



twyg.

Guide



to

slow



fashion



“The times
are urgent,
let us slow
down.”

- Bayo Akomolafe

Fashion wasn't always like this. Before the industrial revolution, people took the time to make their own clothes or if they could afford it, they had clothes made by a tailor or dressmaker. With the industrial revolution came ready-to-wear, followed by brands which disrupted business-as-usual with a new, fast fashion system.

How did they do this? Well, by paying poor wages, along with using fossil fuel-based synthetic materials that are cheaper, adaptable, and more widely available than natural materials this fast fashion model is possible.

Slow fashion aims to counter fast fashion. It has a healing impact on the environment and on those who make our clothes. In a slow fashion culture, consumers, businesses and governments value the earth and people's well-being. Slow fashion acknowledges that there are a multiplicity of ways to build a better fashion system. It nurtures localised ecosystems of fashion designers, organisations, artisans, and changemakers. Fashion academic Kate Fletcher says slow fashion is "a different approach in which designers, buyers, retailers, and consumers are more aware of the impacts of products on workers, communities, and ecosystems."

Slow fashion is a mindset. Join our movement!

Clothes are not simply cloth. Besides, protecting our bodies from the sun, wind, rain and cold, clothes carry meaning, identity and expression.

Sadly, over the last few decades, the speed of production and the greed of industry leaders have changed the nature of fashion. It has become a significant contributor to global warming, loss of biodiversity, pollution and labour rights' violations.

Clothing production has doubled in the last 15 years while utilisation has decreased by 36%. Over the last 20 years, synthetic fibres have grown from below 20% to 62% of global fibre production. Textiles are estimated to account for approximately 9% of annual microplastic losses to the oceans. Fast fashion brands offer up to 24 new clothing collections per year. Now an ultra-fast fashion brand is making these brands look expensive and slow.

Fast fashion

Slow fashion

Quantity

Quality

Cheap

Price commensurate with cost of fair labour and with sustainable design and manufacturing practices

Mass production for maximum profit

Small batch production and pre-order models to avoid waste

Driven by synthetic fabrics (mostly derived from fossil fuels)

Natural, deadstock and recycled fabric preferred

Unsound labour practices

Workers are paid living wages and work in safe environments

Promotes a throwaway culture

Promotes reuse, repair, restyle, rent and recycle

Drives mass culture

Diverse, inclusive and celebrates personal identities and different cultures

Complicated, opaque globalised supply chains

Uncomplicated supply chains, which are easier to trace

Damages the environment, pollutes freshwater and uses harmful chemicals

Respects the environment using low-waste processes and avoids harmful chemicals

“Buy less, choose well, make it last”

- Dame Vivienne Westwood

‘Buy less, buy better’ check list

Do I really need this piece?

Is this piece comfortable enough to wear again and again?

Can I style this piece with clothing I already have?

Is this piece my style? Or am I buying it because it’s on trend?

Do I like the fabric?

Do I feel good about supporting this maker, brand, or seller?

Does it feel good-quality enough to last me many wears?

[Definition]

Slow fashion is resource-efficient and renewable resources-based, producing non-toxic, high quality and affordable clothing services and products, while providing safe and secure livelihoods. To achieve such an industry will require a shift in business model towards more circular, informed consumers and fair, transparent and traceable value chains.

Implicit in the definition of [slow fashion] is that it must operate within planetary boundaries, and that consumption cannot go unchecked, regardless of how efficient and circular the system is able to become. (UNEP, 2020, 45)

What you can do:

Try a 'no new clothes' challenge

Challenge yourself to not buy anything new for a set amount of time. Some people do it for a year, but it could also be shorter. By removing yourself from the endless cycle of consumption that defines the fast fashion industry, you can take a step back and heal your relationship with fashion.

Shop your closet

You know the saying: The most sustainable garments are the ones you already own, including old fast fashion pieces. Find ways to love them, wear them, mend them, and make them last as long as you possibly can. This also helps you gain a deeper understanding of your personal style.

Be a proud outfit repeater

Despite what social media will have us believe, it's perfectly acceptable to repeat outfits – as often as you like! We don't need to wear a new outfit to feel and look good. Follow these fun hashtags #proudfitrepeater, #rewearethat, and #reweardontcare.

Swap before you shop

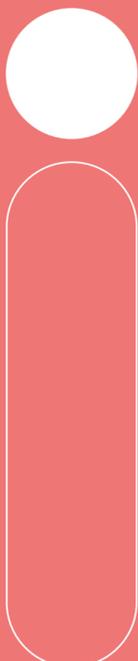
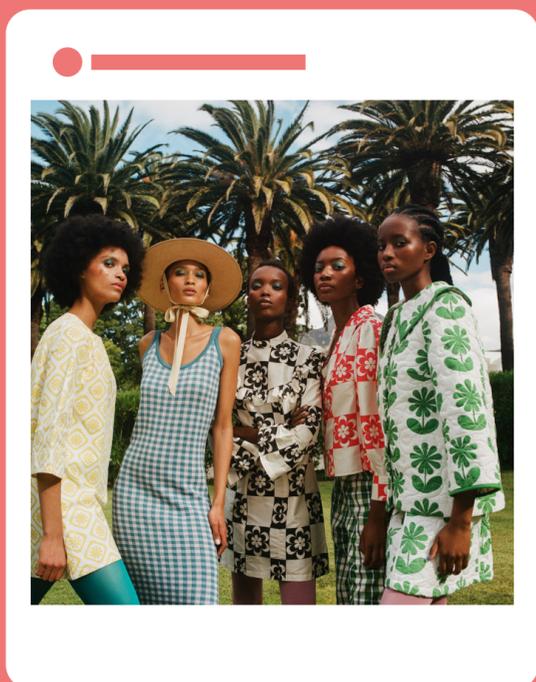
Swapping allows you to switch up your wardrobe without buying anything new, and it's usually very cost-effective. If you are based in Cape Town, join Twyg's monthly Swap&Mend at NUDE FOODS. Follow @twygmag for updates.

Take care of your clothing, sustainably

Take the time to read the care labels on your clothing. And adjust your clothing care routine so that it is as sustainable as possible. This includes washing your clothes less often, at lower temperatures, and try to use eco-friendly detergents. Check out this [guide on how to make your loved clothes last](#).

How to spot a slow fashion brand

- Limited, small-batch collections: While fast fashion brands churn out countless new clothes weekly or even daily, slow fashion brands release just a few collections each year in small, intentional batches.
- Mindful marketing: Fast fashion brands push you to buy more and more. Slow fashion brands promote mindful purchasing habits.
- Timeless, trans-seasonal designs: Fast fashion thrives on endless trend cycles, which feeds into the idea that clothing is only meant to be worn a few times before it becomes “unfashionable”. Instead of chasing trends, slow fashion brands create garments that can be worn across seasons, year after year.
- Designed to last: To counter fast fashion’s disposability, slow fashion brands create high-quality clothing that is designed to last.
- Material matters: Slow fashion brands often work with low-impact materials, such as organic cotton, hemp, recycled fibres, or industry waste.
- Ethical production: Part of slowing down means being able to create safe working conditions for all people within the fashion supply chain and paying fair wages.
- Eco-conscious: From packaging to material choices and limiting waste, slow fashion brands try to keep their environmental impact to a minimum.
- Transparent and traceable supply chains: While fast fashion’s global supply chains are opaque and hide the harsh reality of exploitation and extraction, slow fashion is made in smaller workshops or facilities in transparent supply chains. And if you are unsure, you can always DM or email a brand to ask.



Support local

South Africa has incredible small fashion brands and businesses actively prioritising ethics and applying eco-conscious practices. Because of their size, these brands can be more transparent about their supply chains.

Local slow fashion brands

OCCASION

- Lara Klawikowski [Browse here](#)
- VIVIERS Studio [Browse here](#)
- Fikile Zamagcino Sokhulu [Browse here](#)
- MMUSOMAXWELL [Browse here](#)
- Lukhanyo Mdingi [Browse here](#)
- Sindiso Khumalo [Browse here](#)
- UNI FORM [Browse here](#)
- THE BAM COLLECTIVE [Browse here](#)
- ERRE Fashion [Browse here](#)
- DAISIE JO [Browse here](#)
- Kat Van Duinen [Browse here](#)
- MAXHOSA Africa [Browse here](#)

EVERYDAY

- FIELDS [Browse here](#)
- W35T [Browse here](#)
- Droomer [Browse here](#)
- U Be You [Browse here](#)

