

# Frequently Asked Questions

Here are some answers to the questions we receive the most about Ecorugs.  
If we missed anything, please do not hesitate to contact us. We'll be happy to help.

## Polyester

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### 1. Why aren't you using natural fibres like wool as they are better for the planet?

A fibre's impact on the planet is not just about where it comes from, but also how it's produced and what happens to it at the end of life. In fact, the way a fibre is made and what happens to at end of life has more impact than whether it is natural or not. For instance, while it's considered a natural fibre, regular cotton has a big environmental impact because of soil degradation and water usage. You can learn more about this thanks to the [World Wildlife Fund](#) and it should be noted that organic cotton is considered to have a lower impact on the environment than regular cotton production.

The main advantage of choosing polyester for Ecorugs is its recyclability. Firstly, you cannot create a mono-material product with natural fibres – it's important to think about the whole of the product, even down to the label. With polyester, we can make everything from a single material so that it is much easier to recycle. Secondly, polyester doesn't degrade during the recycling process, so it can be used again and again to make new Ecorugs, rather than having to downcycle it into another product.

It's also worth noting that polyester has better resistance to wear than wool and cotton – our own tests show cotton wears three times as fast – so it provides a longer life for every new rug. Making sure Ecorugs are around for as long as possible in the first place is a great way to minimise the impacts that come with recycling.

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### 2. Aren't there better bio-based alternatives, like fibres made from sugarcane?

While there are bio-based fibres that can be used for rug production, they are not widely available in the quantities we require and come with a hefty price tag that puts sustainable choice further away from most of our customers. Also, these bio-based fibres simply don't have the same properties as polyester when it comes to durability and recyclability. Admittedly, they are biodegradable, but take many decades to breakdown without chemical accelerants.

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### 3. Do you use a special type of polyester that is easier to recycle?

All types of polyester are equally recyclable, so we've put our time and effort into the development of the rug and the recycling processes needed to make a circularity more achievable. Research and development focused heavily on making the entire rug from polyester – yarn, latex, bindings and labels – so that not one part has to be separated out or recycled in a different way. This makes take back and recycling much easier. We've also worked to ensure that the switch to polyester hasn't detracted from the aesthetic quality of our rugs, something that Louis de Poortere is famous for.

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### 4. Isn't polyester made from oil, so why use it at all?

We have to remember our ultimate end goal of our completely circular product: that every Ecorug will be made from 100% recycled polyester taken from Ecorugs that went before it. Unlike natural fibres or bio-based alternatives, polyester gives us this opportunity. In fact, it is the only real option to make this happen.

The world is dominated by oil in all aspects of life and obviously there is a need to reduce our consumption on it as a resource. The virgin polyester we currently use is derived from oil, but our Ecorugs already come with 20% recycled polyester and as Ecorugs return for recycling, we'll be able to increase that quantity incrementally and all the way to 100%, when we will have closed the loop and created a completely circular product.

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### 5. What about micro-plastics from shedding?

Shedding is largely down to the fibres used, the way the item is made and how many times its washed. For clothing, the majority of shedding occurs within the first three washing cycles. Our rugs are woven polyester, which is much less prone to shedding than knitted or tufted products and don't require nearly as much washing as clothing. Also, our polyester yarns are washed in the production process which filters the wastewater to remove contaminants. In fact, the wastewater treatment returns river water cleaner than it came out.

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### 6. What makes polyester so good at recycling?

The composition of polyester means it can be continuously recycled without affecting its strength and quality and therefore, its ability to create the unique Ecorugs designs and uphold our famed quality.

Unlike polyamide or PVC, using recycled polyester in products means we don't have to add virgin material to maintain the quality of the fibres we use for Ecorugs.

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# Recycling

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## 7. Doesn't it take a lot of energy to recycle polyester?

It is unquestionable that recycling any product takes energy, but the processes used in recycling polyester are much less hungry than those used to make new polyester. Plus, we recycle in Europe where there's the possibility to use green energy to power recycling.

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It's also worth noting that polyester has better resistance to wear than wool and cotton – our own tests show cotton wears three times as fast – so it provides a longer life for every new rug. Making sure Ecorugs are around for as long as possible in the first place is a great way to minimise the impacts that come with recycling.

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## 8. Doesn't recycling reduce the quality of the material?

One of the main reasons we chose polyester for the circular model behind Ecorugs is that it doesn't degrade significantly with recycling. This means we can avoid downcycling and recycle Ecorugs back into new products without any loss of quality in design or performance. Over time, the viscosity of the polyester can be affected by recycling but the technology exists to restore any lost viscosity. The recycling partners we work with have adopted this and so polyester becomes limitlessly recyclable.

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## 9. Why don't you recycle polyester at your factory?

As you would expect, recycling polyester efficiently is a complex process and requires a huge amount of specialist expertise. We've partnered with Europe's best polyester recyclers for Ecorugs to ensure that we can recycle as efficiently as possible through our **Take Care** programme. However, we do carry out the sorting required for Take Care in our factory, deciding on which products can be reused and resold and what is ready to be recycled. This is an important step, as re-use is by far the best way to reduce impact because it requires little to no energy use.

Of course, as we progress in the Ecorugs story and the volume of recycled material increases, we will look to internalise recycling. At the moment, the goal is to work with customers through our Take Care programme to create the volume of recycled content needed.

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## 10. What do you do if some of the polyester from my Ecorug can't be recycled

Well, the good news is this simply can't happen. Ecorugs are made entirely from polyester that can be recycled. All you have to do is scan the QR code on the label to activate our Take Care programme and return your Ecorug to us. Every rug will either be reused or recycled.

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## 11. Can I just take my Ecorug to my local recycling point?

Yes, you can take your Ecorug to any local recycling facility, but it is unlikely that it will be properly recycled. Most household recycling points do not have the facilities to sort or recycle polyester, so it will likely be downcycled or used for energy recovery (incinerated in other words). Take Care is the only way to ensure that your Ecorug ends up being properly recycled into a new Ecorug.

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## 12. Is Take Care available across the world?

Currently, Take Care is active in the EU and United Kingdom only. We are investigating ways of implementing Take Care within other regions while still maintaining a climate beneficial recovery and recycling process.

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## 13. Why are you only using 20% recycled polyester now if your rugs can be made from 100% recycled material?

The launch of Ecorugs is more than a new collection, it represents a change in ethos and attitude for Louis De Poortere as a business. So that production can manage the changes involved, we will gradually improve the amount of recycled material over the next two years and have set a target of 2025 for the production of 100% recycled polyester Ecorugs.

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## 14. How do you know that the polyester you use is recycled?

We currently source our recycled polyester with GRS (Global Recycling Standard) and Recycled Materials in Oeko-Tex® 100 certification that independently verifies its source. Our recycling partners are also taking back our waste polyester and returning it to new raw materials.

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## 15. What about the plastic you use for packaging rugs, is that recycled?

All of the plastic used in the packaging of Ecorugs is there to make sure it arrives in perfect condition and we do our best to minimise the amount used. We only use 100% recycled plastic for our packaging which is also 100% recyclable using existing plastic recycling streams.

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## Carbon Emissions

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### 16. Do you know the carbon emissions for the lifetime of my Ecorug?

We only want to provide you with verified information on carbon emissions relating to Ecorugs. As the collection is so new, we're currently undergoing an independently verified life cycle analysis (LCA) so we can report the emissions of production, transportation and recycling accurately.

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### 17. What are the carbon emissions to recycle an average size Ecorug?

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### 18. Can you estimate the lifetime carbon emissions of an Ecorug made from 100% recycled polyester?

Until 2025 and further life cycle analysis of products made entirely from recycled polyester, we cannot get an accurate calculation for the lifetime carbon emissions of 100% recycled polyester Ecorugs. However, based on our current 20% recycled 80% virgin polyester mix, we've carried out initial internal research using the LCA calculator of **ADEME** and have estimated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to be 28% less than that of cotton over a three-year product cycle.

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### 19. What are the transport emissions of delivery my Ecorug?

We've used the LCA tools from the French Agency for Ecological Transition, **ADEME**, to calculate the emissions of sending an Ecorug to London from our Belgium manufacturing site by a standard delivery truck to be 0.521kg CO<sub>2</sub>/kg.

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### 20. What are the emissions of returning my Ecorug?

It's not just the emissions of transport that need to be considered here, which are the same for delivery from Belgium to the UK (0.521kg CO<sub>2</sub>/kg), but also the emissions saved by keeping Ecorugs out of landfill or incineration, or away from downcycling into energy recovery. We've used the LCA tools from the French Agency for Ecological Transition, **ADEME**, to calculate the CO<sub>2</sub> of sending a rug to landfill or incineration in the UK, with and without energy recovery.

For landfill or incineration, the equivalent emissions would be 2.2kg CO<sub>2</sub>/kg, and for energy recovery there is a reduction to 1.4kg CO<sub>2</sub>/kg. That means simply by sending back your Ecorug, you're already saving at almost 1kg CO<sub>2</sub>/kg compared to energy recovery and nearly 2kg CO<sub>2</sub>/kg for landfill or incineration.

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### 21. Are any of your carbon emissions offset?

We're not looking to offset our emissions, instead we are focused on reducing our CO<sub>2</sub> through lowering the amount of energy needed to make and transport Ecorugs and the move to less polluting and renewable green energy sources.

We've also placed significant investment in ensuring that Ecorugs can be a truly circular product model through the Take Care programme. It has required considerable effort to make sure that we have established partnerships that allow the efficient recycling of polyester and to create a return system that's easy for people to use. After all, if it's complicated to return Ecorugs, we would be likely to see less returns, making our goal towards 100% recycled polyester from our own rugs harder to achieve.

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### 22. What are you doing to reduce emissions of making and recycling my Ecorug?

Any production process will always need a certain amount of energy, but we are doing our best to make our manufacturing as efficient and as low impact as possible. With small interventions and by establishing a regular energy audit, we've already reduced around 10% of our energy consumption in 2023. We aim to lower this again by 20% for the end of 2024. Alongside, we have implemented new streams that help us to reduce waste. In fact, we've already saved over 15% of waste from landfill by finding better ways to reuse or recycle it.

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## General FAQs

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### 23. Does using polyester affect the air quality in my home?

Polyester has been independently tested and proven not harmful to air quality within the home. Ecorugs are independently tested and pass all the VOC (volatile organic compounds) standards that ensure they are suitable for use in homes.

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### 24. Do you have any environmental certifications or awards?

We are OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 and Circular Hotel Interior certified. Recognised internationally, OEKO-TEX Standard 100 is a stringent test that certifies the air emissions of our rugs to be safe and free from harm. We're also working towards the OEKO-TEX® Made in Green standard. It's a traceable label that means products have been manufactured in environmentally friendly facilities under safe and responsible conditions.

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### 25. What else are you doing to make Louis de Poortere more sustainable as a business?

Becoming a sustainable manufacturer is more than just finding solutions to how we consume resources, so we're also playing a growing and active role in society and the economy. Specifically, we carry out audits of our suppliers to make sure they adhere to good ethical and ecological standards and are involved in industry initiatives that look to develop the circular economy.

We're involved in the knowledge transfer and collaborative technology project, TEX2CE – *from linear to circular textiles* – that aims to improve circularity within the entire Flemish textiles and clothing industry. This working group brings together leading textile manufacturers to find a more sustainable future and also looks for new products that can be recycled or reused with the goal to reduce textile waste and incineration.

Our principles of design are also shifting, and new product developments will be focused with easy recycling in mind. We'll also aim make sure the materials we use in can extend the life of our products, so that we generate less waste. And of course, we'll make it easy to return these products back to us through Take Care programmes.

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### 26. Do you have a goal to become carbon neutral and when?

With manufacturing it is impossible to completely eliminate emissions, so many companies chose to offset their outstanding CO<sub>2</sub> by supporting schemes in reforestation, fossil fuel reduction and socioeconomic projects that protect the environment. These credit-based systems are numerous and with varying levels of effectiveness, it's impossible to truly quantify the CO<sub>2</sub> reduction they offer. Instead, we're working to reduce emissions wherever possible and to invest in becoming a leader in circularity within the flooring industry.

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### 27. Do you have EPDs available for Ecorugs?

Currently, Ecorugs do not come with an EPD (Environmental Product Declaration) and for many building certification systems, rugs are not required to have an EPD. However, our current commitment to an LCA will give you the transparency and information needed to assess the environmental impact of the Ecorugs collection.

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### 28. Will you use polyester in other products, like your carpets?

All Louis De Poortere rugs will continue our drive towards circularity through polyester recycling and become 100% polyester. We're also developing a brand new product line for the contract market that will also benefit from the use of polyester. Existing wool carpet ranges, like Richelieu, our part of the Louis De Poortere legacy and will remain within our collection.

While moving towards a more sustainable future, we must also accommodate for the continuation of certain product lines. While a relatively niche product in our current range, wool has long been a part of the Louis De Poortere product portfolio. It's important that we continue to offer the fibre as an option for customers that may wish to replace or renew with like-for-like products. Its use in commercially successful collections will continue for the future and we are looking at ways to reduce the impact of production and the wool we use, including research into its downcycling.

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