



Slow and Steady Wins the Fashion Race—Sustainably

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January 23 2022 7:15 AM



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Take a look at your outfit choice for the day. For many, getting dressed might seem like a daily task that requires little thought other than maybe ensuring that you aren't wearing your shirt or pants inside out. But for many, the desire to step out of the box to try out a rising fashion trend has made its way to the front of their closets—but at what cost?

Fast Facts

In the pursuit of creativity and self-expression, fashion has become simply...*fast*. Fast fashion refers to clothing that is produced quick, at a brisk production rate, and sold and worn hastily. Shoppers are too often only wearing these clothing pieces a few times before shoving them to the side for something new. Fast fashion is not sustainable and has thrown the textile industry into a recurring cycle of waste.

What is the Textile Industry?

The textile industry is responsible for producing textile raw materials (such as cotton, wool, silk, and man-made materials), yarns, fabrics, apparel, home furnishings, and other textile-finished products. The [U.S. textile industry](#) supply chain alone—from textile fibers to apparel and other sewn products—employed 529,600 workers in 2020. The U.S. government estimates that one textile manufacturing job in this country supports three other jobs.



So What are the Problems?

1. “93% of surveyed brands aren’t paying garment workers a living wage.” ([Fashion Checker](#), 2020)

Fast fashion retailers employ thousands of people from Bangladesh, India, China, Indonesia, and other developing nations as source of cheap labor. These people are working extensive and exhausting hours and still unable to make ends meet.

2. “The garment industry is reportedly the world’s third biggest manufacturing industry after automotive and technology industries. Textile production contributes more to climate change than international aviation and shipping combined.” ([House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee](#), 2019)

A low production cost is the goal of fast fashion factories. From the production of the clothing to disposing of the aftermath of waste is a huge contribution to climate change.

3. “More than \$500 billions of value is lost every year due to clothing underutilization and the lack of recycling.” ([Ellen MacArthur Foundation, A New Textiles Economy](#), 2017)

This statistic not only applies to consumers but also retailers selling the clothing. Unpurchased clothing is incredibly unlikely to be donated or recycled in any capacity.

4. “Three out of five of the 100 billion garments made in 2018 will end up in landfill within a year. Toxic chemicals land in the environment and worker communities, and the production of cotton uses up vast amounts of water.” ([Clean Clothes Campaign](#))

The time to consider alternatives to trashing our clothing is *now* (some alternatives will be provided; keep reading!

5. Big global fashion brands and retailers like Fashion Nova, Quicksilver, REVOLVE, Nine West and Jockey all score less than 10% on this transparency ranking. (Fashion Revolution, [Fashion Transparency Index](#), 2020)

Transparency must be taken into consideration with any fashion brand and retailer. It is important to do your research when finding brands to support. Transparency contributes to eliminating human rights violations, ensuring workers are treated ethically, and environmental policies, operations, and affects are fully considered.

6. “The fashion industry is the second-greatest consumer of water and is responsible for 8-10 percent of global carbon emissions...” ([UN Environment, 2019](#))

The UN Alliance for Sustainable fashion explains, “Part of these emissions come from pumping water to irrigate crops like cotton, oil-based pesticides, machinery for harvesting, and emissions from transport. The industry is responsible for 24 percent of insecticides and 11 percent of pesticides.” *Yikes!*

7. One in three young women, a large chunk of shoppers, consider garments worn once or twice to be “old!” ([The State of Fashion](#), 2019)

There is a pressure and misconception that one’s outfit should only be seen once or twice before it is deemed no longer trendy, chic, or stylish.

[View “20 Hard Facts and Statistics about Fast Fashion” here.](#)

What You Can Do

Here are some sustainable alternatives to fast fashion:

1. Do a complete and entire search of your closet! There is a chance that something has been hidden away!

2. Seek out a seamstress or mend/alter your clothes yourself.
3. Borrow or swap out clothing pieces with your pals or search online clothing swap events in your area.
4. Join a Buy/Sell group online/and or through social media outlets.
5. Visit a local charity or thrift shop.
6. Shop thrifted clothing pieces online.
7. Hit up an estate or garage sale.
8. Purchase from slow fashion and sustainable brands (these pieces will be more expensive but know that you are investing in a well-made product meant to last and ethical wages to workers).

List of local RiverBend and St. Louis thrift stores (both storefront and online):

[Assassin Vintage](#)

[Basecamp.alton](#)

[Destination Found](#)

[Good Will in Alton](#)

Good Store Thrift (7020 W Florissant Ave, St. Louis, MO 63136)

[May's Place](#)

[Mesa Home](#)

[Paso Collection](#)

[Riverbend Resale Shop](#)

[Society of St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store](#)

[Twice Blessed Resale Shop](#)

[“Six Black Owned Fashion Collections in St. Louis”](#)

List of designers keeping sustainability and style top of mind:

[Jon Blanco](#)

[Michael Drummond](#)

[Mindflowers](#)

[Olivia Rae Designs](#)

[Rolling Oak Alpaca Ranch](#) – From Farm to Fiber

[TheRustyBolt](#)





Want to learn to repair or alter your own clothing and find out about upcoming clothing swaps? Search for drop off options in your area and in St. Louis check out [Remains, Inc.](#) for a list of items, they accept for recycling and resale. Find classes and events in your

area and in St. Louis hosted by our colleagues at [Perennial](#) community workshop and store.

Thanks for doing your part to fight climate change by shopping sustainably! And for everyday green living solutions, visit mobot.org/sustainability.