

SWAP 'N' SOCIAL

THE IMPACT OF OUR CLOSETS

FACTS ABOUT FASHION:

- Second to oil, the clothing and textile industry is the largest polluter in the world.
- The fashion industry contributes 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions due to its long supply chains and energy intensive production according to the United Nations.
- Buying a used garment can reduce its carbon, waste and water footprint by 73%.
- When organic matter, such as clothing, ends up in a landfill, it emits methane gas, a greenhouse gas 30x more potent than carbon dioxide.
- Plastic fibers (polyester, nylon, acrylic, spandex etc) make up 60% of our clothing, They rely heavily on oil for their production and contribute to ocean plastics. One load of laundry can shed up to 700,000 microplastics per wash.
- While you may donate your old clothing to charity, the truth is, even then, 84% of our clothing ends up in landfills and incinerators, according to the EPA.
- Approximately 1,800 gallons of water are required to make one pair of blue jeans and a single t-shirt takes 700 gallons.
- Nearly 20% of global wastewater is produced by the fashion industry.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SECONDHAND:

- Buying secondhand reduces carbon emissions and strains on natural resources.
- It means no new materials / energy was needed to create your garment.
- It keeps wearable clothes out of the landfill or from being incinerated.

CLOTHES AT END OF LIFE:

It takes the following number of years for clothes to breakdown in a landfill:

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|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| • Cotton T-Shirt: 2-5 months | • Lycra Workout Clothing: 20-200 years | • Boot Sole: 50-80 years |
| • Polyester Dress: 200+ years | • Linen Top: 2 weeks | • Wool Sweater: 1-5 years |

Only 100% natural fiber clothes can be composted. However, when clothes end up in the landfill, they not only take longer to decompose, both natural and synthetic fibers emit methane gas (as does all organic matter in a landfill), a highly concentrated greenhouse gas that is 30x more potent than carbon. Eventually all clothes will likely end up in the landfill.

WHERE FABRICS COME FROM:

Almost all fabrics come from 4 sources (or a combination of the following):

- PLANT (cotton, linen, jute, hemp)
- TREE (rayon, viscose, modal, lyocell)
- ANIMAL (leather, wool, silk)
- OIL (polyester, nylon, acrylic, spandex)

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN BUYING CLOTHES:

• Wear what you own. The most sustainable option is to wear what you and your children already have in the closet.

- Buy less (!)
 - Buy secondhand
 - Avoid fast fashion
 - Support companies that promote sustainable fashion practices
 - Buy organic, plant-based, and/or recycled fabrics. Better than cotton fabrics include Hemp, Tencel (Lyocell/Modal), and Linen.
 - Cotton is notorious for heavy water and pesticide use. Organic cotton, however, uses no pesticides, less water, no GMO seeds, and less energy, which is better for our bodies and the planet.
- Note: A product that might only have a small amount of organic cotton can be labeled organic. Look for either GOTS certification.
- Buy high quality, well made clothing that will last.

"AS CONSUMERS WE HAVE SO MUCH POWER TO CHANGE THE WORLD BY JUST BEING CAREFUL IN WHAT WE BUY."

- EMMA WATSON

CARING FOR CLOTHES:

- Wash clothes in cold water.
- Use an eco-friendly detergent. They are better for your health, the environment, our waterways, plant life and animal life.
- Use a Guppyfriend bag, Cora Ball or install a microfiber filter for washing synthetic clothing (think sportswear, yoga pants, fleece) to prevent microplastics from ending up in our waterways.
- Hang dry to save energy (instead of using energy from dirty power plants).
- Use wool dryer balls. They save you money and time by drying clothes faster.
- Mend things that need fixing to prolong clothes' life.
- Hand wash labels that say "Dry Clean" (only "Dry Clean Only" MUST be dry cleaned).

"NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL, COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD; INDEED, IT IS THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS."

- MARGARET MEAD