

By Rhonda Riche

FASHIONABLY AWARE

You've got a closet full of organically grown cotton and hemp togs. Could you be any more green? Yes. The next step is investigating the greater impact of the brands you buy. Ask these questions before your next trip to the mall:

1 Does the manufacturer reduce, reuse and recycle?

Look for items made from recycled textiles and plastics. (Think of the packaging as well.) These reduce waste, landfill space and raw materials used. But while clothing companies are catching on, it seems like there's a dearth in the accessories market. That's why we love Ecoist (ecoist.com), which uses candy manufacturers' post-consumer waste to weave its cute, colourful clutches.

2 Is the manufacturing facility environmentally friendly?

Making a pair of shoes wreaks havoc on the environment, as tanning leather releases toxins into the air and water. And soles are often petroleum based (which also burns up a significant amount of energy to produce). So consider the leather-free Brooks Cascadia (brooksrunning.ca), which uses a rubber outsole made with silica sand instead of carbon black.

3 Are the workers fairly treated and paid?

People are part of the environment too, which is why sweatshop labour is bad and fair trade is good. American Apparel is committed to paying fair wages to all its workers. You Leo fans should also know that conflict diamonds (or "blood diamonds") are associated with human rights abuses, so look into a company's record before you buy.

For more info, check out:

- stepin.org
- treehugger.com/fashion_beauty
- behindthelabel.org

Rhonda Riche does not blindly follow trends, but that silver nail polish from Chanel just looks so cool that she doesn't care if everybody else is wearing it.



Email her with your style questions at advice@2magazine.com



YOU'LL NEED MORE THAN HAIR THICKENERS TO FIX THIS.

Q: Do men's hair thickening products really work? Which would you recommend?

I have good news for those with fine hair: Hair thickeners plump up individual strands of hair to create volume. The bad news is for those with thinning hair: The effect created by these products is one of fluffiness, so they won't actually fill in your bald spots. If that's good enough for you, try L'Oréal Vive Pro Men Daily Thickening Shampoo. To fill in the blanks, talk to your doctor about prescription therapies.

Q: When can I start using anti-aging products?

You can begin in your 20s, says Dr. Peter Vignjevic of the Canadian Dermatology Association. The real question is should you. Most anti-aging products are extra rich because they're formulated for premenopausal skin, which tends to be dry and thin. So if you have an oily complexion, they could cause breakouts. Instead, Vignjevic recommends sunscreen during the day and a vitamin C cream at night, such as La Roche-Posay's Active C (at select drugstores). "Vitamin C creams are designed for both prevention and treatment of age-related skin changes such as fine lines," he says.

Q: I'm preggers but still want to look stylish. Any advice?

Check to see if your fave label/store has a maternity line. If you love Juicy Couture, try their boot-cut Cali maternity jeans. You can also mix maternity wear with

your regular wardrobe, especially now that tummy-friendly tunics and empire-waist dresses are hep. Match these up with leggings and you're good to go. For great office-to-evening looks, check out Hatch Maternity (www.hatchmaternity.com), which offers a collection of classic jersey pieces that also look great post-bump.

Q: Do high-tech fabrics in sports gear really give you an edge or is it just hype?

Performance clothing such as Adidas' ClimaCool, Nike's Dri-Fit and Reebok's PlayDry work by wicking sweat away from your body, keeping you dry and preventing chafing. Other high-tech materials help keep out wind and rain while regulating body temperature. They do cost about two to three times more than a cotton T-shirt and a pair of sweatpants, so if your only exercise is some weekend pickup football, stick to your old gym clothes. ■

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