talk about creative reuse of wire hangers. Wire hangers can be useful in many art projects because they are so bendy. Whether you are making a wreath or a new funky hat for your trash fashion outfit, you will probably use wire hangers to form the skeleton of the project. Every Halloween, I see many fairies and butterflies with wings made from wire hangers and panty hose.

I will also link to a project by the bloggers Lindi and Russel from Love Create Celebrate who made a sunburst mirror from recycled metal hangers - <https://lovecreatecelebrate.com/sunburst-mirror/>. For that design, they used higher end metal hangers ie. not the kind you get with your dry cleaning.

## Projects to Make with Plastic Hangers

Next I'll share ideas to reuse plastic hangers. Most are for plastic hangers that are not broken. My only idea for a broken plastic hanger is for the type of hanger that has a clip. You can saw off the clip portions and use them to clip bags such as potato chips or pasta to keep them shut instead of a clothespin.

So now let's talk about creatively reusing unbroken plastic hangers. So this first idea is actually what got me going down this rabbit hole of hangers. I saw during the winter holidays that people were making giant snowflakes from plastic hangers that they would hang outside their homes. They get a bunch of plastic hangers that are the same make and model, then lay them out in geometric shapes and attach them with zip ties. There are many designs depending on your hangers, so I'll encourage you to visit Trashmagination's Pinterest board for hangers to see the designs (<https://www.pinterest.com/Trashmagination/hangers/>). People also made angels, butterflies, evergreen trees and more. My concern with this project is that I think it might be encouraging people to go to the dollar store and buy new plastic hangers to get enough hangers that are all the same. So in that way, I am not a fan of this project.

Also on my Pinterest board, you can see how interior designers used plastic hangers to make a plastic chandelier (<https://www.trendhunter.com/trends/plastic-hanger-chandelier>) and a plastic room separator (<https://www.designboom.com/readers/likearchitects-chromatic-screen-installation/>). But again, my concern is that

they are likely using new plastic hangers in order to get enough that are the same. If you wanted to take on a similar project, you'd likely need to find a store that is throwing out hangers, and then collect the hangers there over time.

## Artists Who Creatively Reuse Hangers

The last topic for today's podcast episode is artists who work with hangers in their artwork. All four of the artists I'm going to mention have been featured in previous episodes of Trashmagination for their work with other materials.

Şakir Gökçebağ did an installation called Prefix Suffix which arranged black hangers in all sorts of geometric patterns (<https://sakirgokcebag.com/installations/nggallery/installations/prefix-suffix>). Sometimes he removed the hook part of the hangers so they looked like a series of question marks.

David Mach developed a sculptural technique where he lays metal hangers on top of each other, shaping them so they come together to make a three-dimension shape. The hook parts of the hangers stick out in every direction. He starts with a plastic mold and then welds the hangers together around the mold. Using this technique, he has sculpted human heads such as Salvador Dali and Buddha. He has also sculpted animal heads, such as tigers, gorillas and bears. He has also sculpted the whole bodies of humans and animals, not just their heads.

- <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/david-mach-picasso-head>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVGQ-PTsxs0>
- On the Rocks and Straight Up sculptures - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uh81J186Xpw>

Suzanne Tick weaves many unusual objects including metal hangers that she picked up from dry cleaning shops (<https://suzannetick.com/art/wire-hangers/>). Her woven hangers look golden and shiny, much more fancy than a pile of dry cleaning hangers (<https://youtu.be/bg0jLRJ157s>). Suzanne's weavings with unusual materials informs her design studio's work designing products such as upholstery fabrics.

- Suzanne Tick interview as part of New York Textile Month Sept 2020 - <https://youtu.be/rUfj8-ANOFY>
- Suzanne Tick interview Oct 2020 - <https://youtu.be/FoiQE7S3jfw>

Gilbert Legrand makes comedic sculptures from just about every kind of object, including hangers. I hope you'll check out his mouse that he painted on a clip hanger (<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/496099715212340780/>) and his car made from a wooden hanger (<http://laussibelle.blogspot.com/2011/06/gilbert-legrand.html>).

## Thank you!

Thank you for listening! Until next time, may you see hangers as a source of art in your life!