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What is Sustainable Beauty and How it Impacts the Environment

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By Stephanie Jade Wong



Source: [Unsplash](#)

If you think sustainability or sustainable beauty is just for hippies or tree huggers, you're wrong. Did you know [8 million tons of plastic end up in our oceans yearly](#)? In an effort to be more [eco-friendly](#), maybe you've gotten rid of your bag full of [plastic bags](#) in the cabinet under your kitchen sink. Even if you've been sporting reusable totes, did you know [the average moisturizer pot takes nearly 1,000 years to decompose](#)?

Have you thought about how your beauty products could be causing a problem for our planet? What exactly *is* sustainable beauty? Why is it so [confusing](#)? Is it just some hot [trend](#)?

Don't sweat it, we've got the answers for you here.

Sustainability and Sustainable Beauty



Source: [Unsplash](#)

For something to be [sustainable](#), it has to meet your current needs, yet won't compromise future generations' needs.

The last thing we want to do is harm our planet, which is why you're probably used to reusable totes and beauty products with non-toxic ingredients. [Sustainable beauty](#) is essentially a mix of both.

Sustainable beauty usually has the following characteristics:

- Ingredients and packaging are biodegradable
- Low [carbon footprint](#)
- Low energy consumption
- Carefully sourced raw ingredients
- Reduced waste

There's a [99% chance that humans are the cause of global warming](#). Climate change is real, and if you haven't seen [environmental activist Greta Thunberg's passionate speech](#) at the UN Climate Action Summit, I highly recommend it.

Greta Thunberg to world leaders: 'How dare you? You have ...



Droughts, heat waves, melting glaciers, rising sea levels, and warming oceans can all harm humans, but also harm animals.

We love that many of you purchase cruelty-free products. I'm an animal lover and I'm sure many of you are, too. I've had my fair share of pets growing up (including five tortoises), and I feel sick thinking animals could be harmed because of climate change and pollution. Can you imagine a turtle dying after eating 104 pieces of plastic? What about a seahorse dragging a cotton swab around the ocean? The turtles and seahorses can't control what's in their living environment, but we as humans can help.

Climate change affects humans in many different ways, including our health, agriculture, food, water supply, and more. We can do better as consumers and as people.

We've already banned microbeads from products like face scrubs, but there are things you can do as an individual.

How to Become More Sustainable



Source: [Unsplash](#)

1. Educate Yourself on What's Sustainable and What's Not

There are so many products on the market that shopping can feel overwhelming. How do you know what to buy and what to avoid? To start, here are a few [ingredients that aren't sustainable](#):

- Aluminum: Found in deodorants, and linked to [breast cancer](#), [Alzheimer's](#), and [osteoporosis](#).
- BHA and BHT: Preservatives common in lipsticks and moisturizers. There's also evidence that they [disrupt your endocrine system](#).
- [Coal tar dyes](#): Dyes used in food, medication, cosmetics, hair dyes, and shampoos.
- Dibutyl phthalate (DBP): Found in nail polish, and [toxic to human reproduction](#).
- Formaldehyde-releasing preservatives: Formaldehyde (a [carcinogen](#)) can be released from these preservatives found in cosmetics and cleaning products.

2. Recycle

[Recycling](#) helps reduce the amount of waste in landfills, prevents pollution, and saves energy. Yes, recycling an empty water bottle may be easy, but recycling your beauty products may be confusing depending on the product's packaging. Here are three tips on how to recycle beauty packaging:

- If your mascara is packaged in a bamboo tube like [Elate's Essential Mascara](#), use pliers to break open the bamboo and expose the inner plastic tube. Compost the bamboo and rinse the remaining mascara from the inner plastic tube, using the wand to help you scrub. Recycle the

clean plastic and check with your local wildlife initiatives to see if they take donated mascara wands, which can help some rescued wildlife.

- If you have any pressed-powder products like eye shadows, blushes, or bronzers, check if it's in an aluminum pan. If it is, you can remove the pan from its palette and clean it thoroughly. It can be recycled with the rest of your household recycling.
- If you have a product packaged in a glass bottle with a plastic pump or rubber dropper, be sure to remove all the separate materials before you clean them for recycling. Some pumps have tiny metal springs inside them that you can't see.

3. Use Less Water

You know those “save water, drink beer” or “save water, shower together” shirts? They seem cheesy, but kinda have a point.

We're lucky to have clean, fresh water to drink and use on a daily basis. Conserving water means using a limited amount wisely. This is important because we're not promised an endless supply of water.

Here are three easy ways to use less water:

- Take shorter showers.
- Turn off the water when you're shaving.
- Don't leave the water running when you're brushing or flossing your teeth.

Here are more ways to conserve water.

4. Reduce the Amount of Beauty Products You Use



Source: [Love, Indie B.](#)

You don't really need 15 products in the shower or 20 in your makeup bag. If you focus on essential items, this can cut down the number of products you own. We love multi-purpose products. Here are 3 to consider:

- A 3-in-1 shampoo, conditioner, and body wash.
- The [Au Naturele Anywhere Creme Multi-Stick](#) for eyes, cheeks, and lips.
- The [Coco Ensoleille Makeup Assassin](#) which doubles as a face cleanser and makeup remover.

5. Be Aware of Product Packaging

Be on the lookout for how your [products are packaged](#) and if they are recyclable.

Keep in mind that you can reuse containers and jars, too. Smaller containers are great for traveling or to carry with you in your bag for the day.

A great way to cut out the amount of plastic packaging you use is to [swap them](#) for glass or stainless steel containers.

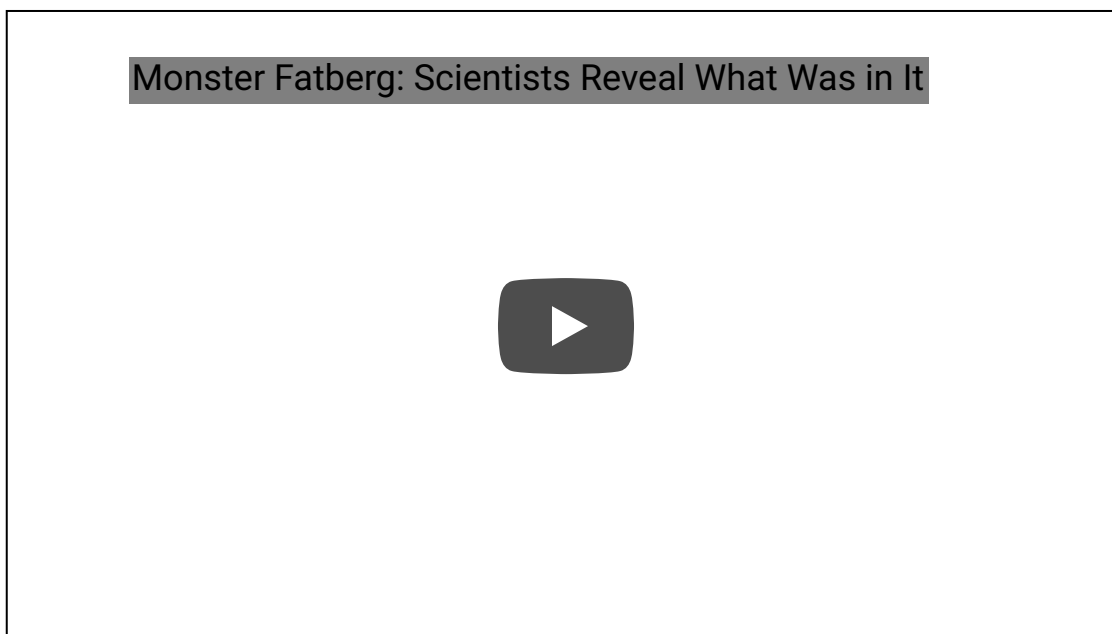
6. Shop for Cruelty-Free Products

Animal testing is a no-no in our book. Also, plastics can get into oceans which can harm animals as well as pollute our atmosphere. Be sure to do your research when shopping for products. If your current items aren't sustainable, switch them out with ones that are. [Check the sustainability and ethics of your favorite beauty brands here.](#)

7. Shop for Eco-Friendly and Zero-Waste Products

Love glitter? You don't have to give it up to save the planet. Find an [earth-friendly glitter](#) product instead.

Have you Googled "[fatberg](#)" yet? It's a giant mass in a sewer system made out of non-biodegradable matter like wet wipes and cooking fat.



If that doesn't make you wanna stop using single-use [makeup remover wipes](#), I don't know what will.

Let's Shop Sustainable Beauty



Source: [Love, Indie B.](#)

We care about humans, animals, and the world around us, so we've gotta step it up when it comes to saving our environment.

Don't worry! It's actually quite easy. We'll start you off with one of our fave products that's 100% sustainably designed. The [Aethier Beauty eyeshadow palettes](#) are completely [zero-waste](#) and the shades are beyond gorgeous.

[Click here to Shop all Love, Indie B.](#)



About the Author:

Stephanie Jade Wong is a NY-based freelance writer. She likes long walks to coffee shops, trying new beauty products, and petting strangers' dogs.

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