
Should We Boycott Fast Fashion Brands?

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What is Fast Fashion?

Fast Fashion is a design, production, and marketing strategy that focuses on creating large quantities of trendy clothes in a short amount of time. It can also be defined as cheap but trendy clothing from the catwalk ideas or celebrity culture and transferred quickly to clothing stores. To produce a low-cost fashion, clothing manufacturers use trend duplication and low-quality materials such as polyester. The goal is to get the newest trends on the market as quickly as possible so that buyers may buy them while they're on-trend. In addition, since it is not high-quality made, they aren't meant to be worn for years or even several times. So, consumers put them away after a few wears. As a result, these inexpensive trendy pieces are becoming one of the world's most polluting industries due to overproduction and consumerism.

—
"Fast fashion isn't free.
Someone somewhere is
paying." —Lucy Siegle,
journalist and author



The History of Fast Fashion

Several years ago, fall, winter, spring, and summer were the four seasons of the fashion business. Designers would prepare for each season months in advance, guessing the trends they thought shoppers would prefer. But nowadays, different trendy styles are often introduced multiple times in a month to stay on-trend. Low-cost fashion peaked in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Fast-fashion companies such as H&M, Zara, and Topshop have taken over the high street as a result of the rise of online shopping. These companies replicated the aesthetics and design features of high-end fashion houses fast and cheaply. It's simple to see how the trend caught on because everyone can now shop for on-trend apparel anytime they want.

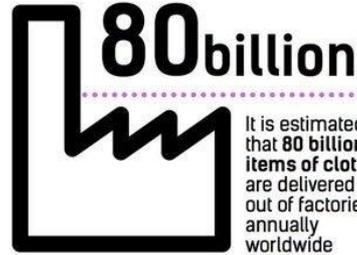
The Impact of Fast Fashion Brands

For the manufacturers to produce low-price trendy clothes, they are likely outsourced and underpaid their workers for as little as \$4 per hour. Some of the brands are reportedly taking advantage of their workers overseas in countries like Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia. Additionally, according to the 2018 U.S. Department of Labor Report, they have been accused of child labor in Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Turkey, Vietnam, and others.

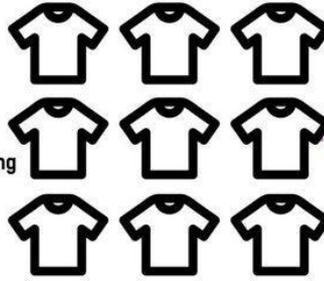
Fast fashion also plays a big impact on the environment. As mentioned, to produce cheap clothes, manufacturers use synthetic textiles such as polyester. One of the most common textiles is polyester. It is made from fossil fuels that contribute to global warming, and when washed, can drop microfibres that add to the growing amount of plastic in our seas. On top of that, because of the rapid rate at which garments are created, customers are dumping a large amount of clothing, resulting in huge textile waste. Every year, more than 500 million kilograms of unwanted clothes end up in landfills.

However, a lot of consumers think fast fashion brands are helpful for them. For instance, a teenager who is buying their clothes using their own hard-earned money, affordability is the main factor in the clothes they buy. It also enables them to buy trendy clothes anytime they want them. Fast fashion brands keep them up with trends to be a better fit in society without spending too much.

The Stats



It is estimated that **80 billion items of clothing** are delivered out of factories annually worldwide



£30 billion

Clothes discarded in one year in the UK would fill **Wembley Stadium**

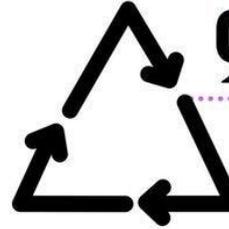


The average British woman hoards **£285 of clothes** they will never wear, the equivalent of **22 outfits** each that are left hanging in valuable wardrobe space, or, **£30 billion** of unworn clothes

it takes **2720 litres** of water to make a T shirt: that's how much we normally drink over a 3 year period.

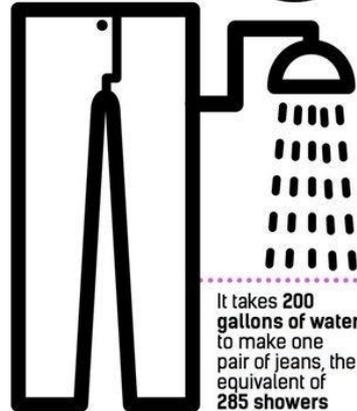


The average American throws away about **£72** of clothing, shoes and other household textiles each year



95%

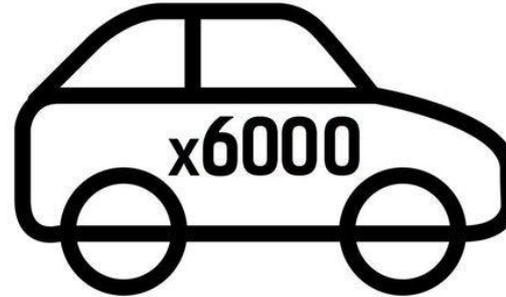
of discarded clothing can be recycled or upcycled



It takes **200 gallons** of water to make one pair of jeans, the equivalent of **285 showers**



x285



1.5 tonnes

Clothing consumption produces **1.5 tonnes of CO₂** x household x year, the equivalent of driving **6000 cars**

What are people saying?

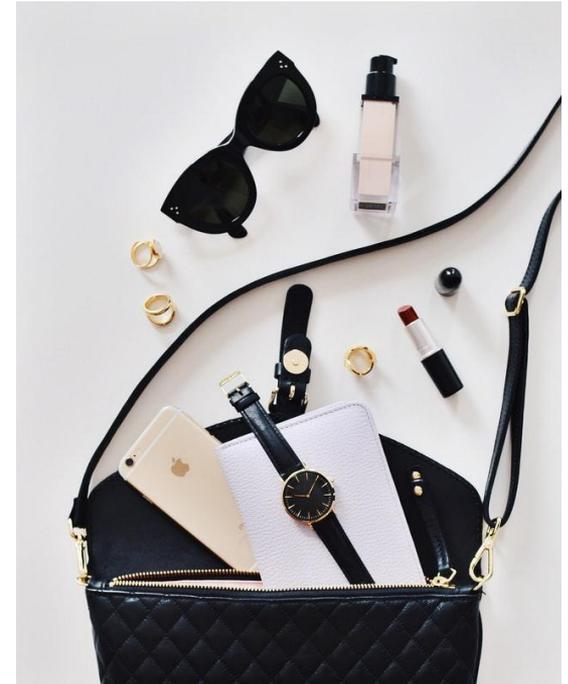


Fast fashion clothes are not sustainable.

Agree

In order for the manufacturers to produce low-price fashion clothes, they use synthetic textiles like polyester. The polyester material is not biodegradable. It means when you throw out a shirt made from Polyester will not degrade for 20 years for sure and 200 years at worst. Aside from that, polyester dyes are harmful to the environment. Polyester fabrics use special dyes which are stain-resistant. These dyes, often known as dispersion dyes, are water-insoluble. Like polyester, they have a complex molecular structure that is difficult to dissolve. Its toxicity causes major issues for local plant and animal life when it enters the environment.

In addition, because these clothes are made out of low-quality materials, they are not intended to be worn several times. They are likely to be thrown out after a few wears. Also, because fast fashion brands release multiple new styles in a month, consumers, especially the younger generation, buy trendy clothes again even they just recently bought a new one for them to stay relevant and on-trend. As a result, those clothes that are not on-trend anymore will end up in landfills. So definitely, fast fashion clothes are not sustainable.



Fast fashion clothes are not sustainable.

Disagree

Fast Fashion brands are leaning towards a more sustainable future. UNIQLO switched to FSC approved eco-friendly shopping bags in September 2019 to eliminate single-use plastics in its supply chain. They are also encouraging their consumers to donate their used down and unwanted items to its stores for recycling and donating so they will not end up in landfills. Moreover, UNIQLO uses textiles made from recycled resources to use sustainable fibers. The company offers a bag made from recycled nylon chips as well as a variety of recycled PET bottle-based items.

Meanwhile, according to Vogue, ZARA recently announced a new series of sustainability initiatives. They will collaborate with Better Cotton Initiative, a non-profit organization that works with farmers to embrace more socially and ecologically sustainable methods. They are committed to using 100% of the polyester in their clothes, and all cotton will be organic, recycled, or created, according to the company.

Additionally, H&M moving away from its fast-fashion beginnings. The brand intends to lessen its environmental footprint by employing eco-friendly textiles and more sustainable production practices. Customers may also recycle old clothing and receive a discount on a future purchase at H&M locations. By 2030, H&M wants to employ exclusively sustainably produced materials across the board.

If fast-fashion brands will continue to practice these, this will benefit a lot of people and the environment as well.

Fast fashion is harmful to our health

Agree

Aside from unfair wages, lack of resources and even physical abuse, fast fashion workers in factories are exposed to different toxic chemicals that will harm their physical and mental health. For instance, they must use highly fluorinated substances to treat waterproof garments, which increases the risk of neurological and endocrine diseases. Workers must dip their hands in a toxic substance without wearing protective gear to obtain the popular “acid wash” or distressed finish on jeans, and that will cause rashes and other severe skin disorders.

According to The Independent, a British online newspaper, there was an investigation showing that toxic chemicals are pouring into waterways from factories that produce material for H&M, Asda, Next, and Tesco in India. As a result, the investigation found that residents around the area had some cases of cancer, tuberculosis, reproductive problems, birth defects, and stomach disorders, according to a report by campaign group, the Changing Markets Foundation.

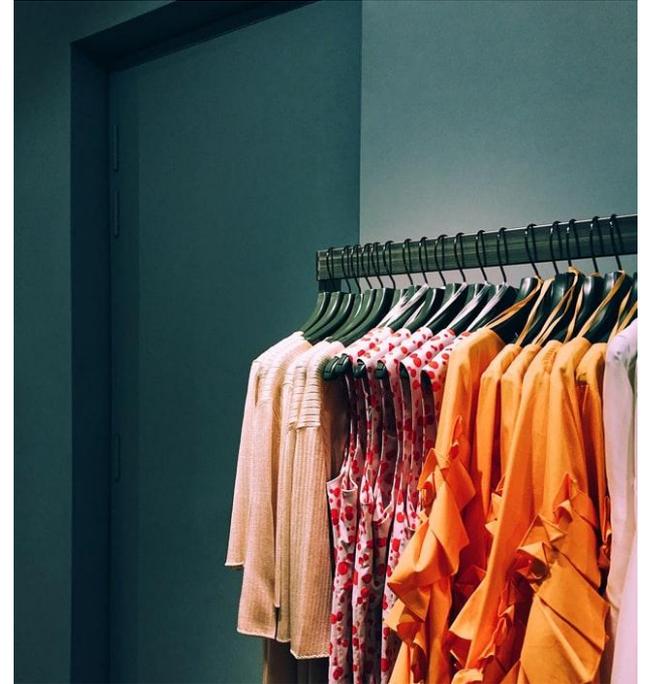


Fast fashion is harmful to our health

Disagree

Depression is a serious mental health problem that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest in activities. Many people love to shop, especially Gen Z and Millennials. It is one way for them to keep their sanity in this stressful world. Because fast fashion is affordable and accessible, consumers can buy new clothes they love anytime they want. It allows the consumers to keep themselves in for clothes that are on-trend today that also give them joy and happiness.

In addition, teenagers nowadays look at fashion as a way of showing the world who they are or who they want to be. Fashion is a way for teenagers to express themselves, their interests, attain social status, bond with their peers to be a better fit in society. Because of these factors, fast-fashion clothes help them to feel better about themselves and boost their confidence which is good for their mental health that reduces the risk of depression and anxiety.



Thrift stores are better than fast-fashion brands

Agree

Thrifting is defined as shopping at a thrift store, garage sale, or flea market for slightly used stuff at a lower price. Thrift stores are a lot better than buying fast-fashion clothes because of these factors: First, it is more sustainable practice, it is one of the solutions for our trash problems. Choosing to purchase at a thrift store decreases waste greatly because fewer garments are created. Fewer textiles and fibers will end up in massive trash piles as a result of less clothing.

What's more, is you are giving new life to something that is supposed to be in a landfill. Second, thrift stores are more economical. As previously mentioned, you can buy different kinds of stuff in thrift stores at a very low price, yet high quality. Fast-fashion clothes are also affordable, but remember that manufacturers produce fast fashion at low cost, which makes the products low quality. It will not help you to save money at all if your clothes will just last for a few wears.

Lastly, supporting thrift stores is also helping other people who are in need. The majority of thrift stores are non-profits organizations that donate their proceeds to individuals in need. Goodwill Industries spends around 83 cents of every dollar on local activities and services for the less fortunate. As well as St. Vincent de Paul in Baton Rouge, they help those people in need in finding work, overcoming substance misuse, and gaining access to education.

Thrift stores are better than fast-fashion brands

Disagree

There are reasons to consider why fast fashion brands are a lot better than thrift stores. First, it is convenient. Fast fashion is everywhere, you can shop the new stylish pieces cheaply and quickly. You can also shop it in the comfort of your home. Fast fashion brands have online stores which help consumers to shop anytime they want, without a risk of exposure outside, especially this time of the pandemic.

Plus, shopping in fast fashion stores is more fashionable than in thrift stores. It will take a lot of your time looking for clothes in a thrift store that fit your style. While fast fashion clothes are already fashionable it's easy to find a style that suits you. Moreover, fast fashion clothes are more hygienic than thrift clothes because they are brand new. There are still some stains, missing buttons, and foul smells in some clothes in thrift stores. Maybe it can be fixed but it's not convenient for the consumer anymore.

