



Laser technology | Photo source Pixabay

JEANS MANUFACTURER USES LASER FINISHING TO REDUCE CHEMICAL WASTE



New laser reduces the number of steps in the finishing process for jeans and cuts chemical waste.

Fast fashion is frequently criticized, and possibly just as frequently, innovative ideas work to counteract the waste. Distressing jeans is a significant polluter within the fashion industry, and **Levi Strauss & Co** recently announced a new operating model designed specifically to reduce chemical waste. With Project F.L.X. (Future-led execution), the company's goal is to achieve zero hazardous waste by 2020. Right now, each finish on a pair of jeans takes between 18 and 20 manual actions to complete. Using its own proprietary software, the company can reduce that process to no more than three steps per pair of jeans. That then increases the numbers of jeans that the company is producing each day. Previously, it took two to three hours to complete each pair of jeans. Now, with the lasers, completion takes 90 seconds for each pair.

The system works by turning a photograph of each finish into a digital file that the laser can interpret. Consumers continue to expect near-bespoke experiences and products, as close to on-demand as possible. Technology is helping many companies keep up with these demands. For Levi Strauss & Co, Project F.L.X. will help the company respond to trends in a matter of weeks or days, rather than months. By completing finishing nearer in time to the final point of sale, the Project allows for hyper-local promotions and productions.

Another example of the fashion industry cleaning up its act is a big name company using **recycled plastic bottles** in its boots and bags. As for other types of new materials, some are designed to eliminate waste altogether. One company recently debuted its lab-grown, animal-free, **biofabricated leather** created specifically for its strength and durability. How might governments address the

potential for black market demand for animal-based materials (such as leather) that are currently legal yet harm the environment?

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Email: newsmediarequests@levi.com

Website: www.levistrauss.com

Contact: newsmediarequests@levi.com