



REDRESS

GET REDRESSED MONTH FACT SHEET

This is a selection of external facts and statistics to support why we need to reimagine our clothes rather than throwing them away. Get Redressed Month encourages everyone to revive, restyle, rewear, and repurpose clothes to make them last longer. With a small change to how we view our clothes, we can make a big difference in reducing fashion waste and the impact our wardrobes have on the environment.

Clothing Consumption, Usage and Disposal Habits in Hong Kong¹

11% of Hong Kongers' monthly expenditure is spent on clothing, more than health and education.

With over half of Hong Kongers stating that discounts are a key purchase trigger.

31% of Hong Kongers already own "secondhand" clothing,

- with 1 in 7 (14%) of Hong Kongers owning clothing that they bought secondhand; and
- 1 in 5 (22%) Hong Kongers owning clothing that has been passed down by someone.

Almost one third of clothing in Hong Kongers' wardrobes is never or rarely worn.

Impulse buying and purchasing clothing items of the wrong style are some of the key reasons for unused clothing items.

- Wrong style (67%), impulse buying (67%), forgot I had it (62%), wrong size (59%), hasn't been an occasion to wear it again (51%), I bought it for a one-off occasion (48%), bought online and didn't bother to return it even though I didn't like it (38%) **Respondents selected multiple answers therefore total not equal to 100%*

The average age of the oldest item of clothing in Hong Kongers' wardrobes is 6 years, with 33% of Hong Kongers still keeping clothes they have owned for more than 10 years.

Two in five (38%) Hong Kongers only keep clothes for one year or less.

The various ways that Hong Kongers dispose of their clothes:

- 30% of Hong Kongers throw unwanted clothing in the bin
- 61% of the Hong Kong public claim that they give away unwanted clothes to organisations who can recycle the items
- 48% of the Hong Kong public claim that they donate unwanted clothes to charity
- 31% Hong Kongers pass-down unwanted clothes to relatives/friends/family members/helpers
- 12% Hong Kongers resell unwanted clothes (online/offline) **Respondents selected multiple answers therefore total not equal to 100%.*

Two out of three Hong Kongers changed their clothing consumption behaviours because of COVID-19.

- When asked why they would continue those habits:
 - 53% said they realised they have enough clothes
 - 30% said they realised their changed habits have an impact on the environment
 - 25% said they realised that their changed habits were better **Respondents selected multiple answers therefore total not equal to 100%*

¹ The data is based on the "Clothing Consumption, Usage, and Disposal Habits in Hong Kong Study" commissioned by Redress and conducted by Edelman Intelligence amongst n=1000 general public in Hong Kong, August 28-September 1, 2020.



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- Of the people who changed their habits:
 - Purchasing new clothing became less of a priority
 - People became more practical about the kinds of clothes they bought
 - People tended to care less about what to wear because they were going out less
 - And tended to wash and re-wear the same clothes

Environmental Impact of Clothes

The fashion industry, including the production of all clothes which people wear, contributes to around 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions due to its long supply chains and energy intensive production. The industry consumes more energy than the aviation and shipping industry combined.²

More than 150 million trees are logged every year and turned into cellulosic fabric – if placed end to end those trees would circle the earth seven times.³

(Globally) The fashion industry is projected to use 35% more land for fibre production by 2030 - an extra 115 million hectares that could be used to grow crops for an increasing population or preserve forests to store carbon.⁴

The production of 1 kilogram of cotton garments uses up to 3 kilograms of chemicals.⁵

It takes 2720 litres of water to make a t-shirt.⁶

Each year, around half a million tonnes of plastic microfibres, which is equivalent to more than 50 billion plastic bottles, are estimated to be released into the ocean as a result of washing textiles.⁷

Washing every 10 times a product is worn instead of every 2 times reduces energy use, climate change impact, and water intake by up to 80%.⁸

Global Clothing Production, Consumption and Utilisation

The number of garments produced annually has doubled since 2000 and exceeded 100 billion for the first time in 2014: nearly 14 items of clothing for every person on earth. The average consumer now buys 60 percent more clothing items a year and keeps them for about half as long as they did about 15 years ago.⁹

Fashion industry is one of the world's largest consumer industries, generating €1.5 trillion in the year of 2016 and employs around 60 million people, with 26 million employed upstream (earlier stages of the business).¹⁰

Nearly 67% of the world's clothing exports and 57% of the world's textile exports are produced in developing countries.¹¹

² UNFCCC (2019), UN Helps Fashion Industry Shift to Low Carbon <https://unfccc.int/news/un-helps-fashion-industry-shift-to-low-carbon>

³ Canopy (2020), Survival. A Plan for Saving Forests and Climate: A Pulp Thriller.

⁴ Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, Inc. (2017), Pulse of the Fashion Industry

⁵ KEMI (2014), Chemicals in textiles: Risks to human health and the environment

⁶ Fashion Revolution (2020), Water Ways www.fashionrevolution.org/water-ways (Original source: Chapagain, A., Hoekstra, A., Savenije, H. and Gautam, R. (2006), The water footprint of cotton consumption: An assessment of the impact of worldwide consumption of cotton products on the water resources in the cotton producing countries)

⁷ Ellen Macarthur Foundation (2017), A New Textiles Economy: Redesigning Fashion's Future

⁸ Levi Strauss & Co. (2015), THE LIFE CYCLE Understanding the environmental impact of a pair of Levi's ® 501® jeans

⁹ McKinsey Company (2016), Style that's sustainable: A new fast-fashion formula

¹⁰ Global Fashion Group & The Boston Consulting Group (2017), Pulse of The Fashion Industry.



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A generic \$14 polo shirt sold in Canada and made in Bangladesh actually costs a retailer only \$5.67. To get prices that low, workers see just 12 cents a shirt, or two per cent of the wholesale cost.¹²

16% of all the clothes owned by Hong Kong residents or around HK\$3.9 billion worth of purchased clothes have never or seldom worn with the assumption of each cloth worth HK\$100.¹³

Clothing and Textile Waste

Every second, the equivalent of one garbage truck of textiles is landfilled or burned. (Based on an average density of 150kg/m³ for a bale of textiles and a volume of 17.5m³ of a garbage truck).¹⁴

On average, 392 tonnes of textiles were discarded every day into Hong Kong Landfills in 2018 (of which about 50% of the waste was clothing items).¹⁵

In Hong Kong we throw away the equivalent of 1.3 million t-shirts every day.¹⁶

When will your clothes decompose?

- Cotton 1-5 months
- Polyester 200+ years
- Nylon 30-40 years
- Leather 30-40 years
- Wool 1-5 years¹⁷

About 95% of the textiles that are landfilled each year could be reused or recycled.¹⁸

Benefits of Clothing and Textile Reuse

If the number of times a garment is worn were doubled on average, greenhouse gas emissions would be 44% lower.¹⁹

If everyone bought one used item instead of new this year, we would save:

- 5.7B lbs of CO₂ emissions (equivalent to half a million cars taken off the road for a year)
- 11B kWh of energy (equivalent to light up the Eiffel Tower for 141 years)
- 25B gallons of water (equivalent to fill up 1,140 Bellagio fountains)
- 449M lbs of waste (equivalent to the weight of 1M polar bears)²⁰

¹¹ The World Trade Organization (2014), The World Trade Organization International Trade Statistics 2014.

¹² Westwood, R., (2013, May 1). What does that \$14 shirt really cost? www.macleans.ca/economy/business/what-does-that-14-shirt-really-cost/

¹³ Greenpeace (2016), Press Release - Greenpeace Releases Hong Kong and Taiwan Consumer Report; Billions of Dollars of Clothing Hangs Unworn in Wardrobes

¹⁴ Ellen Macarthur Foundation (2017), A New Textiles Economy: Redesigning Fashion's Future

¹⁵ Hong Kong SAR, Hong Kong Environmental Protection Department (2019), Monitoring of Solid Waste in Hong Kong - Waste Statistics for 2018

¹⁶ This estimation was based on the average weight of a t-shirt at 150g into the approximation of 196 tonnes of clothing discarded every day into Hong Kong Landfills, and the estimation of 50% of the 392 tonnes of discarded textiles were clothing was provided by Hong Kong Environmental Protection Department.

¹⁷ W24 (2018), Fashion Waste: this is how long it takes your clothes to decompose

¹⁸ Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles Association (n.d.), Press Kit Online, www.smartasn.org/SMARTASN/assets/File/resources/SMART_PressKitOnline.pdf

¹⁹ Ellen Macarthur Foundation (2017), A New Textiles Economy: Redesigning Fashion's Future

²⁰ thredUP (2019), 2019 Fashion Resale Market and Trend Report