

Eco-Fashion Q&A: Denim repair and cheap style

It's that time again! Question four comes from Mallory: *I'm not sure if you're familiar with the company [Denim Therapy](#). Basically they revive old jeans by sort of reweaving the fabric where it's torn or ripped. They estimate the cost at \$7 per inch. I love the idea, but to me it seems like more than most people would be willing to pay. I think most people would just go buy a new pair of jeans. I was wondering if you have any other leads on other similar companies? This is the only one I know of quite like this. It's one of those things that, as with so many green products and services, I think people would be interested in but they're most worried about the immediate cost and it's hard to think about long term costs when you're trying to make ends meet, etc. What are some other cheap but green fashion alternatives?*



It's official Mallory - you win the award for the longest question 😊 There are two inquiries mixed in with all that, but answering them in one post should be no problem.

For denim repair, I don't know of any companies that focus on that service, besides Denim Therapy of course. This leaves you with a host of other options:

- 1) See if your local tailor will repair them (many will).
- 2) Repair them yourself.
- 3) Cut them up and use the denim for various projects.
- 4) Donate them to a [Goodwill](#) or [Salvation Army](#)-type store.

Repairing a pair of jeans yourself is quite easy, in fact; I've done it a number of times before and have come to enjoy it. All you need is some extra fabric (denim or not), and a needle and thread (though a sewing machine works better for heavier fabrics like denim). You can get denim or any host of fabrics from stores like [Joann Fabrics](#), as well as many online stores (a good idea if you are looking for organic or sustainable ones). Another option is to go to thrift stores and pick out a pair of shorts, skirt, sweater, or any other item that you like the fabric of, and use it for the project. Click "more" below to continue reading!

If you think you can live without that particular pair of pants, then two options present themselves: donate them (which we all know is a kick ass thing to do) or cut 'em up and use the fabric for something else. Now we are getting onto the topic of being crafty and creative, which I could ramble on about for eons. The following is just a small selection of things that you could use spare denim for: coasters, dish rags, pillows, the start of a nifty blanket, pet toys, scented satchels for your closet or dresser, tea pot cover ... yeah, you get the idea. The joy of this choice is that you are becoming an even more active part of the recycling process. Crafty books are abound, so finding inspiration shouldn't be tough.

I'm not surprised that a company like Denim Therapy was started, because our society has an overall possessive tone. Many of us have a hard time letting go of our favorite items, whether they are people, pets, clothes, or anything else. Everything is impermanent; keeping that in mind, make sure to enjoy your favorites (who or whatever they are) while they are still in one piece.

Now, on to your second question: *what are some other cheap but green fashion alternatives?* This comes back to the point that I just made. When it comes to fashion, many see it as a temporary thing, but everything we choose to spend our hard-earned money on should be an investment. Of course, now we

are talking about adjusting the human psyche, and that is just one big ole mess.

So, if you want to be cheap and green, thrift stores are your best bet, hands down. No extra energy or fabric was used to create these items; they've been around for years and are still in good condition. While it is good to support new, sustainable fibers and businesses, jeans from 20 years ago are just as sturdy as those made last week. If you have an aversion to thrift stores, you should dig deep down and find out why; these places rock! Maybe you are worried about walking around in a stranger's old clothes? Understandable - to combat this, have a swap party with your friends. Pick a night, get some tasty food, have everyone bring the clothes they hardly/don't wear anymore, and SWAP! No fuss, no muss, no money exchanges hands. Feeling inspired? Head to (or set up your own branch of) the [Swap-O-Rama-Rama](#) event, started by Wendy Tremayne in NYC. Not only will you have a bigger selection of goodies to sort through, do-it-yourself workshops of all kinds are offered to help transform your finds.

Mallory, I hope this served as a pretty good answer to both of your questions. If anyone has other suggestions or comments to add, bring 'em on! As always, my door (or at least my e-mail inbox) is open to any and all of your green fashion questions, so keep them coming. Til next time - this is [Victoria E](#), signing off.

[Image courtesy of [Dave Sag](#)]

Posted on Wednesday, January 24th, 2007 at 5:20 pm

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1. I'd like to submit the idea that jeans from 20 years ago are *more* durable than jeans made yesterday! This whole pre-worn-in thing means my last couple of pairs of jeans have fallen apart after only a few months. erg!

I also recently discovered some 'shops' on www.etsy.com who take vintage and 'used' fabrics and re-make them into various clothing options. I thought this was a great green idea to get some unique items of clothing ('course I have been a huge convert to etsy.com - the shops only sell all handmade stuff and it's just a great community).

Comment by [turtlebella](#) — January 24, 2007 @ 5:52 pm

2. You make a very good point about denim these days TurtleBella, which I am sure is caused by a number of factor (all of them bad for the planet, I'm sure).

Etsy is a fantastic website and my preferred alternative to eBay; I'd suggested everyone check it out.

Comment by [Victoria E](#) – January 24, 2007 @ [5:55 pm](#)

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