

Earth Day: Textile Waste and How to Solve It

Written by Robert Cerrone



Earth Day is Saturday, April 22, and it gives everyone time to reflect upon our impact on the planet. Celebrated by more than 193 countries, Earth Day is a day for people to demonstrate their support for protecting our environment.

And there is no shortage to the number of things we need to do to protect our planet. Pollution, carbon emissions, deforestation, even littering impact our planet and everyone on it. Yes, even that gum wrapper you threw out your car window counts. In this day and age, we live in such a “disposable society.” When it comes to fashion, top designers and retailers are pushing to its customer the “must-have” pieces or accessories for the season to all its young impressionable or die-hard label lovers. The “next best thing” is always just around the corner. But all this comes at a cost to the environment.

For instance, did you know that each person in the United States throws away 80 pounds of clothes in landfills every year? In fact, two out of every 10 items donated to charity is used and the rest ends up in landfills or incinerators. Mind blown yet? How about the fact that we are shopping for clothing five times more than we did 25 years ago--and 85 percent of those clothes are ending up in our landfills.

Why?

The main reason for all this waste is the concept of “fast fashion.” Fast fashion is a philosophy of getting clothing lines out into the marketplace quickly to capture the current fashion trends, quick manufacturing at an affordable price. As the styles change, it's out with the old and in with the new. These fashion brands targeted to tweens, teens, and trendy adults offer endless choices of affordable apparel with a constant rotation of styles. The result? People wear the “it” pieces for a short time and get rid of clothes that are still perfectly wearable.

There are a few solutions to this “textile waste.” Some companies, like H&M, are looking at sustainability programs and recycling that allow consumers to turn in their clothing. Also to consider is that what one person takes out of their closet might look good in someone else's. Locally owned and operated resale stores, such as [Kid to Kid and Uptown Cheapskate](#), buys, sells and trades current styles in trusted brand and popular designer names to new happy customers. Not only do consumers save about 70 percent off the retail price making the experience kinder on the wallet, it's also kinder on the planet as well.

So on Earth Day, we need to remind ourselves that being a consumer should not consume the planet and perhaps we can wear that shirt or that dress for a little bit longer.