

Activewear Saving the Planet: Recycled Plastic



The Ocean Cleanup

80,000 tonnes of plastic float in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch which is equivalent to 500 jumbo jets, (The Ocean Cleanup, 2020).

As sustainability continues to be the topic of discussion and activewear is prevailing as a popular trend of 2020, the use of recycled plastic in creating these garments has propelled. Consumers are becoming more and more conscious in their buying choices because the climate crisis and ethical challenges inherent in the fashion industry have reached a critical point, the challenge is to find approaches that support behavioural change, (Gwilt, A, Payne, A and Ruthschilling E.A, 2019).

Recycling

A move towards innovative fabrics has seen many brands such as Adidas, Prada and Nike pledge to reduce and even cut out all use of virgin plastic by the end of this decade. Designers and Suppliers are shifting their research and development into circular systems, creating products from recycled plastic as the impact of materials comes under greater scrutiny. The climate crisis is driving a transformation in the fashion industry, (Palmer, H 2019).



Nike Grind post-consumer rubber material



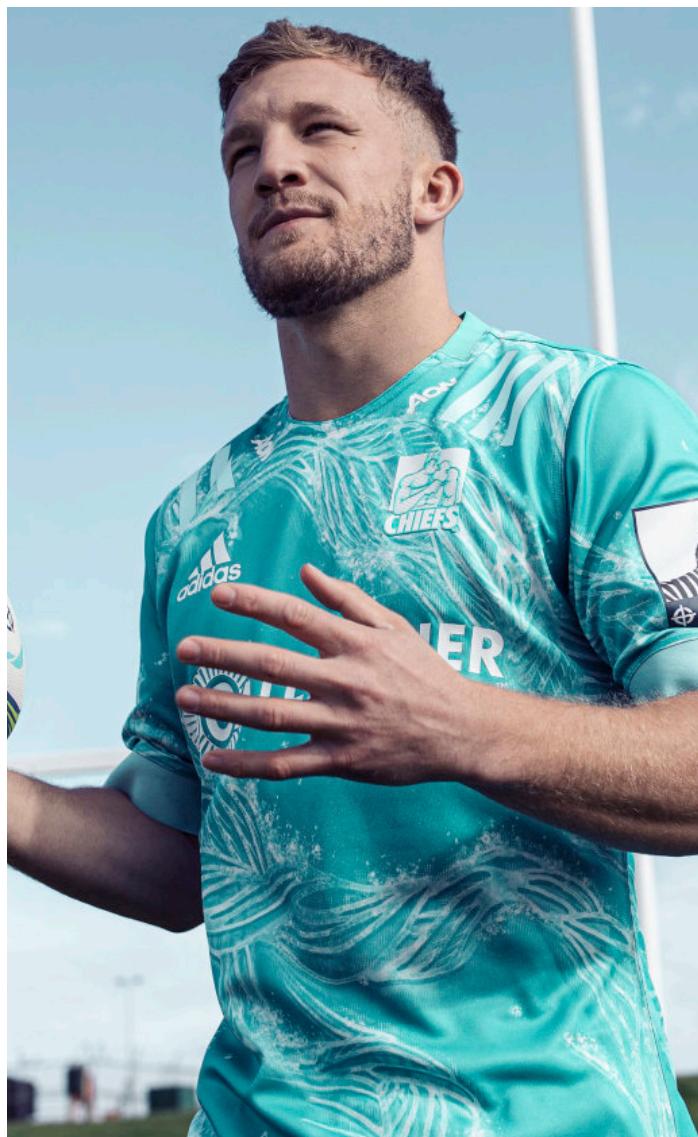
The Oceans: Death by Plastic

Recycling plastic has become more important than ever due to the fact that plastic doesn't break down. It merely breaks up into smaller pieces which means all the plastic that has ever been created is still on the planet, (Adidas, 2019). Rubbish in the oceans causes multiple problems for sea life; fish often mistake the plastic for food, plastic in the oceans are toxic for sea surface feeders and fishing nets account for 46% of the mass in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and they can be dangerous for animals who swim or collide into them and cannot extract themselves from the net, (The Ocean Cleanup, 2020).

Current

Adidas has a long track record in sustainability. Adidas x Parley focuses on using marine plastic waste as a raw material. Nautical themes with tech-infused shades of aqua, orange and green are seen throughout the collection. The first concept shoe, unveiled in 2015, reflects the aquatic tones found in the ocean, created from waste fishing nets. Adidas x Parley products have been on the market since 2016 and have since made over 15 million pairs of shoes made from recycled marine waste. The collaboration is working hard to eliminate the use of virgin polyester in their products by 2024, (Adidas, 2019).

Industry leader in recycling waste, Nike, offers excellent durability and versatility in their federation kits, the uniforms used in the Russia 2018 FIFA world cup. 75% of all Nike products now contain some recycled material. Since 2012, Nike has diverted 5 billion plastic bottles from landfills. 12 to 18 plastic bottles are used in Nike's Fast Fit Vapporknit kits and Nike's Match jerseys, (Nike 2018). Expect performance focused fabrics with a lower impact on the environment as plastic bottles are melted down and extruded into the high-quality yarn.



In Industry, designers and brands from Prada, The North Face and Columbia to Wolf & Whistle are developing high-tech fabrics created from plastic waste. The North Face (The North Face, 2020) and Columbia (Columbia, 2020) are developing market solutions to reduce landfill burdens and reduce energy needed for oil extraction. Committed to improving the environmental performance through innovations in material development and manufacturing. Columbia has created a jacket made from 100% recycled polyester and is made from 21 recycled water bottles. Dye-free fabrics eliminate harmful dying and focus on a mono-material garment. This initiative comes from their effort to increase the amount of recycled plastic in their polyester fabric.



**LIGHTWEIGHT
ON PITCH.
LIGHT IMPACT
ON PLANET.**

Made of recycled plastic bottles
diverted from landfill,
the Nigeria National Kit.

Influence

In the time of a climate crisis, Greta Thunberg, famed for starting an environmental campaign, is voicing the urgency to become a more sustainable planet. She influences politicians, consumers and brands to actively become more sustainable. Inspiring brands to think more environmentally, Greta Thunberg is encouraging a reduction in carbon emissions and to repurpose plastic waste.

Engaging and educating consumers, creating cool brand aesthetics and bringing in collaborative parties & community space. Believing education is key to fighting plastic pollution, Adidas x Parley's Run For the Oceans (RFTO) initiative has used sport to help raise awareness of the plastic problem, since 2017. Fighting for healthier oceans and a cleaner planet, the Parley Ocean Schools Education program uses the money raised to educate young people about the importance of protecting the oceans and the issues of plastic trash, (Adidas, 2019).

Sustainable Design Lab Slow Factory Founder; Céline Semaan Vernon launched the initiative



Landfills As Museums to inspire fashion students to operate in a more sustainable way. Transforming students' outlooks, Slow Factory is encouraging them to design fashion in a way that reduces waste, (Poile, M, Marian, P 2019).

Brands and campaigners are influencing consumers directly, encouraging them to rethink their shopping habits. Today's consumers are opting for sustainable solutions and are becoming actively conscious in their buying habits.

Evolution

Exercising new innovative methods of developing high-tech materials and opting for fibres made from recycled waste will have a much wider influence and impact on the world.

A minimalist mindset will take form and when we move into A/W 21/22 expect to see designers experimenting with perception through texture. As designers focus on creating sustainable garments using mono-colours and mono-material, texture will be incorporated to add refined depth, (Harman, J, 2019). Peachy, blush tones and neutral refined tones of taupe and grey to encourage a sense of tailored minimalism and avoid the use of harmful dying. Swapping regular fabrics for recycled fibres add sustainable selling points to sustainable consumers, expect this to be a prevailing trend by A/W 21/22,



Rosie Broadhead

Outside of the industry, the use of recycling waste will be even more important. In South Korea, for example, food waste recycling has increased from just two percent in 1995 to 95% in 2019 thanks to strict government policies, and in the Netherlands (and soon beyond), new startup Gibbon is making it possible to go on vacation without luggage (or frivolous pre-vacation purchases) by renting excess inventory from retailers to travellers, (Harman, J, 2019).



ADIDAS FUTURECRAFT LOOP

Brands will continue to eliminate virgin plastic from their products as the use of innovative, recycled waste fibres will be used in everyday wear and tailoring, offering greater durability and versatility. Sustainable activewear paves the way for an environmentally focused industry.

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