Critics made:

<https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2017/may/26/zara-hm-step-up-instore-recycling-tackle-throwaway-culture>

## Bad habits are hard to change

Despite growing investment, however, consumer behaviour is proving hard to change – a recent survey by Sainsbury’s suggested three quarters of householders in Britain [chuck old clothes out](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/apr/06/britons-expected-to-send-235m-items-of-clothing-to-landfill-this-spring) with their household waste.

Cyndi Rhoades, founder of recycling technology company [Worn Again](http://wornagain.info/), hopes the growing prevalence of high-street collection schemes will kickstart behaviour change around textiles much in the way that it’s now widely understood paper and plastic can be recycled. “It’s part of the wider communication campaign to consumers to say – whether it’s rewearable or not, whether it’s returned in store, to charity shops or textile banks – clothing can be recycled.”

Some observers, however, question the ability of in-store recycling to effect real change. As part of a wider strategy to increase resource-efficiency, such schemes can be valuable, says Dilys Williams, director of sustainable fashion at the London College of Fashion. But in isolation, **she warns they could “encourage a guilt-free consumption attitude where customers think it’s a good idea to buy and wear (or not) in ever increasing amounts without thought for clothing’s inherent precious value in terms of people and resources.”**

https://www.vestilanatura.com/fashion-and-pollution/

Let's pause for a moment on **collection of used clothes in exchange for discounts**, which "theoretically" should reduce the pollution of fashion. The environmental sustainability expert Maxine Bedat states that coupons only encourage more consumption, and only **1 piece out of 1000 sold is recycled**.

<https://www.huffpost.com/entry/burberry-burn-clothes-fashion-industry-waste_n_5bad1ef2e4b09d41eb9f7bb0>

**So why do they do it? Most often, the reason is to avoid devaluing the brand; there is a terror of what discounting would do to prestige. Some brands, such as Chanel, never discount. The idea is, keep it scarce and you keep it exclusive.**

**Over the last two years, Cartier owner Richemont, for example, has bought back**[**about $575 million worth of watches**](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/may/18/richemont-destroys-nearly-500m-of-watches-in-two-years-amid-buyback-policy) **from retail partners to avoid having the timepieces sold more cheaply on the gray market of unauthorized retailers. Most were destroyed, and the parts were recycled.**

It’s not just high-end brands that are destroying their stock. Fast fashion is at it too. In 2017 it was revealed that fashion behemoth H&M — which has made much of its green agenda with recycling points in stores and what it calls a Conscious Collection — burned about 19 tons of obsolete clothing (the equivalent to 50,000 pairs of jeans) [in a waste-to-energy](https://fashionunited.uk/news/fashion/h-m-hit-with-fresh-accusations-over-incinerating-new-clothes/2017112326944) facility run by one of Sweden’s energy giants, Mälarenergi.

H&M said that the clothes were [unsellable for safety reasons](https://about.hm.com/en/media/news/general-2017/h-m-does-not-burn-functioning-clothes.html) — for example, they didn’t meet restrictions on chemicals or had been damaged by mold. The company used the same defense again this month after the German current affairs program “Frontal 21” dedicated a show to an [investigation into the burning of unsold H&M stock](https://www.zdf.de/politik/frontal-21/kleidung-von-hundm-100.html) in Germany, alleging that the brand destroyed 100,000 pieces of clothing unsold from multiple seasons.

And Nike was the subject of a New York Times article in 2017 that alleged the company [slashed clothing and shoes](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/26/nyregion/slashers-work-ruins-shoes-discarded-at-a-nike-store.html) to render them unwearable before disposing of them.

Public outcry over the destruction of fashion overstock shows that these methods of disposal carry an unofficial public approval rating close to zero. To input all the resources, emit so much pollution and waste and then destroy those clothes is pure madness, given the ecological emergencies we face.

Waste and fashion go hand in glove. The industry continues to pump out a swelling inventory; each year, [north of 100 billion new garments](https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/sustainability-and-resource-productivity/our-insights/style-thats-sustainable-a-new-fast-fashion-formula) from virgin fibers are pushed onto the market. H&M alone was reported in March to have [$4.3 billion worth of unsold clothes](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/27/business/hm-clothes-stock-sales.html).

<https://www.cbinsights.com/research/fashion-sustainable-technology/>

In 2017, British luxury fashion label Burberry burned £28.6M (around $37M) worth of unsold bags, clothes, and perfume.

And it’s not only unsold merchandise that’s problematic. After use, 73% of clothes either end up in landfills or are incinerated.

If these practices continue, the fashion sector could consume a quarter of the world’s carbon budget by 2050. But with increasing consumer demand for more sustainable products and a rising focus around eco-friendly practices, the fashion world is taking steps to lessen its negative impact on the environment.