



Hands-on activity to learn about (micro) plastics in every days outdoor sports products and reflect on the problems of unsustainable products, materials and usage.



Learning experience



Topic

Equipment and consumption



30 min



Participants

- know what products contain plastics
- understand that the usage and care of outdoor products leads to plastic pollution
  - understand the problems that (micro)plastics cause
- are able to search for alternatives made from more sustainable material
- know about ways to limit (micro)plastics from usage of equipment



Suitable for  
outdoor sport instructors  
(and course participants)



Practical sessions  
Theoretical lessons  
Digital



Outdoor F2F  
Indoor F2F  
Digital



Materials needed

Pictures of products or products themselves  
(printable cards provided in appendix)

More activities under [see-project.eu](https://see-project.eu)



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## Preparation

Organise the group in sub groups of 3-6 persons. Every group gets a set of cards or products.

## Activity instruction

The educator explains: Please build three piles of products! One group of products that do not contain plastic, a 2nd group where the packaging normally does contain plastic, and a 3rd group where the content or product itself does contain plastic.

The products may be general items like: Fleece jacket, sun cream, chewing gum, shampoo, lip gloss, cotton t-shirt, apple, plaster, cigarette, water in PET bottle, toothpaste, sport-shirt from synthetic fibres, beer in a glass bottle, a piece of rope, sanitary tampon, toilet paper, energy bars. Additionally, add sport specific items like wetsuits, wax for surfboards, bicycle tires, hiking boots etc.

Give the groups 5 minutes to discuss and build their piles than get the groups together and have a look at the suggested solutions.

## Solution:

All products contain traces of micro plastics, even the apple and the drinking water.

If we build groups that ignore plastic coming from dispersion, the solution would be:

- Products that do contain plastic: Fleece jacket, chewing gum, shampoo, sun cream, lip gloss, hiking boots, plaster, cigarette, toothpaste, sport-shirt from synthetic fibres, a piece of rope, sanitary tampon, teabag, bicycle tires, wetsuits
- Plastic packaging; water in PET bottle, toilet paper, energy bars
- No plastic: beer in a glass bottle, apple, t-shirt (cotton)



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## Reflection and discussion

In a reflection phase, the educator can help facilitate the discussion on the materials and the problems that occur for the environment.

Possible questions can be:

- What products surprised you most?
- How does it make you feel that even edible and drinkable products contain traces of micro plastics?
- What are the problems of plastic waste and micro plastic dispersion?
- What alternative products do you know that do not contain plastics or do not use plastic during the manufacturing process? (e.g. unfiltered beer does not use plastic in the manufacturing process, clothes made from natural material like cotton, bamboo do not release micro plastic into the water during the washing etc.)
- How can we limit the dispersion of plastics from the goods we are using? (e.g. washing habits -> not too often or using a guppy friend to filter micro plastics from clothes when washing them etc.)

Alternative products to avoid plastic fabrics and behaviours to use existing products (with less or) without letting micro plastics escape in in the environment should be collected and for example written down on a flipchart.

If you have worked with cards, you can hand out one card to each participant and give them the task to do some research on alternative products with more sustainable materials or usage.

### Potential variations

If you do not want to print the pictures, you can also show the picture with a ppt presentation in a classroom / online setting or bring real products.



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## Background knowledge

For some products it surprises us a lot that they do contain plastics and you need to have a good knowledge of materials to detect it on the ingredients list or understand the process of manufacturing to reveal the reasons:

Beer for example does contain plastics as the breweries use plastic to filter it, micro particles get washed out and stay in the product. As this does not happen by means, it is not an official ingredient and the manufacturers do not have to list it.

Recycled toilet paper also does not contain plastics by means but because of the materials they are using. During the recycling of paper, traces of plastics from composed materials stay in the process.

For other products, the manufacturing companies include plastics by means but they try to hide it on the material list, which makes it very hard for consumers to detect e.g. chewing gum.

The good news is that many companies already have good alternatives in place and a lot of new materials and products are being developed. For other products, we can just stay with the more natural version – for example drink the beer unfiltered.



### Key words

#plastic  
#equipment  
#litter #waster  
#consumption



### Source

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### Presented by

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Picture: Metaliza01 on Pixabay



Picture: Markusmarcinek on Pixabay



Picture: Hans on Pixabay



Cotton T—Shirt

Picture: Jeff Burroughs on Pixabay



Sport-shirt synthetic fibres

Picture: Atiqur Sumon on Pixabay



Picture: Hans on Pixabay



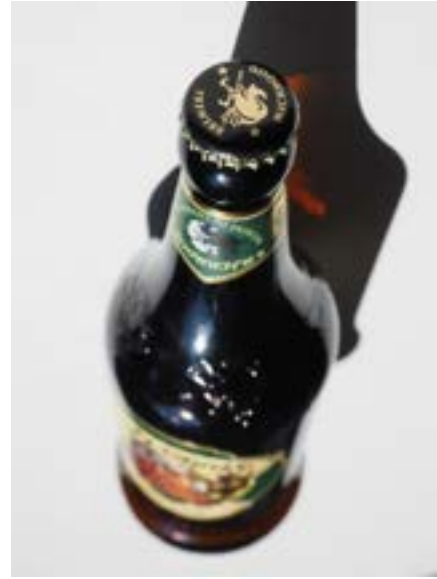
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Picture: Stefan Steihofer on Pixabay



Beer in glass bottle

Picture: Hans on Pixabay



Picture: Günter on Pixabay



Picture: Elastic compute farm on Pixabay



Toilet paper (recycled)

Picture: Alexandra Koch on Pixabay



Tooth paste

Picture: Pete Linforth on Pixabay



Picture: Squirrel on Pixabay



Picture: Hans on Pixabay





**Teabag**

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Picture: Ankit Kashyap on Pixabay



**Energy bar**

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