

# REWIND SERIES EPISODE TWO, FASHION.

**Finding the brakes—in episode two we discuss fast fashion’s damaging impact on the environment and what we can do to slow it down.**

**The clothing industry is responsible for more greenhouse gas emissions than the shipping and aviation industries combined, and these emissions are increasing year on year. The fast fashion model – the marketing of cheaply made garments designed to be worn on only a few occasions then discarded and replaced—is a major contributor to this.**

To reverse this trend, the fashion industry needs to re-evaluate what it uses and how it works. By returning to traditional skills, making use of the

natural materials we already have, such as leather, and embracing new technologies that have clear environmental benefits, we can produce clothes and accessories that are designed from the outset to last, to be repaired and to be passed on.

By using these natural materials, we prevent the production of plastic-based alternatives made from petrochemicals. We also reduce the volume of production by providing long-lasting goods that rarely need to be replaced.

## AVOIDING WASTE, AVOIDING EMISSIONS, AVOIDING PLASTIC PRODUCTION

**“AN ESTIMATED 300 MILLION HIDES COME FROM THE GLOBAL MEAT AND DAIRY INDUSTRIES EVERY YEAR. JUST 60% IS USED FOR LEATHER. 40% ENDS UP IN LANDFILL.”**

Source: [Leather & Hide Council of America](#)

**REAL  
LEATHER.  
STAY  
DIFFERENT.**

“The disposal of these hides produces more than three billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.”

Source: [Leather & Hide Council of America](#)

This waste of worldwide resources results in significant greenhouse gas emissions from landfill. It also means plastics made from petrochemicals are produced needlessly to make products that could be made from leather. These products shed microplastics that pollute our oceans, the food we eat and the water we drink.

“Around 85% of all textiles thrown away in the US – roughly 13 million tonnes in 2017 – are either dumped into landfill or burned”

Source: [United States Environmental Protection Agency](#)

“Annual waste, worldwide, is expected to increase by more than 50% by 2050.”

Source: [The World Bank](#)

“Over 14 million tonnes of microplastics have accumulated on the world’s ocean floor. The amounts are increasing every year – causing harm to ecosystems, animals and people.”

Source: [European environment agency](#)

This level of waste is simply unsustainable. By using more cowhides, we will cut the use of landfill and incineration—not just of cowhides, but of the products made of alternatives that have shorter lives.

## REUSE, RECYCLE AND REPURPOSE

**“90 % OF PEOPLE SAY THEY  
SELL, RECYCLE OR GIVE  
AWAY THEIR LEATHER  
GOODS WHEN THEY HAVE  
FINISHED WITH THEM”**

Source: [Sketchbook Benchmark Survey 2021](#)

Clothes and accessories produced under the fast fashion model are rarely durable enough to be passed on or repurposed and when they are disposed of, they are almost never recycled.

“After the automotive and tech industries, clothing production is the third largest manufacturing industry contributing more to climate change than shipping and aviation combined.”

Source: [House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee](#)

“More than 100 billion items of clothing are produced every year. That is 14 for every person on earth.”

Source: [McKinsey and Company](#)

“The average US citizen throws away more than 35 kilos of clothes every year”

Source: [United States Environmental Protection Agency](#)

Cheaply made clothes and accessories generate greenhouse gases both during production and after they are discarded to landfill. If we cut down on production, we reduce emissions at start AND end of life.

“Leather cannot be matched for durability, tested against alternatives none matched for tensile and tear strength”

Source: [FILK Freiberg Institute](#)

Leather is not only long lasting, it is easy to repair and grows more attractive with age. This makes it easier to repurpose and enhances its second-hand appeal, meaning it is far less likely to be discarded than alternatives.

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**MORE THAN EIGHT BILLION TONNES OF PLASTIC HAS BEEN PRODUCED OVER THE LAST 70 YEARS. NONE OF IT HAS BIODEGRADED YET**

Source: [Plastic Soup foundation](#)

Plastics take up to 500 years to biodegrade. While we wait for that, they occupy massive amounts of landfill and shed harmful micro-plastics that pollute the environment and reach even the remotest parts of our oceans.

“69% of all clothes produced are made from synthetic material”

Source: [Changing Markets Foundation](#)

“The use of synthetic materials in clothes production is expected to increase to 75% by 2030”

Source: [Plastic Soup Foundation](#)

“Nearly 70 million barrels of oil are used each year to make polyester.”

Source: [Forbes](#)

Unless we take urgent action to stop fast fashion, the problems will get worse year by year. More clothes and accessories will be made and an even higher proportion of them will be made from oil-derived synthetics. And the vast majority of them are destined for landfill or incineration.

“When finally disposed of, leather biodegrades in less than 50 years.”

Source: [Authenticae](#)

Natural materials cause much less harm at end of life than synthetics. Leather lasts longer than alternatives and it is disposed of after much more use. Even when it is finally discarded, it decomposes naturally and quickly.

If you found this of interest, keep an eye out for additional factsheets supporting the remaining episodes 'Food' and 'The Future' - to be released each week via [chooserealleather.com](http://chooserealleather.com)

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