



ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY SPENDING

Want to make your shopping habits more eco-friendly? We asked the experts how we can be more mindful about where and how we spend our hard-earned cash...

Think sustainable shopping, and you might picture your weekly supermarket bill racking up and pricey pound signs on clothes tags, but sustainable doesn't have to mean expensive. If you use practical tips to reduce your impact on the earth and make simple swaps in your daily life, planet-friendly can also mean purse-friendly. All it takes, as sustainability YouTuber and author Madeleine Olivia explains in her new book *Mmindal*, is becoming mindful of your existing habits and figuring out whether or not you really need to part with your money. Here, she explains how to do just that.

CUTTING BACK

There's a chance that if you're feeling the urge to declutter and minimise, you may have a history of shopping just that little bit too much. As soon as I found out about minimalism, one of the first things I did was stop shopping. If you have a bit of a purchasing problem, try to avoid a shopping spree (even if your friend invites you – suggest somewhere else), delete sale emails and stop consuming any media that encourages you to buy.

If in doubt whether you should be buying something new, ask yourself these questions:

- Can I afford it?
- Do I have something similar that is good enough?
- Will I only use it once, and if so, can I borrow it from a friend instead?
- Is this an impulse buy?
- Am I buying it because of the brand name?
- Can I live without it?
- Am I buying it to impress others?
- Would I buy it if it was triple the price?

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SIMPLE SHOPPING SWAPS

Not all of us have the facility to grow our own fruit and veg or make our own clothes so sometimes, spending is necessary – but, as Dr Joanna Ward, author of *Superfoods to Superhealth* explains, there are still ways you can lessen your impact on the planet: "It's going to take a coordinated effort to improve the effect that our spending is having on the environment – but you can start with taking a look at your shopping habits," says Dr Ward. Here's her advice...

When food shopping...

"Make local choices where you can and ask, 'is this sustainable?' Avocados, which are hugely popular these days, are actually

imported from Mexico and the demand for them is causing deforestation. Buy Spanish avocados instead, which still come with air miles, but have less of a negative environmental impact. Look to your local farmers' market for inspiration when it comes to seasonality. Not only do they have quality produce, but they'll also have the best of what's in season. Also, you probably won't see a plastic bag in sight!"

When clothes shopping...

"Look for quality when you do choose to spend money on clothes. It wasn't that long ago that we used to try and patch up rips and tears with a sewing machine, rather than spend £4 on a new dress – fast fashion is so detrimental to

the environment, so buy secondhand where you can."

When beauty shopping...

"When you're buying beauty products check the ingredients list before purchase. Look out for ingredients such as silica (a mineral found naturally in sandstone, clay and granite) and parabens (a type of preservative) and buy organic where you can. Think about the packaging that your product is coming in. Beauty products that come naked, such as shampoo bars, are always better for the environment, but you can still have something that feels luxurious that is wrapped up in recycled paper."

- Am I buying it out of boredom?
- Does it fit me and my style?
- Do I have clothes at home to pair it with?

CURB YOUR SPENDING HABITS

It's time we stopped placing so much worth on things, and stopped shopping for stuff we don't need. Don't get caught up listening to advertising campaigns, influencers and celebrities that make you feel like you need something they're selling in order to feel better about yourself. Constantly consuming and wanting more can cause a big strain on our happiness. There is nothing healthy about stretching our wallets to achieve unattainable material goals. If you can change just one thing, then limiting your shopping habits – and only buying what you need and truly love – is it. Everyone's situation is different, but being more intentional with what you're buying, and setting yourself a budget can work wonders over time to get yourself out of a money rut.

Simple tricks to stop shopping:

- Save it for later in a bookmark on your computer, on Pinterest or write it down
- Unsubscribe from your favourite shops' newsletters
- Set yourself a monthly budget and stick to it
- Unfollow people online who encourage you to spend money
- Set yourself a target to save a certain

- amount by a certain time to give you more incentive not to spend
- Declutter and tidy when you get the urge to buy something
- Try renting or borrowing instead of buying something new
- Go thrifting or secondhand shopping to get your fix without spending so much money.
- Pay with cash over card to keep track of your money better

MADELEINE SAYS...

Reducing the amount we buy is one of the biggest and most effective changes we can make when it comes to being more sustainable. It's as simple as stopping before we shop and thinking about whether we actually need it. It's why I wanted to highlight how to curb those spending habits, as a self-confessed and recovered shopaholic, in my book. And one of the best parts of slowing your spending, is saving money!

Madeline



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