

What happens when we recycle?



Below is the eight step process of recycling a plastic bottle.
Cut them out and sort them into the correct order.

Shredding

Once your recycling bin has been picked up it is first shredded into many tiny pieces. This allows excess liquids to leave bottles and containers.

Heating

The tiny little fragments now need to come together. The plastic is heated to 270 degrees Celsius. This allows it to form one spaghetti like string of plastic.

Sieving

The plastic is forced through a sieve (mesh with holes). This forms lots of long strands. It is heated and stretched several times.

Drying

Once washed, the now clear plastic needs the moisture removing. They are placed in a giant steel drum for approximately 10 hours.

Sorting

Once shredded the pieces of plastic are wrapped in cellophane and stacked in bales. They are now ready to be distributed to specialised recycling plants.

Tearing

The long thin strands are then torn apart. This forms a fluffy material which looks like cotton wool. However, the polyester is a completely man made material.

Spinning

The fluffy material is first rolled together to form felt. The material is then pulled out and twisted. This forms long strands which are spun around a bobbin (a cylinder, which looks a bit like a toilet roll). After this has been repeated many times you have a thread.

Washing

To remove the excess liquid the bottles and containers used to hold the plastic is washed. The plastic is put in a corrosive chemical which removes the colour from the bottles. Less dense plastics, such as bottle caps, float and are extracted by workers.

