

Fashion is essential in everyday life, whether it is to express yourself, look smart or even have a laugh and mess around with friends. Fashion can invoke many emotions both positive and negative as well as everything in between. Sustainability is a widely talked about topic but not talked about enough. Sustainability is the avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance. With that in mind, have you ever wondered how sustainable your clothes are?

To make just one cotton t-shirt, it takes 2,700 litres of water. Yes, the world is 70% water but once the water is used it becomes polluted and then it can harm our oceans and rivers. If the water gets purified, where does the waste go? To make a pair of jeans, it takes 3,781 litres of water. In the UK, 70 million pairs of jeans are sold a year. That is 264,670 million litres of water used just to make jeans that are sold in a year. Worldwide, 2 billion pairs of jeans are sold a year. That means 7,562 billion litres of water is used for jeans!

There are many ways of making your clothes that little bit more sustainable other than giving to charity or buying second-hand. If you find a hole in one of your items of clothing, why not try the Japanese method of Sashiko mending? Sashiko (刺し子) is a form of needlework developed in Japan a couple of centuries ago. You don't even need to be good at sewing, you just need to be able to do a basic running stitch. Not only does it strengthen the item of clothing but makes it unique. You can even try and make different designs and patterns to make it truly one of a kind. This technique draws attention to the hole and makes it part of the clothing.



Mending a hole isn't the only way you can renew your old clothes. If you don't like the colour you can change it but not in the normal way, in a natural way. You can use anything for natural dyeing. For example:

- Turmeric = yellow
- Onion peel = brown
- Avocado stones = pink
- Black beans = blue
- Red cabbage = purple
- Spinach = green

There is nothing to say that you cannot mix red cabbage with avocado stones to create a new colour! Try it with flowers, leaves, carrot peel, or anything.

How To:

1. Boil a pot of water
2. Add your natural dye and stir for 2 or 3 minutes
3. Add your fabric and stir for 5 minutes
4. Leave the fabric in the dye for a minimum of 1 hour stirring it occasionally (the longer you leave it, the richer the colour will be)
5. Once you are happy with the colour, rinse off your fabric until the water runs clear and dry.

Another way you can do up your old clothes is with natural printing, but not as you would think. The natural printing you may be thinking of is painting a leaf with fabric paint, not this type. Natural

printing provides a unique pattern and unique colours. To do this technique you will need iron mordant (you can make this at home). You will also need leaves, fabric (plain is best), a rolling pin, a sheet of plastic (best use one you can use again) and a steamer (a vegetable steamer works just as well)

How To:

- Paint the vein side of your leaf or your fabric with the iron mordant. This will give you different effects.
- Place your leaf vein side down on your fabric, this way you will be able to see a more defined image.
- Once you are happy with the way you have laid out your leaves, place the plastic over the top and roll tightly around the rolling pin making sure your leaves are on the inside. Secure in place with elastic bands.
- Put in the steamer for about an hour and once done, undo the bands and unroll. You can then leave it to dry.

You should be able to see the definition of the leaves. Here are some that I did myself:



I hope this has helped you find some new ways of decorating and finding a new love for your clothes.