

10 WAYS TO GREEN YOUR CLOSET

We know that the amount of information on making better fashion purchases and how to have a wardrobe that fits your values can be overwhelming, so we wanted to give you a list of 10 simple ideas for implementing a change in your closet. Some of these you may already be doing and you just didn't realize it! This list is not intended to intimidate, but rather to *inspire* you to think more about how you can continue to #GiveADamn about what's in your closet — every day is a new chance to make a change for the better.



NATURAL DYES



DOMESTICALLY
MANUFACTURED



UPCYCLING



HANDCRAFTED



LITTLE TO NO-WASTE
PATTERN MAKING



FAIR TRADE



ORGANIC & ECO-
FRIENDLY FABRICS

10 Ways to 'Green' Your Closet:

IDEAS ON AN EVERYDAY WARDROBE THAT FITS WITH YOUR VALUES



STOP BUYING FAST FASHION.

This is the first, and potentially most impactful, thing you can do. "Fast fashion" is essentially high speed, high-production-volume clothing meant to encourage overconsumption and throwaway behaviors. It continues to add to the massive waste and detrimental environmental effects of the apparel industry, not only through its production but through consumer purchasing. [Fast fashion is the second dirtiest industry in the world, right after Big Oil.](#) The world now consumes about [80 billion new pieces of clothing every year.](#) This is 400% more than the amount we consumed just two decades ago.

In addition, most fast fashion companies are enormous corporations that do very little to support your local community and small businesses. We know it can be tempting to purchase a \$15 pair of jeans, but remember — [someone somewhere is paying the real price](#) of creating those pants while the [companies benefit](#). Instead of running to the nearest fast fashion store, check out local consignment boutiques and resale stores for affordable, responsible, and uncommon products!

10 WAYS TO GREEN YOUR CLOSET

2

REPAIR AND REPURPOSE.

Did you know that you can reheel and retie shoes?! Many high heels and boots wear out in just those spots, but there are shoe repair stores that will fix these issues so you can wear your favorite pair even longer. This also supports small businesses in your community. Similarly, finding a good tailor is essential. Sometimes there is just a tiny tear in a shirt or a seam comes undone. A tailor can repair this within minutes!

If you are feeling crafty or DIY, you can learn to mend your clothes yourself. The internet (particularly YouTube) is a wealth of information, and many arts and crafts centers offer sewing classes.

3

SUPPORT INDEPENDENT DESIGNERS.

We love wearing a piece of jewelry or an outfit when we know what company or designer made it and [can tell others](#). When we get a compliment, it is way more fun to discuss an awesome company who, for example, uses as much eco-friendly fabric and domestic production as they can and donates 2% of their profits to an environmentally-focused non-profit. Or we love mentioning that we're wearing a piece by someone right here in North Carolina who adds fun details like pockets with a contrasting fabric to dresses.

You too can purchase clothes that tell a story. You may have to purchase only one piece at a time or even save up for an investment piece, but you will know who and where your creation was made and be proud of it. Seek out these independent designers online or attend markets featuring handcrafted or independent goods.

Even if you can't financially support a designer, you can support them through word of mouth and participation in the Redress community. If you love someone's aesthetic or connect with their style, talk about it on social media, repost their pictures, and help grow their market.

4

READ THE TAG BEFORE YOU BUY.

One of the biggest issues within the fashion and textiles sector is the lack of transparency. Companies can easily hide the negative environmental and social justice impacts of their production because clothing labels are vague and confusing.

By simply reading the tag, you will notice two major things: type of fabric and production location. If organics are important to you, this is where you will find that information. If you are looking for Made in the USA, the tag is a good place to start.

And if you don't like what the tag says but you love the garment, ask questions. Post a pic on Facebook, email them, tweet at them to ask about their fabric and production choices. The more we ask, the more companies will be held accountable for their actions.

10 WAYS TO GREEN YOUR CLOSET

5

REWEAR ITEMS BEFORE WASHING.

Did you know that the highest source of energy usage from clothing is actually after purchase, during the time period you own it? Although we're not recommending to never wash your clothes (like the famous ["don't wash your jeans" movement](#)), we are suggesting that you think about how dirty something is before you wash it. Often we just unconsciously throw items in the laundry that may not even be dirty.

In addition, there is really no need to use hot/warm water and this can even cause shrinkage! Using cold water will still clean your clothes and is much better for the environment. You can also choose to air dry more of your clothing — particularly jeans and sweaters — so that you are using less energy. And beware of clothes that need dry cleaning. Again, try not to take them to the dry cleaner after every wear. Seek out an ecoconscious dry cleaner — many have started using less chemicals in their processes.

6

PARTICIPATE IN A CLOTHING SWAP.

These are a great way for you to get rid of items you no longer want and get new goodies cheaply or for free — a win win! Quite a few local organizations hold them (search on Facebook or Eventbrite for upcoming ones), but they are also quite easy to do on your own. Simply invite a few friends and encourage them to bring some gently-used items. Then, at the event, you all can swap amongst yourselves to find a new piece that your friend doesn't want but you do. Not only does this reduce waste in the textiles industry, it means you are not spending money on large corporations that do not have responsible production practices.

7

BUY PRELOVED ITEMS.

There is a plethora of clothing in the world. There is definitely no shortage of apparel. And often, the items you find at consignment, resale, or vintage stores are of a higher quality than those at a "fast fashion" retailer. Again, waste is one of the biggest problems in the industry — if you can purchase something that is already in existence and is not adding to the overusage of the earth's resources, that's a responsible choice. You are often supporting a small business or community-oriented shop as well. And an even bigger bonus — going this route can be less expensive than buying new items. When you shop at these stores, you have the opportunity to find one-of-a-kind chic and define your own style — we take thrifting seriously at Redress!

8

SHOP LOCAL / SHOP SMALL.

In addition to local designers, local boutiques support the community much more than large corporations. Although local boutiques may not have all organic or locally-made goods, they are still essential in the local community, and by purchasing from them, you are making a more positive environmental and ethical choice. (Check out this great list of [Top Reasons to Buy Local](#).) You can green your closet by shopping in a local store or at a smaller store that doesn't have hundreds of locations around the country.

10 WAYS TO GREEN YOUR CLOSET

9

DEVELOP A PERSONAL STYLE.

Whether you are obsessed with pink and sparkles, love athletic wear that is flattering enough to wear all the time, or want a tailored minimalist look, you can cultivate a personal style. There is plenty of inspiration on sites like Pinterest, Instagram, style blogs or in your favorite fashion magazines. Clothes are another method of expression we get to wear every day!

Many people have experimented with a ‘trademark’ look — a particular color or type of garment they wear because they love it. Recently, the idea of a minimalist or capsule wardrobe has emerged as an interesting way to assess what works and doesn’t work in your closet. The more confident you are in what fits your style, the more you can avoid ‘impulse buys’ and cultivate a closet full of items you truly enjoy, lessening unwanted clothing waste and saving your money for higher-quality items.

10

LOOK FOR CERTIFIED PRODUCTS.

Many companies who understand the importance of ethical and environmental responsibility have begun obtaining third-party certifications for their products. Certifications such as [Fair Trade](#), [bluesign](#), and [GOTS](#) (Global Organic Textile Standard) ensure that certain conditions were met for these products, such as paying the workers a living wage or using organic fibers.

While there is no one standard certification throughout the industry, purchasing items with these certifications supports companies who have taken the extra step to verify their production methods. It can also show the industry there is a growing interest in products that meet certain sustainability standards.

By reading these tips, you’ve already taken one step toward understanding how to create a more responsible fashion and textiles industry! However, there is a massive amount of information out there if you would like to learn more or become more involved. We suggest reading more about the companies you buy from and anything on our [list of resources](#) for more knowledge about the fashion and textiles industry in particular. We also love finding new sources and people doing cool things in this industry, so feel free to email us at info@redressraleigh.com with questions, thoughts, and awesome things you find.

You should know there is no “perfect” sustainable garment and you often have to make trade-offs in this process of greening. While one thing may be less energy-intensive, it may have been made in a country known for ethics violations. Or a company may make all of its goods in the U.S. and have a very transparent supply chain, but not use eco-friendly materials. And buying vintage or consignment is great, but it doesn’t help fund a new, more responsible textiles industry or independent designer.

These trade-offs are a given, but any step you take towards greening your closet will contribute to the improvement of the fashion industry. So don’t be discouraged — you are becoming more conscious of the many complexities in the industry, and together with the rest of us who #GiveADamn we can make a collective impact!