

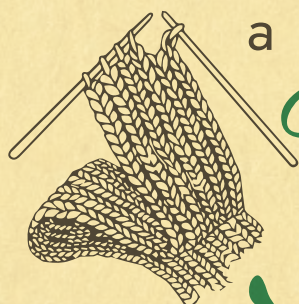


**TAILOR A GREEN FUTURE BY
UPCYCLING FABRICS**

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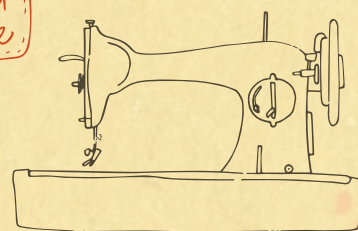
Tailor

hand
made



a

green
future



by

upcycling fabrics







As Indians, we have always been sustainable. We always wanted to use, reuse, and pass things on. Our mothers and grannies were skilled seamstresses, and stitching and darning skills were considered essential for every household. We took pride in wearing hand-me-downs, and every piece of fabric was utilized to its last thread before it was discarded.

In those times, we used to eagerly wait for special occasions like Diwali, Pongal, Eid, or our birthday to buy and flaunt that special outfit. Now things have changed a little bit. Driven by growing middle-class income and easy accessibility to online shopping, the trend of fast fashion has caught up. As a result we are consuming more fabric than ever. To make up for this growing demand the fashion industry mass produces trendy items quickly and inexpensively resulting in poor-quality products that have a high environmental impact. In the last 15 years clothing production has doubled and the number of times the clothing is worn has fallen by 36 percent. Currently, only one percent of global clothing is recycled and ninety-nine percent is going to landfills. As a result, the textile industry contributes to around 10% of global emissions.

Surprisingly, out of the total textile waste generated annually in the world, 95 percent can be reused or repurposed. Each garment resold saves 50 times its weight in carbon emission. So, rather than sending enormous amounts of clothes

to landfills, the clothes must be reused, repurposed, and given a new life.

The creative reuse of the same garment that improves its look and value is called “upcycling”

Upcycling is different from recycling. Upcycling is the creative reuse in which a worn item is given a makeover, transforming it into a new item of higher quality and value. While recycling entails breaking down the materials using physical and chemical processes and then turning them into something new. Upcycling clothes has a lesser impact on the environment than recycling. It has less impact on the environment in



terms of energy, water consumption, fewer chemicals, and harmful gas emissions as compared to recycling.

Upcycling gives a discarded item a new lease of life by repairing, fixing, transforming it into something new, or refurbishing it using dyes, bleach, and washing methods.



Ways to turn your old clothes into something spectacular

All kinds of fabrics can be upcycled and you can take the help of online tutorials to





put these ideas into shape.

- **Shirts:** you can paint or add embellishments to old shirts and turn them into a fashion statement. You can add a belt to a long shirt and wear it as a dress. Old flannel shirts can be made into a patchwork quilt or a tote bag. You can take the collar out of the shirt, add rhinestones and beading to it and turn it into a statement neck piece.
- **T-Shirts:** you can unleash your creativity on old white t-shirts and color them using tie and dye techniques or stitch sequins or old buttons on them to make them into a trendy piece. Old colorful t-shirts can be made into vibrant no-stitch DIY tote bags. You can also make knotted baby hats or headbands for yourself. You can even turn your old t-shirts into pillow covers or pet clothing.
- **Denim:** You can apply paint or embroidery to your old jeans or jacket to make a unique and updated version. Old denim can be used to upholster furniture and make bags, table runners, rugs, and picnic blankets. Using a little bit of creativity, you can turn a vintage jacket into a duffel bag and an old pair of jeans into a trendy pair of shorts.
- **Sweaters:** Sweaters are very versatile and cozy items of clothing that can be turned into Bags, coffee cup sleeves, or carpet slippers. You can even upholster small pieces of furniture like a stool to give it a cozy makeover.
- **Salwars:** You don't have to discard old-fashioned bulky salwars that you no longer want to wear. Instead, with a little bit of DIY, you can convert them into trendy palazzos, cool dhoti pants, or even flared skirts that you can wear to a trendy boho event.
- **Kurtas:** You can turn your old kurtas into tops or blouses. They can even be made into a shrug with a little creativity. Fabric from old kurtas can be used to make little frocks or ethnic dresses for your tiny tots.
- **Duppattas:** It has happened so many times that the kurta has worn off while the dupatta from the same set still looks new. So many things can be done with it. You can stitch it into a trendy cape or a shrug. You can even get a new shirt, dress, or kurta made from that. You can use a multicolored dupatta and turn it into a wraparound or a sarong and use it for a beachy vacation.
- **Sari:** With sarees the possibilities are endless. You can convert your vintage sarees into dresses, scarves, gowns, and even business suits. Saris can also be creatively transformed into runners, curtains, cushion covers, or even wall art. You can use embellishments or borders from old saris to uplift a new suit, dress, or dupatta.
- **Wedding lehnga:** This is an item of clothing that absolutely deserves





upcycling because we spend a bomb on it and use it probably only once in our lifetime. You can ask your tailor to stitch the lehnga and blouse together and change the silhouette in such a manner that it can be worn as a dress. If there is enough material in the lehnga you can turn it into a saree and wear it more often. You can convert the skirt of the lehnga into a garara or a sharara and the dupatta into a top and wear it as a different outfit altogether.

- **Others:** you can make zip bags from old ties. Socks can turn into hand puppets. You can upcycle old clothes into a variety of things like planter covers, aprons, photo frames, coasters, tablemats, gift wrappers, fashion accessories, and iPad covers. The

options are endless, only your creativity is the only limit.



Upcycling fabric as a career

Upcycling is emerging as an increasingly popular trend in fashion careers too. Several fashion houses are promoting upcycled garments and some brands have manufacturing units dedicated solely to upcycled designs. These provide fashionistas with one-of-a-kind unique designs that are trendy as well as eco-friendly. There are labels like Kumari and Bodement that have taken upcycling to a new height by transforming vintage saris into dresses and slick suits.



In conclusion

Upcycling clothes is one way in which you can go green and be good towards the environment and be fashionable at the same time. So go ahead and expand your wardrobe by fashioning new garments from old ones while reducing your carbon footprint and being kind towards mother earth.



About Organo Et School

Organo Et School empowers people to embrace eco-living mindsets, behaviors, and habits. We recognize that for any positive impact to be sustainable, it must be long-term and inter-generational.

Organo Et School is a learning initiative set up by Organo in 2017 and has been facilitating field visits and workshops for Schools and Interest Groups. Organo Et School has had over 25+ schools, 6500+ students, and 3000+ adults participate over the last 7 years.

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