

the environmental impact of thrifting

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Thrifting has risen in popularity among young people. According to ThredUp, 83% of Gen Z in the US currently shop secondhand or are willing to. The global secondhand market is currently valued at \$221 billion and is expected to reach a valuation of \$351 billion by 2027. (ThredUp)

There are many ways to shop secondhand. You can thrift at a traditional thrift store, such as Goodwill, or shop at a curated thrift store. Curated thrift stores are often more expensive, due to the items being sourced by people well versed in archival fashion. Known curated thrift stores include Sororité Vintage in NYC and Treasures of NYC. Some of their items are the same as the ones captured on shows such as Sex and the City.

For online thrifting, there are sites such as Depop, The Real Real, Vestiaire Collective, Etsy, Postmark, Grailed, and eBay. For those sites, it helps to know exactly what you're looking for. eBay is usually cheaper than the other sites but requires more fashion expertise on what you specifically want. Expect to cross reference and to negotiate with sellers to get the best deals.

How sustainable is thrifting? Thrifting is sustainable for a number of reasons. The first being that it keeps clothes out of the landfill. According to the BBC, Americans throw over 13 million tons of clothing each year. Cyclical fashion trends can lead to the normalization of overconsumption. Reusing clothes prevents them from being put in landfills and decreases reliance on new clothing products. Due to most clothing items being made from synthetic materials, the decomposing process in landfills will most likely take hundreds of years. Almost 70% of clothing is made up of polyester or other synthetic fiber. It also reduces chemical pollution, due to the type of dye processes and cottons used for textile manufacturing.

Compared to buying and discarding fast fashion, thrifting is touted as more sustainable. However, what about in comparison to sustainable brands? It depends on the items you buy. Nowadays, many thrift stores are full of items from notorious retailers such as Shein and Forever 21. If you buy a fast fashion item, it will probably fall into disrepair due to its low quality. According to the Round Up, 80-100 billion fast fashion items are made each year. However, if you are thrifting a pair of Levis jeans or Frye boots, for example, that would be more sustainable. Other brands known for coveted vintage include Anna Sui, Coach, Chloe, Dior, Donna Karan, Dolce & Gabbana, Marc Jacobs, and Prada. Also, if you want an item from a green retailer such as Everlane or Reformation, you can always buy it second-hand online or at a thrift store. This not only saves you money but also reduces carbon emissions!

Another way to help the environment is through downsizing your closet. Shopping sustainability also includes denormalizing an overflowing closet and the idea of buying every piece that catches your eye. Basic doesn't have to mean boring! As an example, you can invest in a pair of Mother or Re/Done jeans for a denim staple. Choosing a rotating selection of basics that complement each other can help you unlock your personal style while helping you learn to shop without subscribing to every fashion runway trend.

