



# The Wardrobe Report







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# 01

An Intro to Care

Clothes, they're kind of a big thing. Big decisions on what to wear with little thought to their care.

And the industry's even bigger, in fact, it's worth \$1.3 trillion yearly and employs more than 300 million people.



And it's growing...  
In the past 15 years alone,  
clothing production has  
doubled thanks to the  
explosive global growth  
of the middle class and  
increasing sales from the  
fast-fashion phenomenon.

The rapid pace in which we  
consume our clothes got its  
start in the 1950s.

While many of us have forgotten—or don't even know—we used to have very little in our wardrobes. Some items were meant for finer occasions, while others were meant for practical purposes. This might seem old fashioned—and certainly no one is suggesting that we go back in time; but the fashion world is, albeit slowly, changing. A movement's underway; rooted in the fact that today's clothing industry is unsustainable and has to change. All of us need to do something about it to ensure that real change happens.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ellen MacArthur Foundation.  
*A New textiles Economy:  
Redesigning fashion's future*





# 29%

throw their garments  
away after they stop  
wearing them.

## So where do we start?

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To understand change, we first need to know how the industry is today.

The industry uses large amounts of non-renewable resources to create clothes that are rarely worn or even thrown away. In fact, more than half of the fast fashion produced ends up in landfills.

To put a dollar sign to it, this means that more than \$500 billion is literally thrown away every year. And while some countries collect unwanted or unworn clothing, they export them to countries with no infrastructure of their own—often ending up wasting away.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ellen MacArthur Foundation. *A New textiles Economy: Redesigning fashion's future*

What can you do?

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Since a big question like this needs some pretty big answers, Electrolux conducted a survey in July, 2017 to find out where the problems lie.

4,000 people across Europe participated in the survey—answering how they wear and care for their clothing.

According to the survey 54% wear their favourite outfit every week, while 53% said that they buy new clothes every month.

Two big takeaways from this are that: We have clothes that we really like and wear often, and at the same time, we have this constant urge to buy new clothes.



So back to the question...  
What can you do? There's a  
new way of thinking when it  
comes to wardrobes. And  
that is making more conscious  
choices about our purchases  
and what we already wear.

# 53%

said they buy  
new clothes  
every month.

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# 54%

wear their favourite  
outfit every week.





# 02

Why We Care



## Why we buy

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Our relationship with clothing is complex and comes with varying reasons for why we buy.

Besides the practical stuff, there are subtler societal and emotional desires—like expressing who we are.

# 34%

spend more than  
3,000 Euros on  
clothes every year.

This results in us owning clothes that we seldom or never wear. And this is something the survey confirms, with 38% of the participants having more than 50 items in their wardrobe and 34% spending more than 3,000 Euros on clothes every year.






## Digging deeper into our pockets

One recent report details that fast-fashion houses create clothes that are meant to become obsolete, so that we almost feel that there's no other way but to buy all the time. And the fast-fashion houses don't only sell a product, they sell a complete life-style. The objective is to convince the consumer—that by buying a specific garment—they also gain something more in return, like the sense of freedom or happiness. This means that the actual demand for clothing plays a minor part—we don't need them—we just want something new and better.<sup>3</sup>

Buying, wearing, and discarding is what's communicated by the fast-fashion system. Garments as good as new often disappear—unworn—resulting in textile waste. In fact, around 20% of the participants in the Electrolux survey said they don't own a garment older than three years, and 29% throw their garments away after they stop wearing them.

<sup>3</sup> Müller, T. and Gwozdz, W.  
*Future Fashion Alternatives - A social marketing toolbox to promote sustainable fashion alternatives*



# 81%

don't know the  
value of their  
wardrobe.

People are slowly starting to acknowledge the problem. Today, we are responsible for throwing away \$460million in total around the world. So if we were to wear our wardrobe, global greenhouse-gas emissions would be lowered by as much as 44%.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen MacArthur Foundation.  
*A New textiles Economy:  
Redesigning fashion's future*

## Caring for clothes

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1

### Buy right

One way for righting fashion wrongs is buying more ethically and environmentally sourced clothing.

2

### Wear right

Another way can be as simple as wearing what you already have.



# 66%

of people stop wearing their clothes due to wear and tear.



A photograph of a fashion studio. In the center is a beige fabric mannequin on a wooden stand, with a white measuring tape draped over its shoulders and down its front. To the left is a tall, thin wooden mirror leaning against a dark blue wall, with a potted plant in a brown vase in front of it. To the right is a wooden chair with an orange seat, and two framed abstract artworks are leaning against the wall behind it. The overall lighting is soft and focused on the mannequin.

# 60%

say that fit is the key factor when buying new clothes.

According to the Electrolux survey, the most important factors when it comes to buying clothes are quality and fit.

The industry will have to do its part. Brands need to offer higher quality, a great fit, and additional services like warranties, clothing resale, or repair services. This would lead to the design and manufacture of clothes that last longer, because today, 66% of people stop wearing their clothes due to wear and tear.

A little know-how in the care department can make all the difference when it comes to keeping your clothes looking and feeling great. And not only that, you will also save money and the environment.



We need to talk more about care. If we learned more about the fabrics, read the care label, and used the correct washer and dryer settings, this wouldn't be a problem.

And it doesn't stop at the washer, we don't mend clothes either. According to the survey, over half of the participants (53%) don't repair their clothes. Most times, all we need to do is sew a button back on or mend a broken seam. Something so easy, we can do it ourselves. Or if we don't have the time, we can have our local tailor do it.





# 53%

of the survey participants  
don't repair their clothes.

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# 49%

would dare to wear  
the same outfit for  
more than 10 days.



When it comes to caring for your clothes, you also need the right learning materials about the different kinds of clothing materials.

So to help you out, we've consulted some of the best material experts in the business to help you get the most out of your wardrobe.









03

Birgit Gahlen –  
The Woolmark Company



I have three children, and live in Biella—where the most beautiful wool fabrics and yarns are produced. I got a degree in Textile Engineering around 1990, and joined The Woolmark Company in 1993.

## Q&A with Birgit Gahlen

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**What do you do and what does the Woolmark label mean?**

- Currently, I research product developments around the entire wool textile industry. Empowering collaborations with designers about trends and new product developments, I also conduct workshops and classrooms with manufacturers, designers, and fashion schools.

I love what I do. I never get bored working at Woolmark, because they—like me—know wool. We highlight wool's position as a great natural fibre and a premier ingredient in luxury apparel. For clothing care, we help people identify laundry products that are approved for use on wool.

**Wool's been used for thousands of years, what makes it so special?**

- Wool is natural—it's grown on sheep after all—which only need a little grass, water, and air. It's also biodegradable. When wool's disposed of, it naturally decomposes in a matter of years—slowly releasing valuable nutrients back into the earth. And last but definitely not least, every year sheep produce a new fleece—making wool completely renewable.



A lot of people believe that wool garments are difficult to care for, why is that?

- This is a common misconception, and historically, many wool garments had to be hand-washed. However, recent innovations mean that many of your favourite wool garments can be washed and even tumbled-dried. So really, wool is actually easy to care for.

What do you expect from the future of wool?

- Wool has evolved and advanced across thousands of years, and I don't expect it to slow down in the future. Innovations such as water-resistant fabrics or wool used in footwear are breathing fresh life into a traditional fibre. I welcome these advancements with open arms.

# 50

years or more is how long a wool garment can last.







#### How long can wool last?

- Wool can last forever. I know people who've been wearing the same wool garments for 50 or 60 years. It never goes out of fashion. Wool is a quality fibre you may pay more for, but it lasts longer if stored correctly.

#### Is wool easier to maintain than other fibres?

- Wool is easier to maintain compared to other fibres. Wool needs to be washed less, it's also naturally wrinkle-and-odor resistant. You can just brush the garment after wearing, or simply hang it in a steamy bathroom—cutting down the need for ironing.



## Wool Care tips

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1

### Brushing

For woven garments only: Using a soft garment brush, brush garments lengthwise after wearing to remove surface soil that might become stains later on. Dust and dirt can dull the appearance of wool fabrics.

4

### Ironing

Many wool garments don't require ironing, but very smooth fabrics may look better if pressed. Always use steam when pressing wool. Set your iron on the wool setting and avoid ironing the fabric when it's totally dry.

2

### Airing

To remove odors, lay wool garments flat on a bed or towel for an hour. Woven garments may be hung in fresh air on a suitable hanger.

5

### Resting

Rest wool garments for 24 hours before wearing again. This gives the natural resilience and spring in the wool fibre time to recover and return to its original shape.

3

### Hang wovens, fold knits

Woven wool garments should be hung on shaped or padded coat hangers. Knitted garments should be gently folded and stored in drawers.

6

### Long-term storage

Since food stains and body oils attract moths, you should ensure your wool garment is clean before packing it away in airtight bags or containers.





04

Philip Tavell –  
Helly Hansen

I was a pro cyclist, but then I got a business degree and entered the activewear business. I had this passion and personal experience to lean on, which lent itself to developing outdoor wear. So for the past two-and-a-half years, I've monitored everything from product and design to sales and marketing.

## Q&A with Philip Tavell

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What's Helly Hansen's approach when it comes to outdoor wear?

- When waiting at the ski lift, I constantly look at everyone around me to see what they're wearing since this is the best way of keeping track of the trends. My team and I usually take a lot of pictures, so that we can follow the development and changes over time.

This translates into our consumer-centric approach when it comes to material. Meaning we don't work with one particular fabric, but constantly change and develop our clothing according to the needs. Our technology is called Helly Tech, but the execution is always versatile. A lot of pros use our garments, so obviously, their input's very important. If it's good enough for them, we figure it's good enough for everyone else.







A good ski jacket will last for years as long as you love it, fits, and you take care of it.

Every need is very different. But what's most important when it comes to—for instance, a ski jacket—is that it works when you're both active and resting. If you're skiing in snow and wind, you need something to keep you warm and dry. However, the garment also needs to be breathable — allowing sweat to escape, so you don't freeze on top of the mountain.



To enjoy the outdoors, we need a happy and healthy environment  
What's Helly Hansen doing to help?

— We constantly strive to be sustainable. For instance, water consumption in the textile industry is a big problem, so we work on using less water, finding better ways to dye garments, and so on.

We also recently launched a three-year project, committed to better recycling textile fibres. Another important aspect is to educate when it comes to care, so that the garments last longer. A good ski jacket will last for years as long as you love it, fits, and you take care of it.





A lot of people are actually afraid of washing their outdoor gear since they think they might ruin them. And some people don't find it necessary to wash them as long as they're not visibly dirty.

This is, however, wrong. In order for the garment to maintain its function, it has to be clean because sweat and dirt can clog the membranes. Basically, you should wash your outdoor garments to maintain their abilities.

## The way to wash

1

### Washing

Wash the garment to remove all dirt and sweat—even if it's not visible. When it comes to temperature, you should follow the care label. Don't use fabric softener, and be sure the cycle's long enough to rinse any detergent residue.

2

### Drying

It's a little known fact that the heat from the tumble dryer will actually reactivate the jacket fibres' water repellency. So do that on a low setting if you can.



## Breathing new life

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- ① If rain droplets no longer bead off the surface of the jacket and start leaving a wet mark, it means that the water repellent function might have worn off.
- ② Another sign is if the breathability does not seem to be on the same level as when you first bought your garment, this means that the membranes could be contaminated from dirt or sweat.

### How long can outerwear last when caring for them?

- I've got a funny story about this... I was working in one of our stores recently, just to listen to our customers. A dissatisfied woman came in, and said she needed new rain clothes since hers were no longer water repellent. I asked her how long she had used them for and she said: "25 years." So there's your answer if you simply take care of them. The care part is easy—once you get over the initial fear of doing something wrong. And wash your garments at home, don't go to a professional dry cleaner, they can't do it any better than you.







## Outerwear Care tips

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1

### Zip-up

To avoid any surface damage while also preserving your favourite outerwear for years to come, be sure to zip-up all zippers when washing or storing.

2

### Labels matter

Your outerwear care label is there for a reason, so be sure to follow all its instructions when washing it.

3

### Drying

After washing your outerwear, tumble dry it in order to reactivate the water-repellent treatment.

4

### Preserving

To ensure that your outerwear's fabric repels the elements for years to come, don't use fabric softener as it can reduce the fabric effectiveness.

5

### Washing clean

If you don't have a washing machine with an outdoor program, a second-rinse cycle with water is recommended to remove any detergents that might be left behind on the jacket.





05

Will Steele —  
Pongees



I have been Managing Director of Pongees since 2000 and I am still involved in all of our day-to-day business activities. When I was 23, I started working with a company that traded with China, and that's how I first came into contact with silk—meaning I've been working with silk for over 40 years.

## Q&A with Will Steele

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### What does Pongees do?

- The company originates from Switzerland and has been trading silk since the 1900s. The British branch opened up in London in 1931. We import all types of silk and sell it to couture designers, bridal and lingerie manufacturers, retail brands, and costumiers.

### Silk is one of the oldest textile fibres, what are its origins?

- Silk originates from China, and its production can be traced back to 4000 or 3000 BC. An empress is said to have discovered silk. Legend has it that she sat under a tree drinking tea, when a silkworm cocoon fell into her cup and the heat unwrapped the silk thread.

No matter exactly how the Chinese discovered silk, it remained confined to China until the Silk Road opened and the Byzantines discovered the secrets of silk production around 500 AD. Silk then became well known in Europe and Asia, but China kept a monopoly on its production for a very long time. An imperial death decree condemned anyone who attempted to export silkworms or their eggs.



### How is silk made?

- The process is called “sericulture,” or silk farming, and it’s basically the same today as it was a thousands years ago. It starts with a silk moth laying several hundred eggs, hatching into silkworms. Over 30-40 days, the silkworms feed on mulberry leaves and start spinning their cocoons. The cocoon is then put in hot water, so the silk thread can be extracted—with some strands being as long as 1 km. The harvest takes place twice a year.

# 13%

of the survey participants don’t dare to wash their silk garments for fear of ruining them.

# 40

days is what a silkworm takes to spin its silk.







Why do you think silk is still considered luxurious?

- Since the business is so small globally, it's managed to maintain its exclusive status. Silk is really an amazing textile fibre—there's nothing quite like it. It's immensely fine yet very strong. It has a formidable ability to absorb colour, gives off a beautiful luster, and it also regulates heat in a great way. And then there's this remarkable heritage... After all these years, I am still proud to work with this wonderful material.





## Silk Care Tips

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1

### Safeguarding colour

To find out if the colour may run, test the inside of the garment by rubbing gently with a damp white cloth.

2

### Staying luxurious

To preserve the integrity of your fashion silk garment, dry it flat or use an ironing program designed specifically for silk.

3

### Steaming

If your silk garment is looking sad, steam to refresh it. However, be very careful as it can create shrinkage.

4

### Handwashing

If you want to wash your silk garments at home, handwash them separately in cool water or use a program on your washing machine that's equivalent to a handwash.

5

### Removing creases

If the garment is creased after washing, turn it inside out and iron gently on the reverse side with a cool iron.





06

Thomas Stege Bojer –  
Denimhunters

I've been interested in clothing ever since I was a child. I always put a lot of thought into what I wore, and my dream was to work in a store. So when I went to business school in 2007, I worked part-time in one. That's when I realised that I needed to educate my customers—helping them wash and wear their jeans in the best possible way.

# 72%

of men from the survey say that jeans are their most-used garments.

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# 69%

of women from the survey wear jeans more than anything else.





## What is Denimhunters?

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I wanted to dig deeper into the world of denim and jeans, so I started the blog Denimhunters in January, 2011.

### How has the blog evolved over the years?

- A couple of years ago, I realised there was a gap in the market in education for people who work with denim and jeans. That's when I got the idea for the Denimhunters Academy, an eLearning platform about denim and jeans. If store staff really know the products they're selling, they can attract more customers and create better experiences for them. So, that's what the Denimhunters Academy is for.

### So how did jeans become the fashion icon they are today?

- By the 1960s, jeans had become a mainstay of mainstream youth in the US. But it was actually the Europeans who first challenged the look and design of blue jeans in the '60s—washing them in industrial laundries to get a softer and worn-in look. The first European jeans reached America in the '70s—becoming a big hit. This was the starting point for brands such as Calvin Klein, which ushered in the transition from plain jeans to fashion statements.



## Four facts about denim

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1

### The blue colour

Workwear has been dyed blue with indigo—a natural dye that is extracted from the indigofera plants' leaves—for 5,000 years. The synthesised version of indigo was discovered in the 1860s, and today, almost all denim is dyed with synthetic indigo.

2

### Introduction

Levi Strauss & Co. introduced jeans with rivet in 1873. Apart from a few design changes, jeans are pretty much the same today.

3

### Denim's origins

The name "denim" comes from the name of a sturdy fabric called "serge de Nîmes," initially made in Nîmes, France—hence the name "de Nîmes" ("denim").

4

### In the Jeans

The word "jeans" is believed to be an Anglicisation of the French word for the town Genoa in Italy (Gênes), where a predecessor of denim was made.



Electrolux



Why do you think jeans have remained so popular?

- Jeans are durable and dependable. And because of the way they're dyed, the colour changes with wash and wear—making your jeans truly your own. That's what's called "fading." The fabric is beautiful in all stages of its life. Jeans also have a unique story, not to mention they look darn good on just about anyone!

What do you expect for the future of jeans?

- Jeans have been worn as a fashion item by every generation for almost a century. Each has its own take on the look and its own icons that wore them. But the features and technology of jeans are always evolving, and will keep doing so. I don't think we'll ever stop wearing jeans. Even if future generations move to outer space, they'll probably still wear jeans for the nostalgia of it.







How should you care for your jeans?

— The short answer is: Wash with moderation, inside out.

...And the long answer?

— Well, if they're torn, you repair them! Always repair your jeans. Do it yourself or let your local tailor do it. First of all, it's cheaper than buying a new pair. Second, it's the wear that give the jeans personality. It's also better for the environment since jeans are mainly made of cotton, which is a crop that requires large amounts of water to grow.



# How often you wash depends on the type of jeans, and what you want from them.

## Raw denim

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- Unwashed denim has a dark and saturated look, and the colour is usually either dark blue or black.
- When you start wearing raw denim jeans, and before you wash them for the first time, you need to decide whether you'd like to keep the original colour and get high-contrast fades or if you want a more washed-down look. If you want to keep the original colour and get high contrasts, wash them as little as possible.
- As you wear the jeans without washing, the creases that form will become sharp, which means the colour will fade faster on those areas. The problem with wearing raw-denim jeans for a long time without washing them is that the fabric wears down along the creases, which leads to breaks.
- After the first soak, wash the jeans inside out whenever they get dirty or start smelling. Just keep the washing to a minimum, and try spot-cleaning or airing them out before washing!

## Pre-washed denim

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- Not as sensitive to colour fading as raw denim since it's already been treated—getting that worn-in look.
- Wash as often as you would other clothes. Always inside out!







## Denim Care tips

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- 1 Soak before first wear
- 2 Wash them inside out
- 3 Set washer to 40°C on a gentle spin cycle
- 4 Hang to dry
- 5 Freshen up the jeans by airing them out





07

Caring that Lasts



With new knowledge  
and tech, we can buy  
into new ways of wearing.  
We can wear something  
old that feels new, and  
wear something new that  
feels worn in.

But most importantly...  
Wear what you love,  
wear what you care for.



## The Wardrobe Report



**Electrolux**