

Sustainable consumer care

Life isn't easy if you're an item of clothing. When not being attacked by the forces of external stains, like coffee, wine, mud and grease, clothes fall victim to internal stains like our own sweat, blood and tears. Clothes are then often over-washed using a cocktail of toxic chemicals and high temperatures and ironed to within one inch of their life. They are over-packed, under-aired and generally under-appreciated as they endure their often unnecessarily short life span following acquisition to abandonment.

But the way that we care for clothes *really* matters. Research reveals that consumers are responsible for a staggering 58% of the negative environmental impacts created by our clothes during our clothes' entire lifespan. This means that consumers have *more* power than the industry to reduce the fashion industry's negative impacts, giving a whole new meaning to 'consumer power'.

Caring for our clothes better, from better washing, drying, hanging and packing, won't just give your wardrobe an environmental halo and keep your clothes in the line of active fashion service for longer. It will also save you money, since many clothes are unnecessarily damaged through inappropriate care that sends clothes to landfill and your money down the drain.

And as any good Doctor will tell you - 'Prevention is better than cure' - and this is no different when it comes to clothing care. So this month, we followed Doctor's orders and we, together with Miele, transformed our Instagram platform into a good clothing care guide to prevent clothing damage and to keep our clothes in our wardrobes (and our cash in our wallets) for longer.

Our top tips to better clothing care:



Wash less

Many of us habitually over-wash our clothes, reaching for the dirty washing basket when we could instead reach for the rail. Surveys indicate that far too many consumers unnecessarily wash after just one use. Washing clothes less uses less energy and water and creates less pollution. Plus washing less causes less fabric damage and saves you time and money.



Wash cooler

Many of us over heat our clothes during washing. An estimated 90% of the energy used for machine-washing is used to heat the water. Instead, lower the temperature to save your bills and reduce your own carbon footprint. Plus, many detergents work well in cooler temperatures so do turn down the heat!



De-stain better

Treat stains better. There are many non-toxic methods of stain-removal, including common favourites bicarbonate of soda, white vinegar and lemon juice, which can lift stains effectively.



Air dry

Tumble-drying your clothes uses vast amounts of energy. Instead, air dry your clothes to reduce your energy consumption and bills.



Dose down

Many people over-dose their washing machines with chemically laden detergents in a wasted effort to clean their clothes. If you correctly dose your detergent, you will save money and reduce water pollution.



Dose naturally

Choose a more ecologically friendly detergent to prevent polluting water. Many conventional detergents include optical brighteners, bleach and phenols that may be damaging to human health and the environment.



Avoid dry cleaning

Dry cleaning uses a toxic cocktail of chemicals that will leave your clothes gasping to get home. Surveys suggest that around 90% of a typical wardrobe's content can be machine-washed at home. So, don't always believe your clothing's labels, but of course exercise some caution.

Our top tips in action

Here our friends from Hong Kong, London and Stockholm revealed their inner consumer care expertise and shared with us how they care for their clothes better.



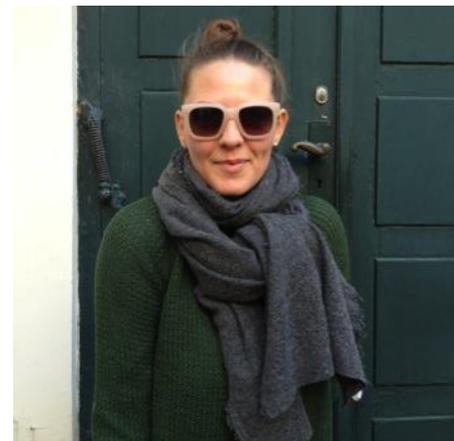
On day 256, Christina revealed her remarkable salvage of this secondhand Herve Leger white dress, which had been discarded most likely because of its faint yellow stains. Christina used bicarbonate of soda, some very gentle elbow grease and 30 minutes of her time to put the appeal back into this dress.



On day 249, Becky shared her childhood-developed leather shoe cleaning habits. 'When I was young, my dad strictly ensured that I cleaned, scrubbed and polished my leather shoes fortnightly. Back then it felt like a chore, but today it's a habit that I've retained and now my leather shoes look and work well for longer'.



On day 247, Redress' Hannah shared her hand washing habit for silk. 'Many of my silk clothes' labels instruct me to dry clean only. But knowing how polluting (and expensive) this is, I instead carefully hand wash my silks in cool water and then hang them to dry. This may be a bit nerve-wracking the first time, but the clothes always come out fine!'



On day 262, Rigitze from online sustainable fashion boutique, River and Raven, informed us that 'Wool is self-cleaning so you can air your knitwear outside for a few hours to refresh. For stains, simply spot treat stains using your own natural shampoo. Then, just rinse with cold water.'



On day 259, Christina wore her favourite jeans that she's now not washing for one year in both an experimental effort and a stance against over machine washing. She was inspired by Levis' CEO, Chip Bergh who is also forgoing washing for one year in favour of lowering water use. In Levis' own words 'Dirty is the new Clean!'



On day 273, Miele stepped in to save some luxury items from landfill by washing delicate items and treating garments' stains from our Hong Kong clothing collection.

Next up... [Shop Smart](#)

In October, we will be turning to shopping and styling experts to learn smart shopping tips, which will leave you buying the best clothes without causing clothing wastage. Join the challenge by #GetRedressed on [Instagram](#).