



## *Mindful Shopping*

## Going Beyond the Clothing

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## Mindful Shopping for Clothing

Fast fashion. This has become the clothing norm for a large part of the First World. The garment industry thrives on our current “buy-toss” habits and athleisure clothing is no exception. The health and wellness trend has seen a surge in new activewear lines. Our “take-make-dispose” economic model has harsh impacts on our environment, the economy and our society. Many of us don’t even realize that we’ve fallen victim to the lure of fast fashion until we take the time to edit our wardrobes and really see how items are working with one another and/or how often we’ve worn them.

Sustainable fashion, or “eco fashion”, is becoming a growing trend among consumers. Athleisure’s popularity has prompted designers and manufacturers to improve on the sustainable qualities of their products. We have a social responsibility to strive for a circular economy where systems are regenerative, and we minimize resource input and waste. How can we as consumers help to close these energy and material loops? **One way is by shopping mindfully.** Is there a hidden ugliness behind the product you are buying? How can you be more informed about the products you purchase? What steps can you take to play your role in reducing how many garments wind up in landfills? Here are a few ways:

### 1. Quit fast fashion.

Big box stores have bargain prices. To provide these bargains, the clothing must be produced in massive amounts with cheap material and inexpensive labour that is found in countries with few protections for workers. Carefully select the brands for which you choose to buy from based on their sustainable qualities. They will not be churning out the items as fast your big one-stop store will. Ask yourself: “Will I wear this at least thirty times?”

### 2. Check the fabric content.

A simple method is to look for clothing made from organic fibers. In the athleisure world, polyester is in just about everything. Look for clothes made with polyester that are made with recycled, post-consumer materials.

### 3. Look for transparency in production.

The carbon footprint of the fashion industry is huge. The clothing industry is the second largest polluter in the world, second to oil. There are signs that you can look for when shopping for apparel. Some are: Oeko-Tex, Global Organic Textile Standard, bluesign® and Fair-Trade certifications.

### 4. Invest in trans-seasonal clothes

Purchase items that will work for you all year round. Take the time to examine your athleisure wardrobe and edit your outfits. Can you mix and match most pieces? Do you own cardigans or pullovers that can pair with your summer yoga wear to transfer them seamlessly into fall? Doing so will ensure your garments pass the aforementioned ‘thirty wears test’.

## 5. Go for quality over quantity.

In our buy-toss era, it is easy to succumb to impulse buying. Many of these inexpensive purchases do not end up being worn often. Everyone that owns multiple pairs of yoga pants has one or two favourites. This is usually due to how they fit and the quality of the fabric. The more wear you get out of a garment, the more sustainable it is. Find eco-conscious brands that fit you well. Invest in buying one special sustainable piece instead of buying several items that you might toss after a few months.

## 6. Buy Local.

Local businesses, including Beyond Yoga Studio and Wellness Centre, select items based on their own interests, not a national sales plan. Thus, the items are specially tailored to a niche market. Additionally, when you purchase from a local business, you are contributing to your community's uniqueness. Since the suburban landscape is very cookie cutter in appearance, with the same chain stores everywhere, small start-ups provide much needed variety.

The main clothing brands at Beyond Yoga's store are Lolë, prAna and Tonic. They have been selected for their sustainable qualities. Lolë is a Canadian brand, created in Montreal, that produces feminine, fashion forward designs. prAna, which is based in California, prides itself on the measures they take to ensure that their consumers are making ethical purchases. Fabrics are made of organic cotton, hemp, responsible down and recycled polyester and wool. Items that are shipped to the studio arrive without polybags and garments are individually tied with environmentally friendly paper string. This measure alone has eliminated 10.6 million polybags from landfills. Tonic is a Canadian company that designs and manufactures their clothing with high quality fabric in Vancouver.

The art of being mindfully aware of the materials and manufacturing of the products we purchase takes practice. As more businesses are becoming transparent, it is becoming easier to sift through the greenwashing and understand each brand's sustainable qualities. We are still a long way from a circular economy, but we as consumers can be one step closer with each mindful purchase.



prAna's minimal waste packaging methods have garments individually tied with environmentally friendly paper string. This measure alone has eliminated 10.6 million polybags from landfills. Photo: prAna.com