

Why I'm Shopping Second Hand in 2019

In my early twenties my new year resolutions were always the same two things on a bi-yearly rotation: exercise more *or* go on a diet. If I was feeling extra then I would have both in the same year, just so I could give myself even more of a kick when I failed again.

More of us are starting to catch onto the idea that trying to contort our bodies into a shape that they will never be is not the best use of our time. I personally gave up on it a few years back when I actually had a good look at myself and realised, after all those years, that I am *absolutely ok as I am*.

That meant that when the end of 2018 approached, I was able to think about a resolution which I actually wanted to do: **avoid fast fashion**.

I have spent my life shopping on the high street and sometimes I really do fall in love with what I buy and wear it for 6 years straight. But more often than not, I find myself buying something on a whim and wearing it twice.

So, for four good reasons, I decided to change my habits.

1. The high street was burning a hole in my pocket

Let's face it, clothes are *expensive*. Even the cheap ones are expensive because you have to buy them more often. I was spending money I didn't have on clothes I didn't want and I don't need an accountant to tell me that's not a great financial gameplan.

Second-hand clothes are cheaper and you usually get way more for your money.

Buying second-hand clothes online is the perfect way to seek out people who generally wear the same style as you and see what they have for sale. Chances are, you'll be buying stuff that you would've been happy to pay full price for in the shops anyway.

Think about all the clothes in your wardrobe that you don't wear but would look great on someone else. Buying second-hand doesn't mean something is past its best or super old.

2. The environment will thank me

Believe it or not, fast fashion is one of the biggest polluters on earth. All of those factories and the amount of waste produced means that most of our high street favourites do not have a good carbon footprint.

The speed at which new clothing is produced means that there is a huge amount of waste also produced each year. Most people, me included, don't want or need everything that we own which means that, even with the best intentions, so many of our clothes are sent to landfill sites.

I know that I cannot change this alone, but making one relatively small decision in my life to buy pre-loved clothes may just help a little.

In my personal life, I still have a long way to go before I'll be as environmentally conscious as I would like to be. However, small steps at a time can make a big difference overall.

3. Uncertain working conditions

I'm not sure what it's like to work in a huge factory in one of the countries which produces fast fashion items for big high-street names because, quite simply, I've never visited one.

What I do know is that over the last few years there have been growing reports of working conditions in these places being *less than ideal*.

Most of us are probably buying things all the time of which we cannot be sure where it came. It's difficult, if not almost impossible, to avoid. But sourcing brands, especially for clothes, who pay a fair wage and look after their workers is becoming more and more of a possibility as awareness is raised.

Buying second-hand means that you are simply giving your money to charity or to a person directly.

4. Customisation is (way) easier

Although there were some pretty big reasons behind me choosing to avoid fast fashion in 2019, it wasn't all like that.

Usually, if I buy something on the high street I'm reluctant to alter or customise it because I've spent a lot of money already.

With second hand stuff, it doesn't have to be perfect because even if you pay a tailor to alter the length or shape, you will probably still ending up spending less than you would've on a brand new piece.

Not only this, if you fancy getting handy with your sewing kit and some embroidery work, you have the freedom to do so knowing that you haven't just spent a fortune on something that you're about to make non-returnable.

Buying second-hand can be fun and, who knows, it may even bring out my creative side this year.

If you're thinking of joining me on this challenge, start with local Facebook groups for low-cost bargains that you can pick up easily in your area.