

# HOW TO GREEN



A batik dress by Studio 189, which works with artisans in Ghana

# YOUR CLOSET

WE'VE MADE STRIDES IN APPLYING ENVIRONMENTAL AND ETHICAL PRACTICES TO FOOD (ORGANIC! NON-G.M.O.! LOCAVORISM!) AND BEAUTY (ALL-NATURAL! CRUELTY-FREE! RECYCLABLE PACKAGING!), BUT WHEN IT COMES TO GREENING OUR WARDROBES, SAD HEMP HIPPIE-WEAR STILL SPRINGS TO MIND. TO THAT, WE ASK: WHO DID THE DUCHESS OF SUSSEX TURN TO FOR HER SEXY WEDDING-RECEPTION HALTER GOWN? THE ECO O.G. WE ALL KNOW—STELLA MCCARTNEY, THAT'S WHO. WE'VE HEARD A LOT ABOUT CLOTHING WITH A CONSCIENCE, BUT WE'RE GOING BACK TO BASICS WITH A LAY OF SUSTAINABLE-FASHION LAND

**By LINDSAY TALBOT**

# THE FIX IS IN

*A breakdown of the four biggest environmental issues and the many more ways to deal with them*



## THE PROBLEM TEXTILE WASTE

**EVERY YEAR**, the average American throws away **70 POUNDS** of clothing and other textiles, which means approximately **22.8 BILLION POUNDS** of clothing end up in landfills. Another way to look at it: **ONE GARBAGE TRUCK'S WORTH** of textiles is incinerated or sent to a landfill **EVERY SECOND**.

## SOLUTIONS

Many designers are recycling or reusing fabric scraps or cutting patterns in ways to minimize leftovers, and **GARMENT RECYCLING PROGRAMS** have popped up at retail stores across the country.



## THE PROBLEM EMISSIONS

In 2015, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from textile production totaled **1.2 BILLION TONS** of carbon dioxide—**21% MORE** than emissions from international flights and maritime shipping in an **AVERAGE YEAR**.

## SOLUTIONS

Brands like REI, Kohl's, Ralph Lauren, and Macy's are powering factories and offices with **SOLAR** and **WIND ENERGY** to offset carbon emissions.

## ECO FAQ

### Q: ARE THERE CHEMICALS IN MY CLOTHES?

**A:** Often, yes. "Clothing companies coat their products in highly hazardous chemicals during several manufacturing stages, from pesticides used in growing cotton to toxic outer finishing treatments," explains clean-fashion activist Marci Zaroff. "Many textiles contain chlorine bleach, formaldehyde, VOCs (volatile organic compounds), PFCs (perfluorinated chemicals), and ammonia, not to mention heavy metals, PVC, and resins, which are used in dyeing and printing processes. You should always wash new clothes before wearing them, but there are still toxins embedded in fibers that you can never truly get rid of. It's sort of like thinking you can wash the pesticides off of conventionally grown strawberries: It's impossible."



## THE PROBLEM WATER WASTE

It takes up to **713 GALLONS** of water to produce a cotton T-shirt—roughly the amount a person drinks over **2.5 YEARS**. Textile production uses around **79 BILLION CUBIC METERS** of water annually (enough to fill **32 MILLION OLYMPIC-SIZE SWIMMING POOLS**; that's a lot of swan floaties).

## SOLUTIONS

Levi's Water<Less campaign employs techniques that can save up to **96%**

**OF THE WATER** used in the denim-finishing process. Adidas's DryDye, a waterless garment-dyeing technology, uses **50% FEWER CHEMICALS** than traditional fabric dyeing. Among its conservation efforts, PVH, which owns brands like Tommy Hilfiger and Calvin Klein, recycles about **90%**

**OF THE WATER** at its industrial park in Ethiopia. Guess Europe launched a GuessEco collection, which utilizes special washing machines to reduce water usage when it makes its denim.



## QUICK TIP

Companies like Everlane, ASOS, Alternative Apparel, Outerknown, and Prana feature sections on their websites that provide information on everything from fabrics to labor practices to factories. Look for headings like Sustainability, Social or Corporate Responsibility, and About.



## THE PROBLEM CHEMICAL POLLUTION

Globally, an estimated **8,000 SYNTHETIC CHEMICALS** are used to turn raw materials into textiles. And **20% OF GLOBAL WATER POLLUTION** comes from dyeing and treating textiles. Even after wastewater has been treated, residual chemicals—which can be carcinogenic, toxic, and mutagenic—remain in the water supply.

## SOLUTIONS

Greenpeace's Detox campaign has support from **80 FASHION COMPANIES** in its effort to reduce discharges of hazardous chemicals during manufacturing to zero by 2020.