



LIVING THE LIFECYCLE

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When we think of recycling, we think of the fundamental forms we use within our own homes. After finishing the water bottle, we throw it into the green bin to be taken to a factory to be recycled once again.

The Rundown

TEXTILE RECYCLING TAKES OLD GARMENTS AND MAKES THEM INTO A NEW TEXTILE THAT CAN BE USED TO MAKE THEM INTO NEW CLOTHING, FURNITURE, OR ACCESSORIES. TEXTILE RECYCLING HAS BEEN AROUND FOR A LONG TIME, BUT IN 2017 ONLY 15.2 PERCENT OF TEXTILES WERE RECYCLED EACH YEAR COMPARED TO 11.2 MILLION TONS OF MATERIALS BEING THROWN AWAY EACH YEAR. THE HIGH PERCENTAGE OF THE WASTE IS DUE TO CONSUMER CULTURE: PEOPLE ARE BEGINNING TO PURCHASE NEW ITEMS INSTEAD OF REPURPOSING THEIR OLD ONES. THEREFORE, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO FIND A NEW METHOD FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING FOR THIS TYPE OF LIFESTYLE. EVEN THOUGH NATURAL MATERIALS CAN ONLY BE RECYCLED, THIS PROCESS NEEDS TO BECOME A NEW CUSTOM IN OUR DAY-TO-DAY LIVES.



Background Check

RECYCLING TEXTILES HAS BEEN AROUND FOR MORE THAN 200 YEARS IN CHINA THROUGH SHREDDING AND HAND CARDING FOR MAKING YARNS (DITZEL). TEXTILE RECYCLING HAS BEEN A CUSTOM IN MANY DIFFERENT DYNASTIES THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES, BUT IT HAS BECOME A CUSTOM THAT HAS BEGUN TO FALL SHORT. THE ARTICLE, "THE RECYCLABILITY OF GARMENTS: WHICH CLOTHES CAN BE RECYCLED," BY OLGA DITZEL STATES, "DURING THE NAPOLEONIC WAR, A SHORTAGE OF WOOL FOR MILITARY UNIFORMS ADVANCED THE NEED FOR RECYCLING POST-CONSUMER FIBERS" (DITZEL). THEY WOULD RECYCLE THESE WOOL PRODUCTS AND BLEND OLD AND NEW WOOL TO CREATE NEW UNIFORMS. UNFORTUNATELY, WE DON'T SEE MANY PRODUCTS BEING RECYCLED INTO NEW ONES: LESS THAN 13% OF TOTAL TEXTILES ARE RECYCLED INTO NEW CLOTHING ITEMS. NOW, WE ASK THE QUESTION OF WHY THIS HAS CHANGED? WHAT ARE COMPANIES DOING NOW TO FIX THIS PROBLEM?



FabScrap ; Saving one garment at a time

ONE COMPANY DEDICATED TO FIXING THIS ISSUE OF TEXTILE WASTE AND RECYCLABILITY IS FABSCRAP. THEY ARE A COMPANY THAT TAKES OLD CLOTHING AND TEXTILE SCRAPS TO MAKE NEW SHEETS OF FABRIC FOR MANUFACTURING OR HOME USE. THEY ARE CURRENTLY BASED IN BROOKLYN, NY, AND PHILADELPHIA, PA. NOW, THEY ONLY RECYCLE COTTON, WOOL, AND POLYESTER FIBERS BUT ARE LOOKING FOR NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND FORMS TO EXPAND.

THEY COLLECT THEIR MATERIALS THROUGH DONATIONS AND SEPARATE THE MATERIALS THROUGH A BAGGING SYSTEM. ONE BAG IS BLACK ONLY USED FOR MATERIALS WITH PATTERNS OR LOGOS, AND THEY WILL TURN THIS MATERIAL INTO INSULATION, CARPET PADDING, FURNITURE LINING, AND MOVING BLANKETS. THE BROWN BAGS CONSIST OF EVERYTHING ELSE AND WILL MAKE NEW SHEET FABRIC. EACH BAG HOLDS ABOUT 40-50 POUNDS OF FABRIC SORTED AND DISTRIBUTED ACCORDINGLY.

THEY ARE COMBATING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF CHEMICALS WITHIN LANDFILLS. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY ARE CUTTING THE CO₂ ASSOCIATED WITH THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY'S WASTE PRODUCTION. ALSO, THEY ARE TRYING TO REMOVE THE DYES AND CHEMICALS FROM THE CLOTHING THAT CONTAMINATES LOCAL WATER SYSTEMS THAT IMPACT HUMANS.

FINALLY, IN 2020 THEY HAD COLLECTED 176,942 LBS OF TEXTILE WASTE, SAVING 1,291 TONS FROM CO₂, AND PLANTING 19,365 TREES. FABSCRAP IS JUST A COMPANY CREATED TO MAKE A MORE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN OUR ENVIRONMENT AND THE LIVES AROUND US. IF INTERESTED IN HELPING MAKE A DIFFERENCE REACH OUT TO FABSCRAP.ORG.

The Future Of Recycling

IT IS CRUCIAL FOR COMPANIES AND BRANDS TO COLLABORATE AND PARTNER WITH EACH OTHER REGARDING TEXTILE RECYCLING. A LOT OF BRANDS SUCH AS LEVI'S, REFORMATION, PATAGONIA, AND MORE PARTNER WITH COMPANIES THAT RECYCLE THEIR DISCARDED TEXTILES INTO SOMETHING NEW. FABSCRAP IS JUST ONE OF MANY COMPANIES THAT USE THEIR FACILITIES TO HELP BRANDS REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF WASTE THAT THEY PRODUCE.

TEXTILE RECYCLING WILL BE A PREVALENT PART OF OUR FUTURE BECAUSE OF HOW THE PROCESS IMPACTS OUR LIVES AND ENVIRONMENT. WITH GROWING PARTNERSHIPS AS WELL AS AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE THAT ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE PROCESS OF RECYCLING, THERE WILL BE A NOTICEABLE DIFFERENCE IN THE AMOUNT OF TEXTILE WASTE BEING EMITTED. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE FIND PROCESSES THAT RECYCLE ALL FORMS OF FIBERS TO CREATE THE MOST EFFECTIVE FORM OF RECYCLING. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR CONSUMERS TO BE EDUCATED ON TEXTILE RECYCLING BECAUSE THEY CAN DO THEIR PART ACCORDINGLY AND BE A PART OF BETTERING THE ENVIRONMENT.

