

A Japanese denim has a reputation among enthusiasts as being the best in the world. It has a cult following in Europe and America because of its amazing look and feel. The cloth is stiffer, denser but far more comfortable than the mass-produced denim used in other countries. Japanese denim is different because they use traditional production techniques that have been abandoned elsewhere. Most denim today is produced using chemical dye, but Japanese denim uses natural dye and the material is dipped up to thirty times to produce a deep, intense and rich colour that fades with time. These traditional methods are more labour-intensive, which makes the product more expensive, but Tokyo's trendsetters are willing to splash out on the perfect pair of jeans.

B We're hooked on jeans! In the UK alone, three pairs are sold every second of every day. But recently, modern methods of production have been causing environmental concerns. Demand for jeans has increased so much that cotton farmers have to rely more and more on pesticides and fertilisers to raise their crops. Traditionally, jeans were dyed with a natural indigo dye. Nowadays, though, the dye is chemical and toxic and even more chemicals are used to give the denim a vintage appearance. Distressed jeans are increasingly popular and to achieve this look – the jeans are blasted with sand. Factory workers complained of breathing problems and as a result, some brands of jeans have banned the process. Another issue is that it takes 6,000 litres of water to produce one pair of jeans. Jeans are fashionable, affordable and hard-wearing, but at what cost to the environment?

C Recent reports have suggested that skinny jeans enthusiasts may be damaging their health. Wearing jeans that are too tight could compress a major nerve on the outside of your thigh. This can lead to pain or loss of feeling in your legs. In most cases, the nerve damage can be reversed simply by taking the tight jeans off. Jeans that are tight around the waist can also make it difficult to digest your food. Health experts are urging young people who are committed to the skinny jeans look to choose a pair that have some stretch in them and are less likely to have a negative effect on the body. If you notice a strange sensation in your legs, it may be time to change your style.

D So, you've got that top quality pair of jeans you wanted. How can you keep them looking good and stop them from fading? Well, perhaps you're washing them too often. The CEO of Levi's caused a stir when he mentioned in public that he hadn't washed his jeans for over a year! He wanted to show how we can help the environment by using less water. Apparently, by washing our jeans in the machine once a week for two years, we use over 3,500 litres of water. His view is supported by other professionals who believe that it isn't necessary to wash jeans very often because the material is thick and it's the top of our bodies that sweats and makes clothes smelly, not the bottom! So, to help the environment and also keep our jeans looking good, wash less frequently, soak in cold salt water, turn them inside out and don't dry in sunlight. Oh yes, and you could wash them in vinegar.