

How to Fight Fast Fashion

Is the answer hanging in your closet?



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Fast fashion has become a major problem in recent years, as its destructive effects have been killing our planet. But what is fast fashion, and why is it so bad? Essentially, fast fashion is a business model which relies on quick production timelines in order to create as many items of trendy clothing for as cheap as possible.

You might be familiar with some of fast fashion's biggest peddlers: Forever21, H&M, Zara, and new brands which are strictly online, like Shein or Fashion Nova. These companies bank on consumers loving fads, but in order to take advantage of these temporary trends, they have to act quickly. This means sacrificing good business practices and ethics along the way, as well as creating immense waste. Known for using sweatshops and preying on third world countries where labor laws are lax, these fast fashion retailers don't care how the clothes get made, as long as they are made at the lowest cost. Often, these clothes are made from low-quality materials, but their trendiness will probably wear off before they start falling apart at the seams.

Not only does fast fashion profit off paying their workers next to nothing, but the process in itself is polluting our planet. According to the World Resources Institute, this industry alone produces 1.2 billion tons of carbon dioxide annually, whether it be from the factories which create the clothes, or the emissions from transporting them all over the world. Millions of gallons of water are wasted in the fast fashion manufacturing process, and toxic chemicals and dyes often seep into the waterways in the densely populated areas near the manufacturing plants, poisoning the local water supply.

There are many solutions to this problem. Being aware of which companies are fast fashion is the first step to avoiding them and reducing the negative impact. Switching to shopping ethical brands which are transparent about their production process and sourcing of materials is a good way to make a positive change in the industry.

Patagonia is a good example of a company which prides itself on ethical practices when it comes to making their clothing, and a majority of their fabrics are made of recycled materials. They also take donated clothing and turn it into up-cycled items to divert waste from

the landfill and to extend the life of these products. Buying these up-cycled clothes or shopping second-hand like at thrift stores or on Depop, you can do your part to reduce the number of new clothes created. By donating the clothes in your closet to a second-hand retailer instead of just throwing them away, you can extend the life of these items, and help fight fast fashion.

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