

# FIVE STEP GUIDE TO REPAIR CAFÉ



change **X**

# WELCOME

**“Welcome to the ChangeX Repair Café guide! We’re excited you’re thinking about organizing a Repair Café in your community.**

**Here you’ll find all the information, practical tips, and resources you need. There is someone to help you at each stage of the journey so feel free to get in touch!”**

**Martine Postma,  
Founder of Repair Café**



## Introduction to the Idea

### What is Repair Café?

We throw away vast amounts of stuff - stuff which could get a new lease of life after a simple repair. Lots of people have forgotten that they can repair things themselves. Others no longer know how. Repair Cafés are free meeting places where people come together to repair things. In a local Repair Café, you’ll find tools and materials to help you make any repairs you need on clothes, furniture, electrical appliances, bicycles, crockery, appliances, toys, etc. You’ll also find expert volunteers with repair skills in all kinds of fields. Visitors bring their broken items from home and start making the needed repairs with specialists in the Repair Cafés. It’s an ongoing learning process.

Repair Cafés help people with unique skills get involved in their community. They help neighbors from different backgrounds connect with each other and allow valuable practical knowledge to be shared.

### Why is it important?

By setting up a Repair Café in your village, town, or city, you can actively contribute to a more sustainable society. You can help create a community where everyone can find a place, where repair expertise is cherished and passed on,

and where valuable raw materials are used in a responsible way.

The Repair Café Foundation has the following goals:

- a) to bring repairing back into local society in a modern way;
- b) to maintain repair expertise and to spread this knowledge;
- c) to promote social cohesion in the local community by connecting neighbors from different backgrounds and with different motives to each other through an inspiring and low-key event.

### The background

The Repair Café concept comes from the Netherlands. It was formulated in 2009 by Martine Postma, at the time an Amsterdam-based journalist/publicist. She hit on the idea of setting up low-key meeting places nationwide where neighbors could repair their broken items themselves, supported by specialists, in a relaxed atmosphere. There are now 1500 Repair Cafés globally.

# STARTING A REPAIR CAFÉ

## EVERYTHING YOU NEED

### TIME



You'll need about 4 hours a week to get your Café up and running, as well as a full day on the day of your Repair Café event.

### PEOPLE



You'll need a team of 5 people to help you start your Café, plus some volunteer fixers and helpers for the day of your event.

### FUNDING



Funding is needed to buy repair materials & tools, the registration fee for the Repair Café Foundation, any venue costs plus some cookies and coffee for the events!

#### Who typically starts a Repair Café?

Someone who:

- enjoys bringing people in the community together
- has an interest in DIY
- is passionate about the ethos of Repair Café

#### 5 Step Summary

- 1 Complete your 30 Day Challenge
- 2 Find a space
- 3 Find specialists in your area
- 4 Register with the Repair Café Foundation
- 5 Plan and hold your first Repair Café

#### Support and Additional Resources

Support from ChangeX: Call us at (507)301-6614. Email: [hello@changex.org](mailto:hello@changex.org)

Contact Information for Repair Café Foundation. Email: [info@repaircafe.org](mailto:info@repaircafe.org) Phone: +31 20 223 25 86

Download Repair Café starter kit: <https://repaircafe.org/en/shop/>

# STEP 1: COMPLETE YOUR 30 DAY CHALLENGE



The 30 Day Jumpstart Challenge has been designed to get your project off to the strongest possible start by building momentum in the first month. Once you have completed your challenge your first funding payment will be unlocked.

- Learn more about the idea you're starting**  
This '5 Step Guide' includes all you need to know about the specifics of starting your project.
- Schedule a Call**  
Pick a time that works for you to talk to a ChangeX team member about what's involved in your chosen project as well as to ensure that you understand the Guidelines & rules associated with the Challenge.
- Find 5 interested people**  
You already have your own project page on changex.org. Use the site to share the project with others and recruit neighbors, friends, or other folks with an interest to be your first supporters.
- Set up a casual kick-off meeting**  
Host a meeting with your team at your home, at a community center or in a coffee shop and come up with an action plan. You can use your page on changex.org to set up an event and invite people.
- Share a team photo and your plan of action**  
Upload a team photo taken at your first team meeting to changex.org. In addition, provide us with a narrative on what you will spend the funding on, what your next steps as a group will be, and how you hope the project will ultimately benefit your community.

## STEP 2: FIND A SPACE

After completing your 30 Day Challenge, we hope you'll have a small team on board to help you get started with your Repair Café.

A key action in getting your Café up and running is to find a venue. A founding principle of the Repair Café is that it should, if possible, be free of charge to attend. It's preferable that you source the venue free of charge to allow this to happen. A Repair Café is an activity both for and by neighbors, so it's best to choose a place that is low-key, easily accessible, and in the heart of a residential area.

The space needs to be big enough to accommodate a number of tables where various repair experts can sit with visitors to repair items. The tables need to be big to have room for all the experts' tools. Some examples of suitable venues are community centers or places of worship. You can also try local businesses that make space available on weekends and get their employees involved all at once.

### Insurance

An advantage of using a public space is that you won't have to worry about public liability insurance, which should already be covered. You shouldn't need any other insurance for the Café - you can ask those who bring items to be fixed to sign a liability waiver.

"Reducing waste was something close to my heart, and Common Ground, a community group here in Bray, is an amazingly fertile place to get ideas off the ground. I suggested the idea of a Repair Café and was immediately encouraged and helped to start it up"

**Toby Steele used an existing community space to start his Repair Café**



## STEP 3: FIND SPECIALISTS IN YOUR AREA

The next step is to find the right experts to lend a hand making repairs at your Repair Café! It's impossible to repair toys, printers, or hair driers without the people who know how to do it. It's also challenging to do so without some vital pieces, like power and tools.

Usually one will lead to the other. If you can hook up with the fixers in your community, chances are they will have some of the tools needed or could point you in the right direction to locate them.

Start small - ask you neighbors, relatives, or friends who have an interest in DIY to help. Just using your own network, you can go a long way in manning all the basic stations in the Repair Café.

Next, look up local Employment Services and Employment Programs to find people who may be retraining in electronics, carpentry, plumbing, or metalwork and might be interested in volunteering their time to help out at your Repair Café. Pay a visit to craftspeople in the neighborhood as well. You never know, a furniture maker might like to attend a Repair Café as a carpenter (and advertise his own furniture workshop at the same time). Or perhaps the tailor around the corner would like to get involved. Try getting in touch with institutes for professional education. By taking part in Repair Café, students in various courses (technology, woodwork, fashion design) could gain additional practical experience and credit.

Last but not least, you can try to find people by approaching volunteer networks such as thrift stores or local associations like a carpentry club, a computer club, or a local Men's Shed.



### TIPS



Try putting signs up in local shops, community centers, places of worship, or doctor's waiting rooms. You will get the word out to more isolated people in your community who could gain most from the interaction at a Repair Café and may even have skills to share!

# STEP 4: REGISTER WITH THE REPAIR CAFÉ FOUNDATION

Now is a good time to officially register your Repair Café with the Repair Café Foundation and download your Repair Café starter kit. The starter kit contains all sorts of materials, tips, and branding to assist in setting up and running your Repair Café, including templates for posters and flyers, as well as guides for fixing all categories of items. Registering also means your Repair Café will be added to a worldwide map of Repair Cafés.

The Repair Café Foundation suggest a donation of \$60 to download this pack, but the donation amount is up to you. The donation helps to support the Repair Cafe Foundation to continue its work.

## TIPS



You'll be joining Repair Cafés all over the world, from Ghana to Japan and from Turkey to New Zealand!

Register your Repair Café with the International Repair Café Foundation here:  
<https://repaircafe.org/en/shop/>



**ORGANISE YOUR OWN REPAIR CAFÉ**  
The tried and tested Repair Café manual

[www.repaircafe.org](http://www.repaircafe.org)



# STEP 5: PLAN AND HOLD YOUR FIRST REPAIR CAFÉ

Now that you have everything ready, pick a date (weekends are best) and start planning your first event! Repair Cafés usually take place every couple of months, for a full day.

You will need a few volunteers to help out on the day; to set up tables, sign people in, pick up donated food, and be there to help with logistics while spreading good repair vibes on the day of the event! Lean on family and friends for these roles at first, then try to recruit at your first Repair Café for subsequent Cafés.

Food not only provides the necessary energy for hard-working handy people and visitors, it's also the glue that binds the community together. Make sure you have lined up tasty treats either donated from local businesses or purchase them with your seed funding you receive from ChangeX. Coffee and cookies are a great place to start!

Get the word out there! This can range from emails to your personal networks, to contacting local community groups, businesses, or even your local newspaper or radio station. Give this job to the person on your organizing team with the most local connections and experience with media.

From active participants eager to learn how to fix their own things all the way to people who just want to get their toaster toasting again, expect to accommodate a whole spectrum of people. There will be lots of neighbors to meet and stories to share. Enjoy the day, take lots of photos, and then start planning your next Repair Café!

## TIPS

Make sure you publicize the kind of repairs you're prepared for. For example, if you have tailors with sewing machines, you can give the green light to visitors with clothes in need of stitching. This saves people turning up with items that you don't have experts there to fix.



[www.changex.org](http://www.changex.org)  
[hello@changex.org](mailto:hello@changex.org)  
[facebook.com/changexhq](https://facebook.com/changexhq)  
[twitter.com/changexhq](https://twitter.com/changexhq)