

Blue Jean Blues



Blue jeans are the most popular item of clothing in the U.S. and probably in the world. We love them for their comfort, versatility and style. If you ardently believe “Nothing comes between me and my Calvins” you may want to stop reading this here. Most of us think that the plastics we throw away and the gas fueled cars we drive are the prime culprits in our climate crises. It turns out though, that the production of denim is one of the worst planet offenders.

Consider this, growing and processing cotton, “the fabric of our lives” requires:

- A whopping 660 gallons of water per 2.2 lbs of cotton
- A 16 percent portion of all pesticides which endanger workers and residents
- A toxic amount of synthetic dyes and bleach which end up polluting our rivers and drinking water

Read a full account on the impact of blue jean manufacture on the environment in Tatiana Schlossberg’s excellent [report](#) for The National Resource Defense Council.

It’s not all doom and gloom for our favorite garment. There are actions we can take to mitigate the toll their manufacture takes on the environment. According to Schlossberg we should:

- Avoid overconsumption. Wear the denim you have as long as possible.
- Forgo “fast fashion,” -cheaply made, trendy clothing manufactured to last only a season or two and end up in landfills.
- Mend your jeans instead of tossing them.
- Shop for jeans at thrift and consignment shops to extend their life and lower their carbon footprint.
- When buying new, opt for durable items that will last years and not months.

Schlossberg has written a book called *Inconspicuous Consumption...the environmental impact you don't know you have*. It’s a great title. It implies that with awareness and a mindful approach to what and how much we buy, we have a chance to make a difference.