



nobody was dirty



We've all heard different things about how to care for our denim jeans- wash them before you wear them, avoid washing them too often....raw denim enthusiasts even swear by not washing your Levis for six whole months! But did you know that washing, drying and ironing our favourite threads can have a big environmental impact?

Melbourne Uni student and sustainable fashion researcher Tullia Jack believes we should wash our clothing less. Would you be able to sacrifice frequent washing for a better environment? Some of us feel dirty if we don't wash our jeans every couple of days, but think of how much water, detergent and energy that uses.

To see how it would feel to wash our clothing a bit less, and how it would impact the environment, Tullia is currently conducting a study in which participants will wear the same pair of jeans for 5-7 days a week for three months. The jeans- hot dark denim skinnies generously donated by Nobody Jeans-are not allowed anywhere near a washing machine for those three months. Our curiosity about this interesting concept got the better of us, and we asked Tullia a couple of questions about her sustainable fashion experiment.

FJ: Hi Tullia. What good can come out of deciding to wash our clothes a little less?

T: A load of washing uses about 70 to 140 litres of water. If you change from doing two loads of washing per week to one, you can save about 100 litres. Times this by Australia's population, 22.5 million people, and this would mean we could save about 22,500 mega litres every week.

FJ: What are your predictions for your participants? They'll be living in their Nobody jeans for three months without being allowed to wash them...do you think life will be different for them?

T: My inkling is that life will continue on as usual. Not only will my thirty participants save thousands of litres of water, they'll also be able to talk to their social circles about the excessive washing of clothes. This will hopefully lead to a cultural shift towards less resource intensive cleaning practices.

FJ: How have people been reacting to your study so far?

T: I've had the full range of reactions from disbelief to "I've not been washing my jeans for years". Jeans are already on the cusp of social acceptance for limited washing. A more radical option would be a no wash shirt or jumper.

FJ: Sustainable fashion is such a great initiative. But for those who aren't ready for their washing machine to go on strike, how can they reduce their carbon footprint?

T: There are plenty of ways that people can make a difference and support sustainable fashion. Try to buy second-hand clothing if you can, and when buying new products, choose those made with the least energy and toxic emissions. Support ethical clothing manufacturers that pay their workers a credible living wage with reasonable employment rights and conditions - Nobody is registered with Ethical Clothing Australia. Mend tears in clothes instead of throwing them away, or give them to recycling businesses, who can extract and reuse the yarn and fibres.

Whether you take a leaf out of Tullia's book and change your laundry schedule from every couple of days to every couple of months, or simply try to reduce your environmental footprint by hanging your clothes out in the sun, it helps to know how to be a little bit greener.

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