

Curbing the impact of footwear manufacturing on the environment - one step at a time

As 'Fast Fashion' continues to leave its mark on the environment, one independent British shoe company is taking big strides to break the mould.

In the wake of the current climate crisis, the fashion industry is under fire. Colossal amounts of waste are dumped in landfills and oceans, polluting the atmosphere and killing wildlife. What has become known as 'Fast Fashion' is the number one culprit, adding over 92 million tonnes of textile waste to the planet each year.¹

Worryingly, this waste is starting to take its toll on the environment, with the fashion industry accounting for 10% of global carbon emissions.²

In the UK, reports show that an item of clothing lasts on average only 2.2 years.³ This obsession with style shows we struggle to see the value in something we paid good money for just weeks before.

It's a vicious cycle the world needs to acknowledge and address. Luckily, fashion manufacturers and companies are starting to take note. One casing example is Percy Stride, a leading independent company offering beautifully constructed footwear for gentlemen.

The Environmental Impact of the Shoe Industry

Quantis reports that the footwear industry is responsible for 1.4% of global GHG (Greenhouse gasses) emissions.⁴ If you think 1.4% doesn't sound too bad, just compare it to

the 2.5% generated by air travel. So, there can be no denial that 'Fast Fashion' in the footwear industry is also a major concern to climate change.

What is cheap is not always cheerful. The time has come for the fashion industry to go full-circle and return to quality materials and traditional production methods.

With a staggering 20 billion shoes made each year, we instantly see where the problem lies.⁵ A philosophy of quantity over quality has reigned supreme to the detriment of the climate. The problem is not just the toxic materials in cheap shoes that take years to biodegrade, it's the chemicals and large amounts of machinery used in production too.

More Incentive to Invest in Quality

The impact on the environment doesn't mean we should stop buying footwear, far from it. The pleasure of buying a new pair of shoes should never be taken away.

However, the world needs to start investing in shoes made with quality in mind. Likewise, shoes don't need to be made from hemp or biodegradable materials; they just need to be made more sustainable by having a longer life span.

Rather than buying cheap shoes that last around six months or less, purchase a pair that will last years instead. To achieve this, gentlemen need to invest in a pair with quality



construction, first-class materials, and repairable qualities.

Shoes like these will come with a higher price tag. But they will save everyone money in the long run. Specialised shoes that can be re-soled and repaired become part of the recycling process. Quality leather is also reusable as a recyclable material.

Percy Stride not only takes pride in their shoemaking but is proud to be a part of the climate crisis solution. Their Oxford shoes and brogues are constructed traditionally. Firstly through "Clicking", a handmade cutting technique designed to reduce leather waste. Secondly, the shoes are put through the "Closing" stage, this assembles the shoe before "Lasting" is initiated.

All Percy Stride shoes are "Goodyear Welted". Invented in 1872, Goodyear Welt shoes are made specifically to be re-soled. They are renowned for their ethical and recyclable quality. Percy Stride shoes are constructed and manufactured in Northampton, the historical home of traditional English shoemakers.

There are also other ways to help maintain the quality of footwear, such as steel metal heel protectors, applying waxes and creams, using shoehorns, and placing them on shoe trees.

All these inexpensive accessories can help maintain the quality of shoes, so you won't necessarily ever need a new pair. After all, 'Fast Fashion' comes and goes, but good quality is built to last.

When you invest in quality, you realise adding to the landfill pile is just not an option. Help support sustainability by investing in quality, repairable and recyclable footwear.

For your own peace of mind and the planet too.



Danielle Wathes
Founder of Percy Stride Footwear
percystride.com

Sources:

¹ <https://www.abc.com/future/article/20200719-wily-clothes-are-as-hard-to-recycle>

² <https://www.abc.com/future/article/20200319-sustainable-fashion-how-to-buy-clothes-good-for-the-planet>

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2019/aug/01/fixer-fashion-how-to-keep-your-favourite-clothes-for-ever-from-laundering-to-moth-proofing>

⁴ <https://quantis-int.com/report/measuring-fashion-report/>

⁵ <https://theecoindustry.weebly.com/environmental-impact.html>