

Wardrobes



The clothes and accessories we wear are a huge source of waste from our homes. People buy more clothes than ever before but also wear them for less time. Work on greening your wardrobe by taking good care of the clothing you have and cutting down on the number of new items you bring in.

Buy high-quality clothing



Get the most out of your wardrobe by buying fewer clothes, shoes, and accessories and repairing and repurposing them so they last longer.

View your clothing choices as an investment. Buying high-quality clothes that last a long time and can be repaired will be less expensive and create less waste in the long run. Try to avoid “fast fashion,” where current trends are manifested as inexpensive items that are often made poorly. Fabrics that wear out or tear and seams that unravel after just a few washes are hard to repair. Finding your own personal sense of style may even boost your self-confidence more than wearing whatever is on trend for the moment.

Follow these tips to put together a wardrobe that passes the test of time.

- **Be intentional:** Impulse buying because something is on sale can leave you with cheaply made clothes and accessories that don't fit well or go with anything you have. Avoid filling your closet with things that you barely wear. Honestly ask yourself “Should I buy this? Would I still wear this six months from now?”

- **Look for quality:** Go with brands that have a good reputation for durability or a lifetime warranty (one example is Darn Tough socks). Check the workmanship starting with the seams by gently pulling to see if the thread holds the fabric closely together and doesn't show gaps or pull apart. See that any buttons or fasteners are sewn on securely. Feel the fabric to see how thick it is. For example, a thicker cotton shirt will last longer than a very thin one.
- **Buy versatile items:** It's worth spending more for items that you can wear in a variety of ways. Try to buy garments and accessories that go with others in your closet. Search online for terms such as “minimalist wardrobe” or “wardrobe staples” if you need inspiration for creating multiple looks with fewer pieces.
- **Shop reused:** If you're changing your wardrobe or need to keep costs low, look for clothing and shoes at garage sales, thrift stores, secondhand online dealers, clothing swaps, or from friends. You can often buy high-quality clothes secondhand for what you would spend on a new, less durable piece. This is an especially good option for anyone who is still growing or adults with changing bodies or professions.

Extend the life of your wardrobe



It is often cheaper to repair clothing, shoes, and accessories than to buy a replacement piece. To mend your clothing, search for a video online, take your clothes to a tailor, or attend a monthly Fix-it Clinic where you can be guided through the repair. Remember, items like socks can be darned to extend their use, too.



You should be able to take care of minor shoe repairs with a little bit of glue or other supplies you can find at home, or freshen up dirty or stinky shoes with a bit of cleaning. For fixing leather items or getting your shoes resoled, it is worth a trip to your nearest shoe repair business.

Disposing of clothing

When your clothes are at the end of their life, you can repurpose them (such as making pants with ripped knees into shorts), or you can cut and reuse the fabric for rags. Ask your local reuse retailer that accepts clothing for donation if they will accept unwearable clothing for textile recycling. Some fabrics can be downcycled into fillers or carpet padding.