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Downcycling and Upcycling; How to Make Up an Eco-Friendly Wardrobe

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Abstract

How to put together a complete and up-to-date wardrobe from eco-friendly items to take care of nature. Environmental problems and overproduction dictate the trend towards conscious consumption, which is also often called sustainable, or slow, in all spheres of human life. Fashion is no exception: the era of weekly updates is becoming a thing of the past. Brands rely on environmentally friendly materials, limited drops and technology that allows things to last longer.

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Basic recommendations

When we talk about sustainable shopping in simple terms, there are four ways to contribute to the development of eco-friendly fashion:

1. Choose eco-brands, that is, buy items with appropriate labeling, watch the composition of the fabric;
2. Start wearing vintage clothes;
3. Give clothes a second life: for this there is upcycling, recycling, downcycling and freecycling;
4. Turn to digital fashion if you regularly need fashion contact for blogs and social networks.

Always buying things exclusively labeled as eco-friendly can sometimes be difficult, if only for the simple reason that the choice of sustainable clothing is still much smaller. If you realize that you cannot wear only eco-friendly brands just yet, remember the simple rule of a capsule wardrobe-buy those things that you actually wear regularly and that are easy to combine with each other. This will justify the harm from their production. For example, if you constantly wear a sequined top made of 100% polyester, it is much more environmentally friendly than a T-shirt made from recycled organic cotton, which will hang sadly in your closet. (The Guardian, 14 Apr. 2018.)

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https://www.econyl.com/wp-content/uploads/Processo-bluA4_web-01-1200x750.png

Dictionary of slow fashion.

The main formula for slow fashion is to buy only what you need, wear clothes for more than two season, alter old items or recycle them. If everything is more or less clear with the first points, then a whole dictionary of concepts has appeared for different types of recycling: upcycling, recycling and down-cycling. Many eco-friendly brands are incorporating different recycling approaches into their production or even making it a central part of their unique selling proposition.

Upcycling is the creative recycling of old things. For example, when a tote bag, a panama hat, or some other fashionable item of the current season is made from an outdated style denim skirt. Or earrings or a bracelet are assembled from fragments of broken dishes, as the brand "Шито-крыто" does. Upcycling brands use unsold items, fabric scraps, second hand clothes and specialized organizations that collect unwanted clothing as "raw materials." The concept of upcycling underlies the brands Go Authentic, Jeans Revision, DogRose, Ksenia Schnaider (Re-worker line), Zero Waste Daniel, Bentgablenits, Eileen Fisher.

A good example of recycling is Econyl fabric made from old fishing nets and other plastic waste. (Earth911, 7 Apr. 2017,)

Recycling is a type of processing in which unusable items pass through special equipment and become raw materials for a new item. For example, recycled plastic bottles can be made into yarn. Unlike upcycling, this type of recycling cannot last an infinite number of times: sooner or later the item will still go to waste. Everyone can contribute to recycling. To do this, you just need to collect garbage separately and properly dispose of unnecessary things. A good example of recycling is Econyl fabric made from old fishing nets and other plastic waste. Polyester from plastic bottles, coastal garbage and other waste is used in their collections by the brands H&M, Kering, Patagonia, GANT, Melissa, Nike, Adidas and Stella McCartney.

Downcycling is a type of recycling that is used for those materials that cannot be completely recycled. Usually they contain different fibers, which are difficult and unprofitable to separate. Such things are crushed and used as stuffing for jackets, furniture, plush toys, and in insulation materials for repairs. And it is important to understand that this is a one-way process. It will be impossible to return the T-shirt from the padding. Downcycling is carried out by the Second Wind foundation. Due to this work, textiles and other materials that could take 200 years to decompose are given new life in fashionable clothing. By the way, the Lamoda marketplace also works with this fund. Over a year and a half of cooperation, they gave a second life to more than 46 tons of things and donated 113 168 items of clothing and shoes to charity. (" The World Counts, 2020)

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The practice of freecycling using already used items is also very common. While in the West vintage fashion is highly respected (and hunting for that same 1980s Armani suit will increase your status in the eyes of experts), in Russia freecycling is associated exclusively with worn, faded T-shirts from second-hand stores. This stereotype is also supported by the fact that high-quality vintage is the privilege of large cities. First-class materials, good cut, perfect fit, price, like a new item from the mass market - what is not a reason to replenish your wardrobe with a branded item, and even with history. When there is a trend away from fur and leather, even among luxury brands, finding a leather bag or coat is problematic, but not in the case of freecycling.

How to put together an eco-friendly wardrobe.

Meeting the demands of slow fashion doesn't require as much effort as it seems at first glance. The easiest way to look for eco-friendly products is on marketplace sites that support such initiatives. For example, Farfetch, Lamoda and Asos. Many buyers believe the names "eco-leather" or "eco-fur", although in fact it is synthetic. For those who consider clothing a reflection of individuality, want to support domestic producers and find something unique and unusual, there are small local brands and vintage showrooms. We tell you where to choose things so that they last a long time, do not lose their relevance and do not harm the planet. Bad news: followers of the conscious consumption trend will have to give up the classic attribute of a Russian woman - a luxurious fur coat. Stylish eco-fur coats with a length, style and color to suit the most demanding tastes are not an option. Many buyers believe the names "eco-leather" or "eco-fur," although in fact they are synthetics made from petroleum products; in fact, ordinary plastic that takes hundreds of years to decompose. Only a mink coat from grandma's bins or a vintage showroom does not count. And the conscience is clear, and the formalities are observed. As for eco-friendly down jackets, we did not find such brands from domestic manufacturers. This is because such things require expensive processing and greatly increase in price. Among Western brands, down jackets that comply with sustainable principles are produced by brands such as Finisterre, Noize, Katharine Hamnett London and Ecoalf. (Vogue, 27 Nov. 2019)

Unisex jackets and vests, clearly inspired by Soviet quilted jackets, can be found from the Vatnique brand at prices starting from 1.995.000 sums. In the production of clothing, stock fabrics are used, which confirms the brand's slogan "Sustainable". Genderless. Ironical. Lovers of high-quality vintage and fans of Burberry, DKNY and Ralph Lauren trench coats should look into the Total Vitage showroom. There you can find a unworn Burberry trench coat from the 1990s for only 2.659.000 sums. And this is not the limit: the assortment is regularly updated, good things are sold like hot cakes. The basis of clothes: dresses, shirts, skirts, trousers. This segment is most fully represented in the assortment of eco-friendly brands, so there are problems with finding decent stylish and we didn't have any quality options. The price of eco-friendly and recyclable fabrics is now only 10-20% more expensive compared to conventional ones work. Another eco-sustainable brand where you can collect almost all wardrobe items, and for the whole family- NNedre Minimalism, comfort and functionality. Such things are easily combined with each other and meet the criteria of basic models, albeit with a certain amount of individuality. The brand's clothing is produced in small batches, and the children's line is made from remnants of fabric from adult collections. Hoodies can be found from 731000 sums, slip dresses-from 930000 sums. Dresses with ruffles, American hippie jeans from the 1960s, knitted suits by an unknown author and leather Cossacks with upturned noses a collection of vintage clothing from the Bon Appartment fashion space is collected from all over the world for discerning connoisseurs of fashion as art.

<https://imageio.forbes.com/specials-images/imageserve/832186600/T-shirt-made-of-100--and-hundred-percent-organic-materials--Customer-with-responsible/960x0.jpg?format=jpg&width=960>

Here, first of all, they look not at the brand (although they still managed to find Dior pumps), but at the concept and style of the model, so all the things fit perfectly together. Several brackets are occupied by outerwear: autumn coats made of good quality wool and even fur coats. The average cost depends on the individual characteristics of the item, an important details: bags, shoes, accessories, underwear and swimwear. As with fur coats, sustainable shoe and bag brands that specialize in "leather" are hard to find. Especially when it comes to strict and classic accessories and shoes. It is likely that in the future

fashion will reconsider its ideas about the canons of business style or offer unusual solutions like those implemented by the Yes-Idea bag brand. He produces clutches, clasps and shoppers from craft paper (you can find options starting from 133000 sums), which can be washed. The classic design of the bags allows you to wear them with suits and dresses. Upcycling can be beautiful, convenient and economically justified. Cute belt and cross-body bags, comfortable backpacks, toiletries of high-quality denim are produced by the upcycling brand Jeans Revision. (Good On You, 29 Jan. 2021)

https://www.stitchfix.com/women/blog/wp-content/uploads/21-01-21_Set_3_W_SLD_GRID_v1_2x3-scaled.jpeg

The buyer can also place an individual order for the production of a skirt, vest, dress or unusual bag with a more complex design than in the standard line. An impressive collection of Instagram clips from the 1970s from Chanel, Dior, Versace and other major brands is worth looking for in the vintage showrooms of Mix and Match Vintage and Vintage Heritage. Lovers of expensive jewelry with a history and a name are guaranteed to not be able to leave without buying it. Also in Mix and Match, with proper luck, you will find very rare and very valuable clothing models: the sellers assured that their collection included a Rgada suit, an analogue of which is exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. As for Vintage Heritage, the showroom is notable for its cute French interior and a good collection of scarves, bags and suits from famous brands. (Harper's Bazaar, 24 Feb. 2020,)

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