

New series

# Breaking the cycle

With disposable sanitary protection ever polluting our planet and bodies, Ellen Tout seeks out a few conscious menstrual choices

There's still a stigma around our period and we don't talk about it enough, so its environmental impact had barely crossed my mind. I was shocked to learn that one sanitary pad contains, on average, as much plastic as four carrier bags, as well as chemicals like bleach. Most high-street products don't biodegrade, and the Marine Conservation Society recently found 20 tampons and sanitary items per 100 metres of our coasts.

We need to change the way we view these 'throwaway' items. After some research, I decide I want to find a natural product that's healthier for the planet and my body. But which one? I'd seen Mooncup advertised and have friends who swear by them. The cups are reusable and last 10 years. The concept is out of my comfort zone, but I psych myself up to try one. After squirming around on my bathroom floor for 10 minutes, I can safely say that these are not for me! We're so used to the grab-and-go nature of disposable sanitary wear, but a menstrual cup takes practice.

Feeling a little put off, I decide to try biodegradable pads and tampons. Brands such as Natracare and Flo offer vegan and organic alternatives made of natural materials with eco



packaging. They're a little more expensive, but very comfortable.

I'd read about reusable cloth sanitary towels and period-proof underwear. I wasn't sure if they'd really work or be practical for my lifestyle, but order a pair of Thinx to try. They're washable, reusable and made of natural fibres. I was shocked by how much I love them. They are comfortable and really reliable. While they're more of an investment initially, they're reusable, month in and month out.

Our periods are a natural process and throwing plastic and synthetics at them without a thought now feels wrong for me. It should be about listening to your body and finding what works for you. By making a small change to my routine, I know it's having a positive impact. I want to protect, and work in harmony with, my body and the planet. Making a conscious choice about my sanitary wear helps me feel more in control and grounded; I'm managing something I used to dread from a place of care.

@Ellen\_Tout

Eco finds

## SAY GOODBYE TO PLASTIC AND SYNTHETIC SANITARY WEAR



A pair of Thinx lasts up to two years – simply rinse and cold wash without conditioner.

**Try this**  
Thinx Hiphuggers, £26.78  
• shethinx.com



Make a conscious choice, be kind to your body and help save our oceans.

**Try these**  
Flo organic cotton and natural bamboo tampons, £4.29  
• hereweflo.co  
OrganiCup, £21  
• organiccup.com



**Did you know?** The Cup Effect is a charity working to empower young women, end period poverty and protect the planet. For every cup sold, two are donated to those who can't afford menstrual products. See [thecupeffect.org](http://thecupeffect.org)