

Fast fashion is “drowning” the world. We need a Fashion Revolution!

“Nothing to wear?” Well here’s something to think about: Every piece of clothing we buy has had an impact on our planet before we even bring it home.

That’s before you step out of the door, walk down the street, and spot that attractive item you see hanging in the window.

First, there’s water consumption. 2 billion pairs of jeans are produced every year, and a typical pair takes 7,000 litres of water to produce. For a t-shirt, it takes 2,700 litres of water to make just one – that’s the amount of water an average person drinks over the course of 900 days!

Secondly, there’s the dyeing process of which 1.7 million tonnes of various chemicals are used; not to mention the hazardous chemicals like PFCs that leave a permanent impact on our environment.

And what about the clothing that doesn’t make it to market? An estimated 400 billion square meters of textiles are produced annually, of which 60 billion square meters are left on the cutting room floor. Each year over **80 billion** pieces of clothing are produced worldwide, and after its short lifespan, three out of four garments will end up in landfills or be incinerated. Only a quarter will be recycled.

A textile factory in Prato, Italy, the biggest textile district in Europe. 20 companies from here have committed to eliminate hazardous chemicals in their factories. © Andrea Guermani / Greenpeace

According to a report by UK-based NGO WRAP, lower prices and reduced demand lessen the incentive for collecting used textiles, which could lead to more going to landfill. And as recent Goldman Environmental prizewinner Zuzana Čaputová has shown, no one wants more landfills in their town.

So how did we get this way? Since when did we get so **obsessed** with clothes?

Overconsumption is one of the negative effects of fast fashion. In Hong Kong, residents throw away the equivalent of 1,400 t-shirts every minute!

One obvious reason is fast fashion. In an era of fashion bloggers and getting Insta-famous, being seen in the same outfit has been enough to warrant a “tsk-tsk” from the fashion police. Just over the last five years, the top fast fashion retailers grew 9.7 per cent per year, topping the 6.8 per cent of growth of traditional apparel companies.

But the fashion world wasn't always like this. According to *Plenitude: The New Economics of True Wealth* by Juliet B. Schor, Americans for instance, consume three times as much as their ancestors did fifty years ago, and they buy twice as many items of clothing as they did twenty years ago. In 1991, the average American bought 34 items of clothing each year. By 2007, they were buying 67 items every year. That's a new piece of clothing every four to five days!

So how can we fix fast fashion problems?

Firstly, it starts with you, the consumer and staying away from impulse purchases from fast fashion retailers. But it's not just about saving pennies – in the lead up to the third anniversary of the collapse of the textile factory, Rana Plaza in Bangladesh, it's as much thinking about who made your clothes as well as the environmental impact it has made.

And if you think that dumping a bag of clothing at your local thrift store will help get rid of all that unwanted clothing, it doesn't quite work that way. Whilst donating is great in giving your old threads a second life, not all can be recycled. H&M's recent World Recycling Week, in which their aim is to collect and recycle 1,000 tonnes of used clothing, is an “illusion” of what true sustainability is, as only one per cent of collected clothing can be used as recycled fibres.

Instead get crafty and pick up a needle! 95% of discarded clothing can be upcycled or recycled. And fashion trends come in waves, so hang onto that 10-year-old t-shirt. You could be wearing it again in 20 years time!

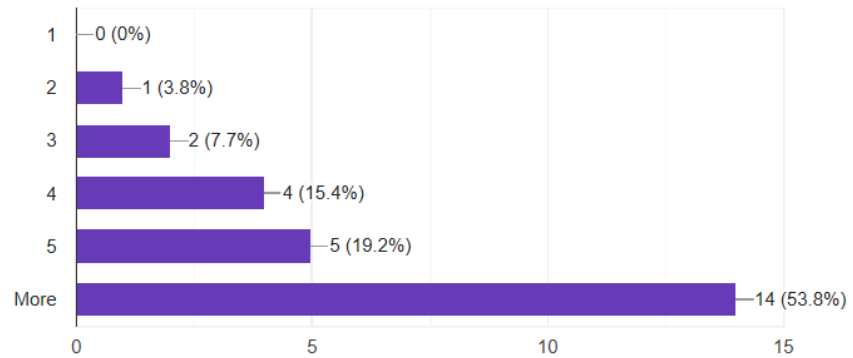
But that's not to put all the aspiring artists and independent designers out of work. As legendary fashion designer Vivienne Westwood says: ‘Buy less, choose well, make it last.’

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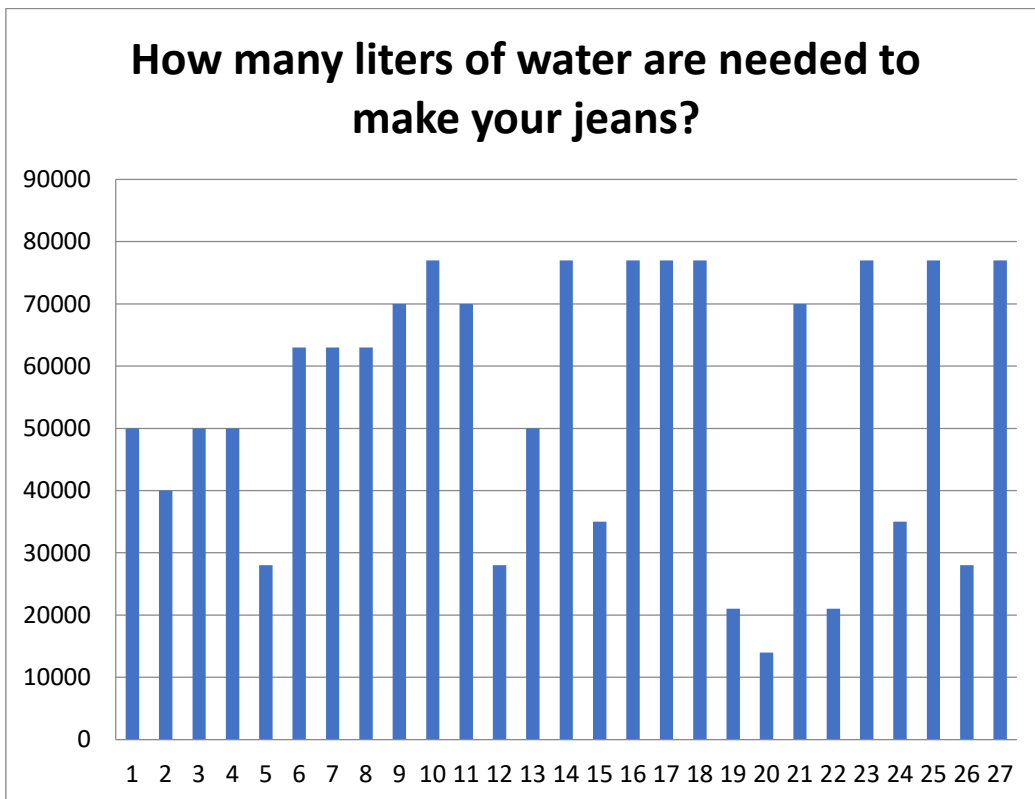


How many jeans do you have?

26 responses

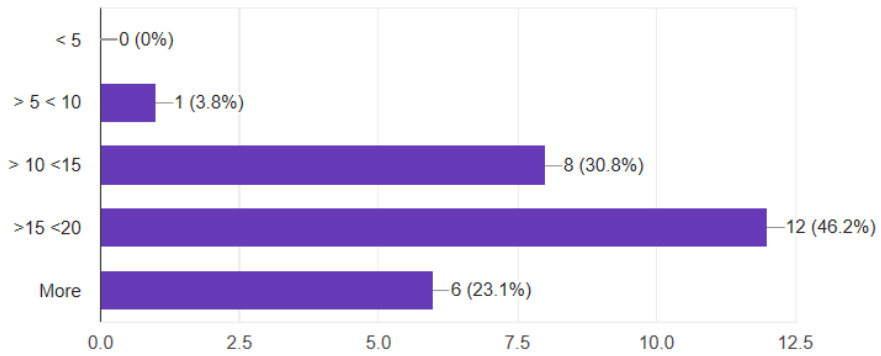


How many liters of water are needed to make your jeans?

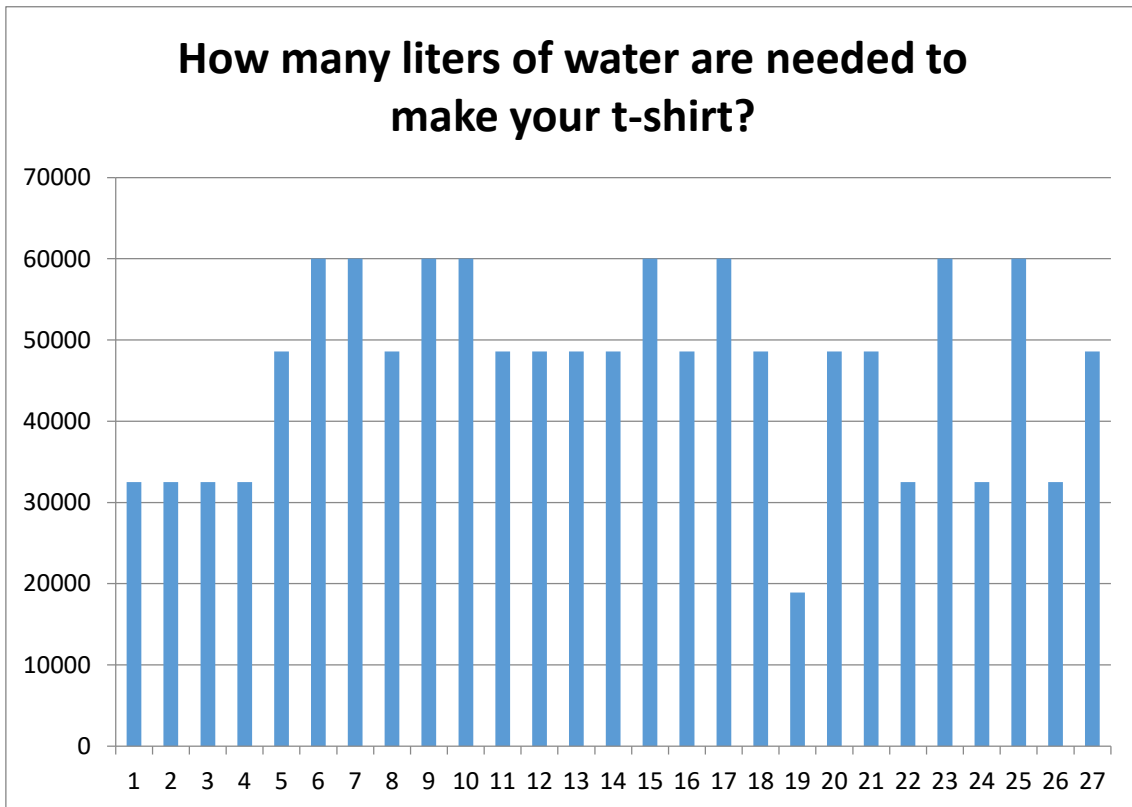


How many t-shirt do you have?

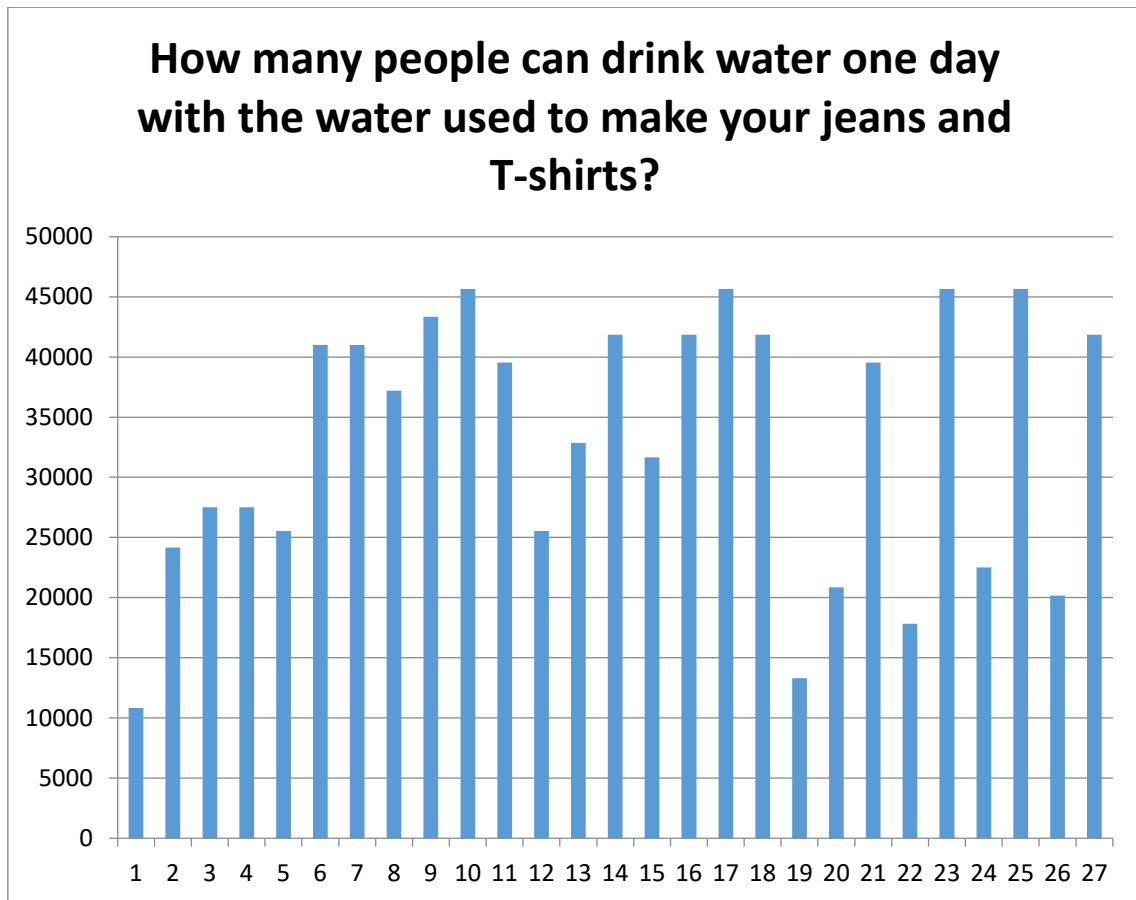
26 responses



How many liters of water are needed to make your t-shirt?

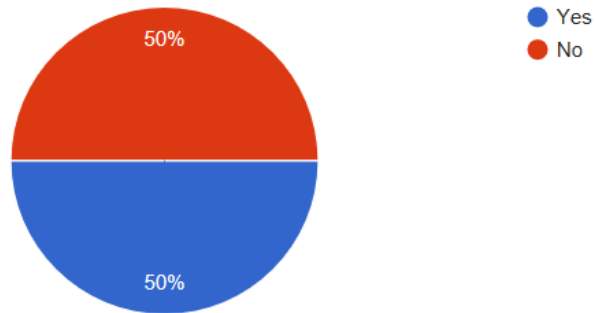


How many people can drink water one day with the water used to make your jeans and T-shirts?



Were you aware of the water cost involved in making clothes?

26 responses



Will you modify your buying behavior style?

26 responses

