

# FAST FASHION WASTE

Shein- H&M- Zara- Fashion Nova- Forever 21- Top Shop - Gap - Esprit - New Look - Uniqlo - ASOS - BooHoo - Pull and Bear - Primark - Mango - Oysho - Missguided -

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LEARN ABOUT THE IMPACT OF FAST FASHION WASTE ON OUR WORLD AND ENVIROMENT

## *What is Fast Fashion?*

In creating and researching for this magazine, I realized many people don't know what fast fashion is. The basic meaning of fast fashion is clothing specifically designed to go from design to store in order to create quick, short term fashion trends. It is even called "Fast Fashion" because of how rapidly the clothing is made and sold. These clothes are mass produced at a very low cost. They are made cheaply in order to be turned out quickly and keep up with current fashion trends. One may say something considered trendy comes as quickly as it goes. Companies like these are even sponsored by celebrities. People see what they are wearing and begin to follow them. Really, the pro of fast fashion is that it gives people a cheap and easy way to always stay on trend. However, one may find themselves wondering what happens to all the extra clothes. That is exactly what I found myself wondering after observing how fast clothing in big name brand stores changed.

## *Why is it Wasteful?*

A lot of people discard clothes they don't want anymore by throwing them away rather than repurposing or donating. Do you know how many clothing items are thrown out by one person in a year? Well you will be shocked to learn that the answer is about 81 pounds! That is billions of pounds in America alone! In fact 27% of polluting carbons come from fast fashion industries alone. These clothing textiles are not compostable. Textile waste is not just in landfills but also creates dangerous greenhouse gasses that affect our soil and poison our drinking water. Fast Fashion waste is actually the top polluter of water globally. On top of all this harmful waste, the textile dyes used on the clothes are incredibly dangerous to our environment because they create methane toxins. More than half of fabrics used in fast fashion are synthetics derived from fossil fuels and will not decompose. Many brand name manufacturers simply destroy unused products rather than recycling or donating. 73% of textile waste is discarded or destroyed, 12% is reused, and 14% is downcycled for rags. Less than 1% of textile is recycled. In addition to all of this information on the harm to the environment, fast fashion also has a major effect on our society. People who are not "dressed to trend" are viewed differently from those who are. It



## *Preventing Fast Fashion*

The more I learned about fast fashion the more I wanted to prevent it and help others learn how to prevent it. I learned so many different ways and decided to put my knowledge on paper. Ideally we should all buy better quality clothing made from natural fibers. We should also buy much less clothing than we currently do as a society. I will be showing and explaining different ways you can stop the cycle of fast fashion. These techniques include preventing once-wear culture, altering clothing, clothing swaps, and easiest of all, thrifting or purchasing second hand clothes. Each of these prevention methods are easy to do and can even be fun. Decreasing the demand for new clothing production and increasing the life cycle of clothing will help both the environment and your bank account.



~ PREVENTING ONCE WEAR ~



## *Destroying A Prom Dress*

I took on the challenge of reviving a once-worn item with my sister's prom dress. My sister is currently twenty two and living in Philadelphia. She attended SLA Beeber high school and bought a brand new formal dress for her senior prom. She spent over \$300 on a dress she wore one time. That dress sat in her closet for over four years. As I am a strong believer of the prevention of clothes waste, I took it upon myself to turn her dress into an everyday clothing item. This can be done with any item and access to the internet. After looking for the perfect project I began. My sister loved the color and fabric of her prom dress. It is why she chose it from the store and why she kept it all those years. Using a simple tool to pull the skirt of the dress apart at the seams, we had enough of the fabric to make something new from the material she liked so much. From the fabric I made a wrap skirt perfect for any occasion. Turning her expensive formal dress into something she can wear for any occasion was well worth the investment. It will definitely be worn more often. This small act not only filled my sister with joy but prevented the waste of her most expensive item of clothing not being worn.

## *Effects Of Once Wear Culture*

How many times have you worn something once? You may think not too many clothes are only worn once, but that's where you'd be wrong. The fact is that as a society we are large participants in Once Wear Culture. Special events like proms and weddings are perfect examples of wearing something once before you get rid of it or stuff it in your closet never to be worn again. Traditional and social media contributes to this culture. Have you ever noticed a dress or suit repeated at an event like the Oscars? Although some celebrities will wear vintage clothing on occasion, most outfits worn at large public events will not be seen again. According to one British study conducted by Lucy and Yak, twenty seven percent of people said they are afraid of being judged for wearing the same thing twice. The study also showed that of the British people surveyed, 1 in every 5 people are done with clothing after one wear. However it is not only special event attire but everyday outfits that are getting worn once. This is a large problem in Fast fashion waste and global waste that is not only harming our wallets and self confidence but also the environment.





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## *Easy, Unique, and Prevents Waste!*

Breaking the Habit of fast fashion waste can be easily done by altering clothing. With a few tools, altering clothing can be an easy and fun experience that can save your clothing waste. With simple sewing skill or even a sewing machine, altering can be as simple as taking in a big dress, hemming pants that are too long, or cutting a shirt into a crop top. Altering clothes also makes something more suited for you. You end up making something unique and something you can be proud to show off. Learning this skill can also make money. Offering to alter your friends' or families' clothes for a small price can prevent even more clothing waste. The benefits of learning to sew and alter are endless. You learn more about your sizing and how to shop for clothes. In addition you can learn more about how clothing is made and what good quality clothes should look and feel like. You can prevent yourself from buying wasteful clothes in the future or even better buy something with the set intention of altering it for yourself. However, be careful! Giving yourself too many projects can lead to an abundant amount of clothes not being used, which is exactly what you want to prevent!



## *The Process*

Altering clothes is a fun and easy thing to do to clothes you no longer wear. It's a great skill to learn and can prevent a large amount of waste. With a simple sewing machine alterations are endless. I came across a top that was given to me and was too large. I didn't mind the pattern of the fabric or the material. I really didn't like the cut of the top and didn't think I would ever wear it. I imagined that if it were tailored more I may wear it. I was able to reconstruct the top into one I would wear by making a pattern from one of my favorite tops. To make it more unique to me, I cropped it and darted the breast and the back to make it look less baggy. Next I cut the sides and used extra fabric to make straps to make cool designs on the side under the arm of the shirt. It can be quite easy to find inspiration. There are also an infinite amount of patterns available on the internet. For example, I had a dress I loved that was too small so I repurposed the fabric into something else. I pulled it apart and had enough fabric to make a halter top from a pattern I found online. This was a super easy process anyone could do if willing. It does take time and attention but the result is a piece you are proud of and can wear way more often. Now you can end up with quite a bit of fabric scraps. There are a lot of things to do with clothing scraps such as headbands, bags, napkins and many other upcycling projects.



CLOTHES  
SWAP







## *Holding A Clothes Swap*

Here are some tips and tricks for holding your very own clothing swap. First step of any clothing swap is going through your closet and finding some things you never wear, no longer fit, aren't your style or any other reason for getting those clothes out of your closet. Next, put them all in a bag or a box, this will come in handy for the clothes swap. Now you ask some friends if they have any clothes they want to get rid of. Most likely quite a few friends will say yes. For my clothing swap I had clothes donated by Ellis, Sasha, Josie and myself (Seva). Clothing from four people was more than enough. Keep in mind that clothing swaps can also be a really fun experience. Set out some food, take pictures, and overall enjoy your friends and finds. The best part is showing off your new look to your friends. They'll be thrilled to see their clothes have a new, loving home. It is one of the best ways to clean your closet and know your clothes are still going to be loved and worn. Hosting a jewelry or accessory swap is another way to give those items that maybe left unworn a second chance. One may say this way is better than donating or selling your clothes and accessories because you still get to see those clothes being styled and worn in different ways.

## *Old Clothes Are New To Friends*

Clothes are a necessity. We may find ourselves needing to replace our clothes with larger, smaller, shorter, longer or warmer items. We also might find some things we own are still in good condition and are simply not being worn and maybe able to be useful to someone else. Our clothes can be the right size or style for someone else. Something you no longer wear could be what someone else is looking for. While donating clothing to a thrift store is an option, many of the donated items actually never make it to the hanger. Thrift stores are unable to resell all donations and a large portion of those donated clothing items are still discarded, turned into rags or shipped overseas. Swapping clothes with friends is a great way to see your clothes making someone else very happy. You can be sure the clothes are going to get worn and the best part is it's totally free. Everyone ends up choosing clothes they will definitely wear. You can see your clothes get loved and cared for by a friend! It prevents the waste of clothing and gives your friends a gift. In addition to all of this it is a fun event to hold, a free shopping spree with friends.





Josie →



Ellis →

← Ellis



Seva



Seva





Seva →

Seva →



Josie →



## *The Thrill Of The Thrift*

Clothing has become more about fashion trends over necessity. This has led to a higher volume of lesser quality clothing being produced. The Environment Protection Agency states that the main source of textile waste is actually from discarded clothing. Data shows million of tons of clothing entered landfills. Thrift and second hand stores are a great way to keep clothes from landfills and can be a lot less expensive than purchasing new. Unlike retail clothing chains, you have a much larger selection of styles to choose from. You would think second hand stores only sell gently used clothing. Due to over consumption of clothing alot of items in second hand stores have actually never been worn. Some even have the original retail tags.

Second hand stores are a great place to shop for clothing that is out of season. A winter coat would be impossible to find a retail store when they are only stocking spring and summer merchandise. Since donations come in year round, new items are stocked on a daily basis making thrifting much more exciting for treasure hunting. Choosing a local thrift or second hand store also helps support your community. If you are donating or shopping at these local establishments you are giving back to your community. Since the items at local stores are sourced locally it also has less of an impact on the enviornment.

Consignment stores are another option. Many of these stores have purchased used clothing from customers or are reselling on behalf of customers. These stores are usually more selective in the clothing they decide to put on their racks. They often do keep to the season but have higher quality clothing so it can be worth spending a little more money. Purchasing clothing that is well made, worn more often and circulating for a longer period of time is ideal for decreasing the waste.

My clothing is primarily thrifted. In fact I rarely find myself at any new clothing stores. People may think because of this I am never on trend or complemented for my clothes. I actually find it to be the exact opposite! I like to call myself a good thrifter and here are a couple tips: Stay away from fast fashion brand clothes. Though this cuts down many options, these clothes are normally cheaply made and won't last long. My other tip is try and stick to local thrift stores. Places like Goodwill are great but they are taking clothes internationally and most of the time proper vinage boutiques have already dug out the scores. My top suggestions for local thrift stores are Philly Aids Thrift, Thunderbird Salvage, Bryn Mayr Hospital Thrift, and The Second Mile Center.



THRIFTING



## *A little More to Know*

Clothing production has doubled in my lifetime. This increase in production has been a direct result of fast fashion which created and continues to perpetuate an inflated demand for inferior products. More than half of fast fashion textiles have a life span of less than one year from creation to disposal. Shockingly, people continue to throw away their hard earned money on disposable clothing. Billions of dollars in usable/wearable clothing is discarded globally each year by everyday people. The average person wears an individual article of clothing 36% less than before I was born.

There are lots of other ways to avoid purchasing clothing and you can still get that new outfit for any occasion. Short term rental has been available for a while with formal attire such as tuxedos. It has become more popular with everyday items and can be a good way to keep those clothes circulating. Another way to purchase gently used second hand clothing is online. ThredUP is one of many companies offering used clothing. If you like certain brands and you know your size you can shop at home and find just what you are looking for. It's still a thrill to find what you may have purchased at the store available for much less.

Fast fashion waste is severely harming our environment. When I initially decided to research fast fashion waste I was appalled at how much landfill has been created. In fact, in 2019 it was estimated that 208 million pounds of clothing was created purely by single-use outfits. This meant that these clothes were almost brand new! One of my most unfortunate discoveries was that 85% of all textiles go into landfill each year. This means that 5% of our landfill is clothing. This may not seem like a lot but think about the amount of trash you see around you everyday, that 5% turns into a lot more waste than it seems initially. For further understanding plastic makes up 13% of all waste. Textile waste is hugely affecting water pollution. About 20% of water pollution comes from the dyes in textile waste. Buying a new wardrobe has more of an effect on our environment than people may realize.

Whenever buying clothes, new or used, remember to think about what you are buying, not what you are being sold. Buy what you like and what you know you will wear often. Slow your fashion down by buying better, buying less, sharing more and being creative!