

the
**Sustainable
Closet Audit**



—
OFFICIAL GUIDEBOOK

Redefine Your Wardrobe,
One Conscious Choice at a Time



FIBERSHED

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Introduction

Why Should I Do a Sustainable Closet Audit?

Fashion gives us the exciting ability to express ourselves – our clothes are an extension of how we see ourselves in the world. The way we dress can communicate our personality, mood, and even our values without saying a word. One person might wear vibrant colors and bold patterns to convey a lively, creative spirit, while another might choose minimalist, neutral-toned outfits to reflect a preference for simplicity and elegance. These choices are not just about aesthetics; they are a way for us to share who we are with the world.

But our clothing isn't just a reflection of our style; it's also a reflection of our values. When we start to ask questions like, "Who made my clothes? Where do they live? How are they treated?" we begin to see our wardrobe in a new light. The people behind our garments are often far removed from our daily lives, yet their well-being is deeply connected to the choices we make as consumers.

Similarly, considering the materials used to make our clothes and how they were created brings an environmental perspective into focus. The production of textiles can significantly impact the planet in both positive and negative ways. Sustainable materials and practices can contribute to a healthier ecosystem, while harmful methods can lead to environmental degradation and harm to communities.

If we want our wardrobes to reflect our values in the future, we must first unpack what is in our closets today.

Fibershed is a nonprofit organization leading the charge to create a more sustainable fashion industry. We work with farmers, producers, and communities to promote soil regeneration and build soil-to-soil frameworks that support environmental health and ethical practices. We believe it is essential to make information about the global fashion system

– the good, the bad, and the ugly – available and easy to understand for everybody.

"The goal is not to get rid of clothes that don't *spark joy* but to educate and empower you to make more informed, sustainable choices in the future."

This Sustainable Closet Audit is designed to be a learning experience that helps you gain a deeper understanding of your purchasing habits, the triggers behind them, and how these choices reflect your values. Throughout this audit, you'll explore

your current wardrobe and consider the broader impact of your clothing choices. The goal is not to get rid of clothes that don't *spark joy* (though you may have some Marie Kondo-esque moments) but to educate and empower you to make more informed, sustainable choices in the future.

At the end of this audit, you'll have the opportunity to create a plan of action. What will you change going forward? How can you incorporate sustainability into your fashion choices in a way that feels authentic and manageable? Whether you choose to buy less, opt for second-hand items, prioritize natural fibers, or support ethical brands, your plan will be a personal roadmap to a more sustainable wardrobe.

We're excited to join you on this brief but revealing excursion into the secrets, stories, and possibilities of what lies behind your closet doors.

Hot tip: This journey can be even more enlightening and enjoyable when shared with friends. Consider inviting a few pals to join you in this activity – you can learn from each other's insights and support one another in making sustainable fashion choices.

Where Fashion Goes Wrong

To start moving in the right direction with your wardrobe, it's important to first understand what may be going wrong with the practices and materials behind some of your wardrobe items.

Industry and Consumption

To begin, let's talk about "fast fashion." In our capitalist society, rampant consumption is often encouraged, driven by companies' relentless pursuit of profit. The fashion industry is a significant part of this capitalistic machine, with many large fashion companies working tirelessly to convince people that they need more clothing and must keep up with the latest trends. For this narrative to be successful, these companies must produce clothing that is inexpensive enough to attract and maintain consistent consumption.

The Mechanics of Fast Fashion

How do companies churn out so much clothing at such cheap prices? The answer lies in several unsustainable practices:

Using cheap materials: Many fast-fashion items are created with synthetic materials like polyester, which is made from plastic. These materials are inexpensive to produce but have a high environmental cost.

Paying workers low wages: To keep costs low, many companies outsource production to locations or systems where labor is underpaid or exploited. Workers are often paid well below a living wage, and they may also face poor working conditions and lack basic labor rights.

Cutting corners: Fast fashion brands often cut corners wherever possible, sacrificing quality and durability for speed and cost-efficiency. This leads to clothing that wears out quickly, prompting more purchases.

All of these practices result in clothing that is highly disposable.

"The fast-fashion system relies on a take-make-waste model that is unsustainable for our planet and the workers and communities involved."

The Consequences of Fast Fashion

We dispose of our clothing at an alarming rate. While billions of garments are manufactured worldwide each year, the world also discards several million tons of textile waste annually. This waste often ends up in landfills or is **shipped to under-resourced communities**, where it can create significant environmental and social issues.

Psychological Impact:

Fast fashion's volume-driven consumption model is deeply tied to marketing tactics that exploit feelings of inadequacy and fuel an insatiable desire for more. This cycle encourages consumers to continually seek fulfillment through the acquisition of new clothing, often leading to a disconnection from the items they already own. By recognizing this, individuals can begin to shift toward building deeper relationships with their clothing, valuing quality over quantity, and fostering connections to the people and ecosystems that produce their garments. This not only counters the overconsumption mindset but also promotes a more intentional, joyful, and sustainable approach to fashion.

Environmental Impact:

The production, wear, and disposal of cheap, plastic-based synthetic clothing contribute significantly to pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Synthetic textiles can take hundreds of years to decompose, while continuously releasing harmful chemicals and microplastics into the environment.

Exploitation of Workers:

At many garment factories, workers must endure long hours, unsafe conditions, and inadequate pay. This exploitation is a direct result of the pressure to produce large quantities of clothing at low costs.

Social Inequality:

Fast fashion often leads to a cycle of poverty and exploitation in the communities where clothing is produced. Additionally, the disposal of unwanted garments in other vulnerable communities can exacerbate social and environmental problems.

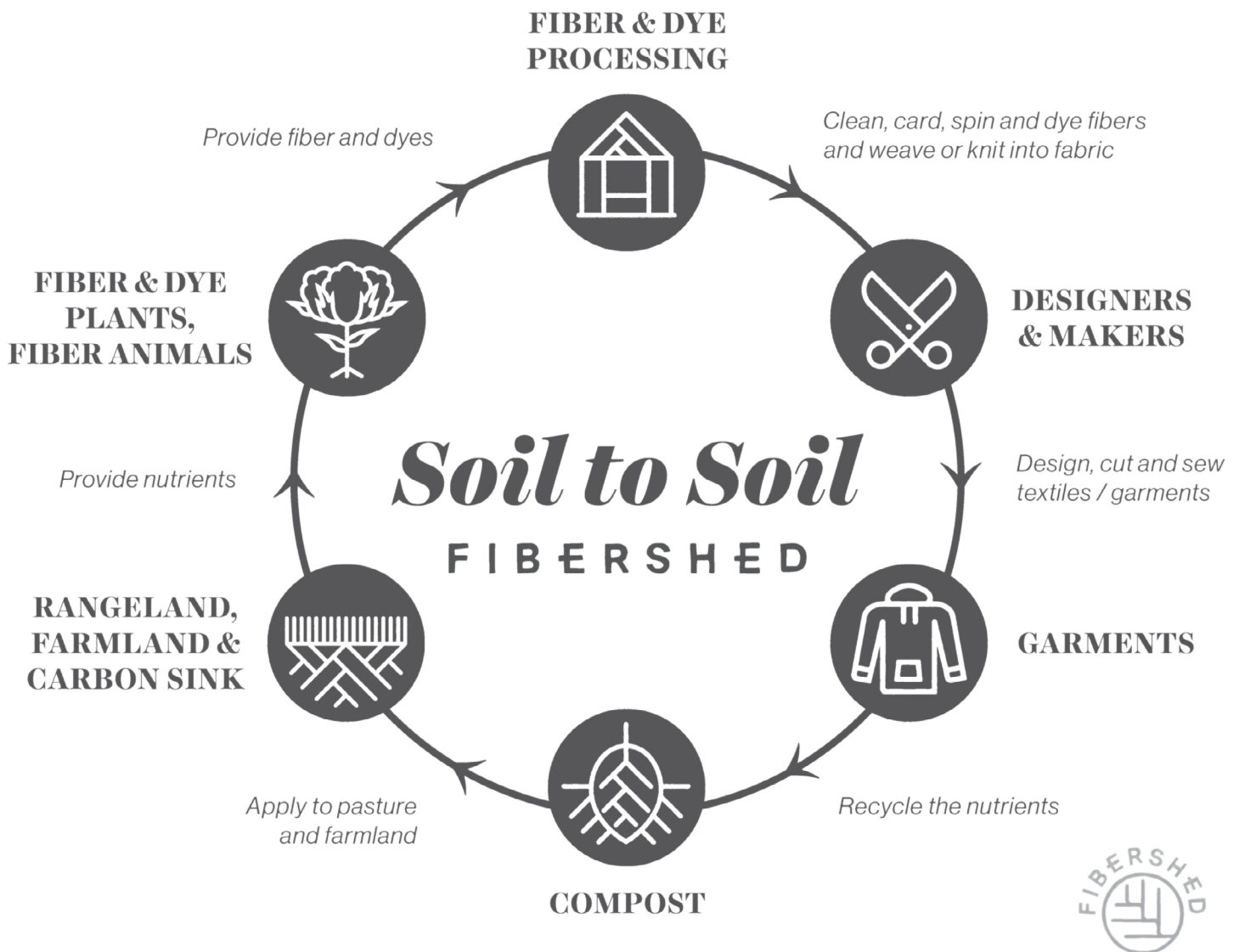
Understanding these issues is the first step toward making more sustainable and ethical fashion choices. By recognizing the flaws in the fast-fashion system, we can begin to shift our habits and support practices that are better for people and the planet.

Where Fashion Gets It Right

The news isn't all bad. Fibershed's community, alongside innovative leaders and brands, is identifying and working to scale solutions that create a more sustainable and ethical fashion system.

The Soil-To-Soil Framework

To envision a better fashion system, we can think about our wardrobes as part of a **soil-to-soil system**. In a soil-to-soil system, consumers, brands, policymakers, and other stakeholders consider the implications of the clothing life cycle — from the formulation of textile materials (starting at the soil level) all the way to how a garment breaks down at the end of its life (back to the soil).



Elements of a Soil-to-Soil Framework



Rangeland, Farmland, & Carbon Sink:

Natural fibers such as wool and cotton begin their lives in the agricultural space. Agriculture has an incredible ability to nourish our lands, benefit ecosystems, and even draw dangerous carbon out of the air and into the soil (where it provides essential nutrition to the foodwebs that nurture plants). But in order for agriculture to be beneficial rather than extractive, soil-regenerating practices must be used. Climate Beneficial™ agriculture, which focuses on restoring soil health and biodiversity, is still not as widely adopted as needed. This is partly due to the lack of financial support for farmers who bear a significant burden in transitioning their agricultural practices. Fibershed is working with farmers and producers throughout the U.S. and worldwide to make **Climate Beneficial™ agriculture** more feasible and improve soils and the health of our planet.

What you can do:

Support soil-regenerating agriculture by purchasing from brands that source their fibers sustainably. Look for certifications and support local farms practicing regenerative methods. Donate to organizations that help farmers transition to these practices.



Fiber & Dye Plants, Fiber Animals:

When soil is nourished and healthy, it supports the efficient and healthy development of the next part of the soil-to-soil system: the plants and animals that provide our natural fibers and dyes. Wool-producing sheep have a symbiotic relationship with healthy farmlands, while cotton, other plant fibers, and **dye plants** can thrive with fewer resources on healthy soil. Using sustainable practices to raise animals and cultivate plants ensures that soil is replenished and not depleted.

What you can do:

Choose natural fibers over synthetic ones and seek out products made with organic or sustainably farmed materials. Learn more about the impact of different fibers and opt for those with a lower environmental footprint.



Fiber & Dye Processing:

Turning raw materials into the fibers used to craft textiles requires processing infrastructure, namely **mills**. While hundreds of fiber mills used to thrive in the U.S., most have shuttered due to a global economy that makes importing processed textiles cheaper than milling them domestically. Although some domestic mills still exist, their scarcity and vulnerability make developing truly localized fiber systems nearly impossible in most U.S. locations. Supporting and revitalizing U.S. mills is crucial for creating a sustainable and resilient fiber system.

What you can do:

Advocate for and support local mills and textile producers. When possible, buy products made from domestically processed fibers. Engage with policymakers to promote the development of local textile processing infrastructure.



Designers & Makers:

Once textiles are produced, designers and makers bring them to life by crafting them into clothing and other textile-based products. Thousands of **brands and makers** are creating unique products with **sustainable, ethical textiles**. However, their prices can rarely compete with the prices of fast-fashion brands, which makes it challenging for them to reach a broader audience. Supporting these designers and makers through informed purchasing decisions helps sustain the market for ethical and sustainable fashion.

What you can do:

Buy fewer styles of higher quality. Support sustainable designers and makers by purchasing their products and sharing their work with your network. Attend local fashion events and markets to discover and support small, ethical brands.



Garments:

The average consumer's relationship with the soil-to-soil system mostly exists during this stage — when a garment is acquired, worn, and cared for. Many natural textile garments require less washing than those made from synthetic textiles. Moreover, garments constructed from plastic-incorporating textiles shed microplastics when they are worn and washed. (Learn more in [Fibershed's guide on "The Hidden Story of Plastics."](#)) Choosing garments made from natural fibers and caring for them properly can reduce environmental impact and prolong their lifespan.

What you can do:

Opt for garments made from natural fibers and learn how to care for them to extend their lifespan. Reduce your consumption by buying less and choosing higher-quality, longer-lasting pieces.



Compost:

You've likely heard about composting food scraps, but natural textile waste **can be composted too**. Plastic-based textiles do eventually break down and decompose (over hundreds if not thousands of years), but they pollute the Earth as they do so. Healthy compost can be effectively made with the careful inclusion of natural textiles when their useful life is exhausted. Once it's created, it can be applied to pasture and farmlands, where it aids in the health and production of new natural textiles. This completes the soil-to-soil cycle, returning nutrients to the Earth and supporting future agricultural productivity.

What you can do:

Start a composting system that includes natural textiles or find local composting facilities that accept textile waste. Educate others about the benefits of composting natural fibers and encourage them to do the same.

A Holistic Approach to Fashion

In thinking about the ways our fashion system can align with our values, considering the soil-to-soil system and how each element can be improved at scale helps us determine how our clothing choices relate to the bigger picture. By supporting soil-regenerating agriculture, sustainable processing, ethical designers, and proper garment care and disposal, we can create a fashion system that benefits the planet and its inhabitants.

Fibershed works with leaders at every stage of this system to pinpoint opportunities for improvement and support. We hope you'll continue to engage with us to spread the word about our community's work and initiatives. Together, we can foster a sustainable and ethical fashion future.

The Sustainable Closet Audit

Getting Started

Ready to dive into your Sustainable Closet Audit? Here's how to set yourself up for success:

1

Set an Intention and Prepare Yourself Mentally

Reflect on your goals: Take a moment to consider what you hope to get out of this process. Are you looking to reduce your environmental impact, support ethical labor practices, or simply understand your purchasing habits better? Write down a few intentions to keep yourself focused and motivated throughout the audit.

Prepare mentally: You may learn things about your fashion consumption habits that feel a little uncomfortable. While it's valuable to pull back the curtain on how some of your clothing purchases contribute to a flawed system, remember this: Powerful industry and policy leaders have created and promoted a fashion system that often threatens communities and our environment. While we urge all shoppers to learn and vote for a better future with their purchases, you are not to blame for the bad decisions of unconscionable giants.

The choices we have as consumers are often very limited by the choices that clothing brands have already made, and by the larger economic and regulatory systems we are all living within. However, by taking more consideration of the choices we are able to make, we can take steps to improve the impact of our individual closets, and we can inform our collective actions to change the systems and options available to us all.

2

Set Aside Time

Schedule uninterrupted time: This exercise will require you to assess every item in your wardrobe. Depending on its size, this may take at least a couple of hours. Consider setting aside one or two blocks of uninterrupted time so you can complete this project without feeling rushed.

3

Prepare Your Space

Organize your wardrobe: Decide on a method that works best for you. Some people may find it helpful to pull all of their garments into a single space or pile to tackle this audit comprehensively. Others may find it easier to pull one garment at a time from their closet. Choose the approach that feels most manageable and prepare your space accordingly. Ensure you have enough room to lay out your clothes and move around comfortably.

4

Get Your Audit Worksheet Ready

Prepare your tools: Have your [audit worksheet](#) or [spreadsheet](#) ready. This will be your guide and record throughout the process.

The Audit

A Step-by-Step Guide

Now that your worksheet, space, and mindset are prepared, let's dive into your Sustainable Closet Audit. Follow these steps to analyze each item in your wardrobe systematically.

Organize by Category

You may find it easiest to work through one category of your wardrobe at a time. For example, you might start by analyzing all of the tops in your wardrobe first, then move on to bottoms, accessories, and outerwear.

Step-by-Step Item Inspection

Start by pulling one garment from your wardrobe at a time for consideration. This focused approach helps you avoid feeling overwhelmed by the sheer volume of clothes you may have.

Refer to your worksheet and take note of each indicated field. **Here's a breakdown of what you should include:**

Item description: Describe the item in a way that makes it easy to identify from your other items. Note the following:

- **Type of garment** (e.g., "tank top")
- **Garment color** (e.g., "purple")
- **Garment style** (e.g., "cropped with chest pocket")

Category: Note the garment category (tops, bottoms, accessories, outerwear).

Frequency of use: Reflect on how often you wear this garment. Note the frequency (often, sometimes, rarely). If the garment is for specific occasions, select note "occasional."

Materials: Check the tags for material information. Note all materials listed. If there are no tags, try researching online or leave this field blank if you're unsure.

Brand: Note the brand that created the garment.

Country of origin: Find the country where the garment was made (usually on the tag). If not available, research online or leave it blank.

Condition: Assess the current condition of the item. Note whether the item is like new, shows signs of slight wear, requires mending, or is beyond repair.

Does this item fit? A simple "yes" or "no" will do here. (Hint: If you're struggling to answer because the item kind of fits, the answer for your audit is "no.")

When did you acquire this item? Provide a ballpark idea of when this item became yours.

Did you acquire this item new or secondhand? If the item wasn't purchased perfectly new and unworn, note "secondhand."

Reason for purchase: Did you acquire this item because you needed it? Did it fill a gap in your wardrobe? Did it fulfill an emotional need?

Purchase location: Note where you bought the garment (e.g., online, department store, thrift shop) and if it was acquired used.

Personal attachment: Reflect on any feelings or memories associated with the item. Consider:

- **Emotional attachment:** Was it a gift, a vacation purchase, or worn on a special occasion?
- **How it feels to wear:** Does it make you feel good? Is it comfortable? Does it fit well? (You may need to try it on.)
- If there's no specific personal attachment, note that too.

Action needed: Based on your notes, consider the future of this item in your wardrobe. Possible actions include:

- Keep
- Patch/repair
- Send for alterations
- Donate

Continue this process for each item in your wardrobe. If you feel overwhelmed or disheartened at any point, take a break and come back when you're mentally ready.

By systematically analyzing each item in your wardrobe, you'll gain a deeper understanding of your purchasing habits and how they align with your values, setting you on the path to a more sustainable and thoughtful wardrobe.

The Analysis

If you've completed your audit, first of all, pat yourself on the back. This is an exercise that requires patience and time, and your willingness to complete it says a lot about you. This might be a good opportunity to treat yourself: Grab an ice cream cone or reward yourself with some special "me" time.

Now, use your notes to pinpoint some takeaways. In short, what did you discover about your wardrobe and buying habits based on this exercise? This is easiest to do by looking at general trends in your notes.

For example, you may find that your wardrobe contains many items purchased online and worn rarely. What might that reveal about your relationship with clothes? Does it suggest impulse buys or a preference for convenience that doesn't always align with long-term satisfaction?

Or, maybe you noted a significant personal attachment to most of the items in your wardrobe. Why do you think that attachment exists? Is it tied to memories, experiences, or simply the comfort and confidence those clothes give you?

Take a Break

Before diving into your analysis, take a short break. Relax, refresh, and reward yourself for the effort you've put in so far.

Review Your Notes

Read through your audit worksheet carefully. Pay attention to patterns and trends that stand out. Look for:

- **Surprises:** Are there any notes that surprise you? For example, did you discover that a high percentage of your clothes are made from synthetic materials despite thinking you preferred natural fibers?
- **Repetitions and Themes:** Do you see a lot of repetition in certain categories? Perhaps you have numerous items from a particular brand or most of your clothes are in a specific color palette.

Reflect on Your Feelings

As you review your notes, notice any emotions that arise. Do you feel pride, guilt, joy, or discomfort? Try to understand why you feel this way about your wardrobe.

Use the Provided Worksheet

The **accompanying worksheet**, with prompts and questions, will guide you along this analysis journey. This structured approach will help you dig deeper into your findings.

Pre-Action Plan

Tips & Frequently Asked Questions

While it's great to have a deeper understanding of your existing wardrobe, the ultimate goal of the Sustainable Closet Audit is to create a plan of action. This will help ensure your wardrobe better aligns with your values going forward. If you'd like, skip ahead to start your action plan. Or, stick with us here as we provide some information and tips that may help you determine the best pathway forward.

How do I know if the materials in my items are sustainable or in line with my values?

You may have found that your garments contain a long list of materials, many of which you've never heard of. We think of reading clothing labels as similar to reading the ingredients list on food items: if the list is lengthy and a lot of the words are unfamiliar, you're probably holding an item that is further from your values than is ideal. Fibershed has created a guide to common fibers, which will help you identify the fibers on your tags as well as materials to look for in the future.

Can't find what you're looking for? Depending on the manufacturer, some materials go by multiple names. A quick online search should point you in the right direction.

Finally, keep an eye out for synthetic materials, most of which are made partially or completely from plastic. The hazards of plastic are well-covered in today's media landscape, but we recommend taking a look at our [**overview of plastics in clothing**](#) to learn more.

Is buying secondhand always more ethical than buying new?

Buying secondhand is an excellent practice that, if more widely adopted, could dramatically decrease the amount of textile waste on our planet. By and large, we enthusiastically support this practice.

That being said, secondhand clothing isn't without its issues. For example, clothing made from plastic-based textiles sheds microplastics into the environment throughout its life. This remains true of secondhand clothing.

So, while acquiring secondhand items is certainly a step in the right direction, we must also hold brands that rely on dangerous materials accountable for their part in a vicious cycle of environmental degradation.

How can I find out if a brand I like has ethical or sustainable business practices?

Search for garments that have as transparent a supply chain as possible — all the way back to the farm. There are a growing number of cases where brands have made this level of transparency clear for the wearer. Search for 100% natural fiber garments from plants and animals; some designers offer un-dyed or naturally dyed garments.

For brands that rely more heavily upon third-party certifications, we recommend searching for GOTS-certified garments (Global Organic Textile Standard) and BlueSign-certified garments. Both of these standards focus on the elimination of harmful substances from the supply chain, and GOTS certification includes the use of organically farmed fibers.

Additionally, consider looking for garments made from Climate Beneficial™ Verified fibers. Fibershed's Climate Beneficial™ Verification Program supports farmers and ranchers who engage in practices that actively draw down carbon from the atmosphere and contribute to healthier ecosystems. The program ensures that the fibers used in your clothing come from farms committed to regenerative agriculture practices, which increase soil organic carbon, enhance biodiversity, and provide measurable climate benefits. This verification provides a direct connection between your garment and the positive environmental impact of carbon farming.

Keep in mind that sustainable and ethical business practices in fashion, while becoming more prevalent, are not the norm. This means that brands actively pursuing a better model are almost always putting in extra work and expense. These brands also tend to be ultra-transparent about their practices. If you can't find the information you're looking for about a brand, a logical question may be, "Why are they making this information so hard to find?"

How can I buy more sustainable clothes on a budget?

Buying sustainable clothing on a budget is definitely possible with some strategic approaches. Here are a few tips to help you get started:

Secondhand shopping: Thrift stores, consignment shops, and online secondhand marketplaces like Poshmark, Depop, and ThredUp offer high-quality clothing at a fraction of the original price.

Clothing swaps: Organize or participate in clothing swaps with friends, family, or your community. Swaps are a fun way to refresh your wardrobe without spending any money.

Sales and discounts: Keep an eye out for sales, discounts, and clearance sections in stores and online. Many sustainable brands offer seasonal sales or discount codes if you subscribe to their newsletters.

Fewer, higher-quality items: Investing in a few high-quality pieces rather than many cheaper items can save money in the long run. Quality garments last longer and need fewer replacements, which is both cost-effective and sustainable.

Capsule wardrobe: Build a capsule wardrobe with versatile pieces that can be mixed and matched. This approach minimizes the need for a large number of clothes while maximizing outfit combinations.

Budget-friendly sustainable brands: Research and support brands that offer sustainable options at more affordable prices. Some brands are committed to making sustainable fashion accessible to everyone.

Should I only buy clothes that are produced in my country?

Supporting more localized production of textiles and clothing is an excellent practice, and when you have the opportunity to do so, we deeply support it.

However, there are still major challenges inherent in attempting to make your future wardrobe fully local. For example, the U.S. lacks the essential milling infrastructure necessary to process all of its textiles domestically. While we can and should use our voices to support enhanced infrastructure in the future, consumers in the U.S. may not have the option to purchase all of their garments from local systems.

So, we absolutely recommend looking for brands and clothing that are located and do their production close to where you live. But we also know that perfection in this arena may not be attainable yet.

I don't know how to mend my worn clothes – what now?

You have two great options here:

Learn how to mend! We view mending as a mindful act of resistance, and **there's no better time to start than now**. You'll find loads of resources online or at your local library. We also recommend the book *Mending Matters* by Katrina Rodabaugh. Just get started – you'll likely be surprised by how simple some of the techniques are.

Find a skilled helper: Your local tailor has years if not decades of experience adjusting garments to suit customers' needs. Additionally, within your family, friend, or community networks, you're probably already connected to somebody who has basic mending skills. Consider reaching out to discuss how they may be able to help or teach you what you need to know.

What should I do with my items that are in good condition but that I don't want to keep?

Hosting a clothing swap at your home or local community center can be a great way to bring novelty and newness to a thoughtfully curated wardrobe. The nature of the swap is that you bring garments you are ready to part with, invite your friends to do the same, take some time to try on each other's clothing items, and swap items with one another. Adding a potluck dinner to the clothing swap is a great way to build community and connect through the essential nature of food and fiber.

Of course, donating your items to secondhand retailers is also an option, and we recommend it over simply throwing away your garments. The higher the quality of the garment, the more likely it will see a second life with consignment shops, Goodwill, and the Salvation Army. But it's important to know that many garments donated to these retailers never make it to their clothing racks. More than half of our donations are currently sent overseas, and many are now **flooding countries** that, in some cases, no longer want these cast-offs. Uganda, Tanzania, and Rwanda have banned all clothing and shoe donations in an effort to support the **African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)**, which aims to enliven regional economies.

Keeping your garments in use for as long as possible is absolutely key to addressing our planet's clothing waste problem. Some brands, including Eileen Fisher and Coyuchi, have innovative programs that allow customers to return their items and give them a second life.

What should I do with my items that are beyond repair?

When you find items that are beyond repair, consider the following options:

Repurpose: Some textiles can be turned into cleaning rags, quilting squares, or even used in DIY projects.

Recycle: Look for textile recycling programs in your area. Some brands and stores offer take-back programs specifically designed to recycle worn-out garments.

Compost: Natural fibers like cotton, wool, and linen can be composted if they are 100% natural and free from synthetic blends, dyes, or treatments.

Donate to specialized organizations: Some organizations accept fabric scraps for use in industrial settings or in making new products.

I don't know much about how to care for my clothes sustainably. How can I learn more?

Garment care accounts for approximately 75%-80% of the carbon footprint of any individual piece of clothing. This is because you typically own a garment for longer than the supply chain that created it. Clothing care has an impact, and there are easy ways to drastically reduce this impact. It starts with clothing choices. Here are some helpful tips:

Choose naturally antimicrobial fibers: Many natural fibers are inherently antimicrobial, thus requiring less water and heat to wash them. (Consider fibers such as wool, hemp, flax, and bamboo.)

Wash with cold water: When you do wash your garments, use cold water and line dry to retain textile longevity and reduce the carbon emissions produced by typical grid energy and propane systems that power hot water and mechanical dryers.

Save energy: Switching from hot to cold water washings can save approximately 1,600 pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere per year per household; that's 34 million tons that could be saved in the United States through broad-scale adoption of cold water washing.

Use eco-friendly detergents: Use fragrance-free, phosphate-free, and biodegradable soaps to eliminate endocrine disruptors in our environment (which are correlated to autoimmune, cancer, and metabolic disorders).

Avoid fabric softeners: Eliminate fabric softeners altogether, and instead use $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of white vinegar during the rinse cycle.

Use wool dryer balls: These balls eliminate the use of polluting disposable dryer sheets and reduce drying time by up to 20%. You'll likely have luck finding them from Fibershed friends and producers, [**including these from Coyuchi**](#).

Harness UV light: Wool, alpaca, cashmere, mohair, and angora do not readily absorb body odor and need little washing. But when they do begin to accumulate odors, you can put protein fibers into direct sunlight for several hours. UV light is a practical tradition for cleaning clothing items that dates back as long as humans have worn these fibers.

The Action Plan

Now that you've taken the time to thoroughly review your wardrobe, it's time to set actionable goals to ensure your clothing aligns with your values. This section will guide you through creating a personalized action plan using SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound). Your action plan will help you make sustainable and values-aligned choices going forward.

Remember that goals are only valuable if they're achievable. We welcome you to dream big but also to stay realistic. Three to five goals at this stage is a great start.

You can use [this worksheet](#) to record your thoughts and ideas.

Step 1: Reflect on Your Audit

Before setting your goals, take a moment to reflect on the insights you gained from your audit and analysis. **Consider the following questions:**

- What did you learn about the materials and brands in your wardrobe?
- What are the key areas for improvement?
- What are your primary fashion-related values (e.g., reducing waste, supporting ethical brands, minimizing plastic use)?

Step 2: Brainstorm Your Goals

Based on your reflections, start brainstorming some broad goals you'd like to achieve. Think about different categories to help organize your thoughts. This is your chance to create a long list without worrying about editing or prioritizing just yet.

Categories to consider:

- Purchase quantity and cadence
- Materials in your clothing
- Brands you'll support
- Caring for your clothes
- Keeping your clothes wearable or usable

Example goal: “Stop buying clothes just because they’re trendy.”

Step 3: Make Your Goals SMART

To ensure your goals are realistic and actionable, refine each one using the SMART criteria. This means making your goals Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

For each goal, consider these prompts:

- **Specific:** What is your specific goal?
- **Measurable:** How will you measure your progress?
- **Achievable:** Is your goal realistic based on your current habits?
- **Relevant:** Why is this goal important to you?
- **Time-bound:** What is your timeline for achieving this goal?

Example Goal: Reducing new clothing purchases

- **Specific:** I will reduce my new clothing purchases.
- **Measurable:** By 50% over the next year.
- **Achievable:** I will buy no more than five new items per season.
- **Relevant:** This goal is important to me because I want to minimize waste and support sustainable fashion.
- **Time-bound:** I will achieve this within one year.

Example Final Goal Statement:

"I will reduce my new clothing purchases by 50% over the next year. Specifically, I will buy no more than five new items per season. This goal is important to me because I want to minimize waste and support sustainable fashion. I will achieve this within one year."

Step 4: Create a Comeback Plan

Habits are tough to change, and forming new habits takes time and repetition. While the current you reading this guide is probably gung-ho about your goals, future you will have encountered myriad distractions that may threaten your focus.

Give yourself a leg up now by creating a simple plan for coming back to this exercise. Will you revisit your goals and progress in a few weeks or a few months? Mark some time on your calendar right now so you won't forget.

Step 5: Create a Checklist to Use Before Purchasing

One goal we're pretty sure isn't in your action plan is "Never buy a garment again." At some point in the future, whether it's next week or next year, you'll either need or want to purchase another item of clothing. But how will you approach this moment in a way that honors the work you've done here?

One technique is creating a checklist customized to your values and ideals. You can review this checklist before deciding whether you're really ready to buy something, and you also can use it as you begin determining what to buy.

To get you started, we've created [this checklist](#) that you can save and edit as you see fit.

"Remember that goals are only valuable if they're achievable. We welcome you to dream big but also to stay realistic."

Thank You

for Joining Fibershed on this Journey!

Congratulations on completing your Sustainable Closet Audit! By taking this journey, you've not only gained a deeper understanding of your existing wardrobe but also equipped yourself with the knowledge and tools to make more informed, values-aligned fashion choices moving forward.

Remember that conscious consumerism is an ongoing journey, not a destination. Continue to educate yourself about sustainable practices, stay curious about new innovations in the fashion industry, and remain committed to making choices that align with your values. Progress is the goal — not perfection. Keep up with ethical and sustainable fashion with Fibershed by signing up for and reading our newsletters and following us on social media.

Don't forget to share your journey and spread the word. Host clothing swaps, start conversations about sustainable fashion within your community, and inspire others to join you in making more conscious choices. Together, we can amplify our impact and drive change within the fashion industry.

