Jain core practice of Non-Violence extends far beyond being vegetarian and avoiding activities that hurt insects. The products we buy, how we use them, and how we dispose of them are important opportunities for Jains to practice Non-Violence and Non-Possessiveness. Most Jains are familiar with what happens on farms and in slaughter houses to make meat and leather products. Similarly, it is important to understand how other everyday products – such as food, electronics, jewelry, and clothing – are manufactured. Some of these processes inflict violence on people, animals, and the environment in the form of poor labor conditions, human rights abuses, pollution, inefficient use of resources, health risks, and social and economic injustice. We all must eat, wear clothes, and use technology every day to function as productive citizens and Jains. Since lay Jains are neither able to nor expected to eliminate all violence from our lives, we should instead focus on becoming more aware of the social and environmental consequences of our purchases and seek to minimize the overall impact of our lives. The following pages provide a primer on the main issues associated with everyday products. A wealth of information is readily available online. It’s up to you to become aware of the impacts of the products you use and seek out ways to integrate Non-Violence and Non-Possessiveness into your shopping and consumption decisions.

About Jewelry

Families regularly purchase jewelry without realizing the social and environmental implications of gold and diamond mining and production. While the jewelry industry helps generate revenues for developing countries, gold and diamond production pollutes the air, water, and land; contributes to military conflict; leads to human rights atrocities; and generates tons of toxic waste. Keep in mind the following information when purchasing gold and diamond jewelry:

- Producing one gold ring requires 30 tons of ore and generates 20 tons of mine waste.
- More than 50% of the world’s diamonds are processed in India, where many of the cutters and polishers are bonded child laborers who work to pay off the debts of their relatives, often unsuccessfully.
- Roughly 4%-10% of the world’s diamonds are known as “conflict diamonds.” These diamonds are traded by rebel soldiers and governments to finance military activities, buy weapons, and fuel civil strife. The majority of conflict diamonds come from Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Congo.
Simple Tips

- Minimize your jewelry purchases.

- When you do purchase gold and diamonds, make sure that the jewelry you're buying was produced responsibly. Use the Internet and the resources in the next column to make informed decisions.

- If your family has old jewelry sets that are no longer worn, try recycling them into new pieces. Many jewelers, especially Indian jewelers, will melt down your old gold jewelry and reuse the diamonds to make brand new custom pieces. This is a cheaper and more sustainable alternative to purchasing new jewelry.

- Many jewelers carry vintage jewelry, including engagement/wedding rings.

- Up to 15% of the world’s rough diamonds come from small-scale informal digging activities which are often unlicensed and exploited by rebel military groups.

Useful Resources

Brilliant Earth (www.brilliantearth.com): All diamonds are harvested and finished using fair trade practices and are certified conflict-free by third-parties. 5% of profits goes to the Diamonds for Africa Fund.

Adia Diamonds (www.adiadiamonds.com): Makes high-quality diamonds in a laboratory. All diamonds are conflict-free and produced in an environmentally friendly way.

Tiffany & Co. (www.tiffany.com): Played a major role in establishing a system adhered to by trading countries and the jewelry industry to keep conflict diamonds out of the legitimate diamond supply. Tiffany is among 11 jewelry retail companies that support the No Dirty Gold campaign’s “Golden Rules,” which were introduced in 2006 and establish principles for socially and environmentally responsible gold mining.

About Clothing

Public awareness has increased about sweatshops and poor labor conditions at textile and apparel factories. Many large brand name companies outsource their clothes manufacturing to sweatshops that have poor wages and benefits and appalling working conditions. Through our clothing purchases, we can encourage clothing retailers and manufacturers to improve labor rights at their suppliers’ factories and promote economic empowerment and community development.

Useful Resources

Co-op America's Clothing Retailer Scorecard
www.coopamerica.org/programs/sweatshops/scorecard.cfm

Responsible Shopper
www.coopamerica.org/programs/rs/companies.cfm

Non-leather shoes, belts, and accessories
www.veganshoes.com
www.mooshoes.com
www.alternativeoutfitters.com
www.veganessentials.com
www.earthshoes.com
www.thevegetariansite.com
www.newbalance.com
www.ethicalwares.com
www.vegetarianshoesandbags.com
www.planetshoes.com

American Apparel (www.americanapparel.net): Manufactures all garments in company-owned factories in Los Angeles. Offers competitive wages, generous employee benefits, and stable employment to its textile factory workers. Also sells clothing made from organic cotton.

Nike (www.nike.com): Nike Organics line includes 95-100% organic cotton clothing. About half of Nike’s cotton products are made from 5% organic cotton, and the company has eliminated virtually all toxic chemicals in the rubber components of its footwear.

No Sweat Apparel (www.nosweatapparel.com): Sells 100% union-made apparel and footwear. Union workers generally have more job security and better wages and benefits than non-union workers.

Patagonia (www.patagonia.com): Donates 1% of profits to environmental causes. By using recycled bottles in some clothing, Patagonia has saved 86 million bottles from landfills.

Timberland (www.timberland.com): Timberland shirts sold in the United States contain at least 6% cotton. The company’s goal was for organic cotton to account for 5% of its total cotton purchasing in 2005. It has developed footwear using less water and energy, environmentally preferred materials such as recycled rubber, and no polyvinyl chloride. The company has proactively addressed labor issues and employee welfare at its overseas and suppliers’ facilities.

Gap (www.gap.com): Is a leader in the apparel industry for addressing labor rights violations in its supply chain. Several labor rights groups have praised Gap’s factory monitoring and compliance systems. All proceeds from GAP Project Red Jeans go to the Global Fund for Africa.

About Electronics

Appliances and electronics have become so inexpensive that people are buying new gadgets and PCs left and right without adequately understanding the impact of their purchases. Keep in mind the following:

1) How the products are manufactured.

Electronic products contain hundreds of materials, many of which are toxic-heavy metals and pollutants such as lead, mercury, cadmium, beryllium, hazardous chemicals, and polyvinyl chloride (PVC). These substances pollute the land, air, and water when electronics are not discarded properly. Workers, especially children and pregnant women, face health risks when exposed to lead and mercury when manufacturing these products in factories.

2) How the products are used.

Electronics naturally require energy to operate. Most energy in the United States and is derived from burning coal and oil, which generates greenhouse gas emissions and contributes to climate change. Between 60% and 80% of the electricity used by most appliances is sucked away when they’re not even being used. Light displays (like the lights on your computer monitors and printers) and “instant on” features (like the ability of the remote control to “talk” to the TV) use energy all day long.

Simple Tips

• Minimize your clothing purchases. This includes American clothes as well as Indian clothes. Think hard before you purchase another sari, Panjabi, etc.
• Buy clothes at thrift shops and exchange clothes with friends and relatives.
• Buy high-quality clothing that will last longer.
• Use online resources (see adjacent column) to find socially responsible clothing companies.
• Avoid leather, silk, and fur.
• Buy organic cotton clothing and textiles when you can. Conventionally grown cotton is among the world’s most pesticide-intensive crops. Buying a 100% organic cotton T-shirt over a non-organic one saves 1/3 lb. of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides from entering the waste stream.
3) **How the products are discarded?**

Increased purchasing of electronic goods results in more products being thrown away – a problem known as e-waste. Mobile phones have a lifecycle of less than two years. The average lifespan of computers in developed countries dropped from six years in 1997 to just two years in 2005. In 2004, less than 1 in 30 home computers was recycled. When thrown away, these electronics end up in landfills or incinerators. Since electronics contain heavy metals and hazardous chemicals, discarding or burning them releases lead, cadmium, and mercury into the air and ashes. Mercury released into the atmosphere can bioaccumulate in the food chain. If the products contain PVC plastic, highly toxic dioxins and furans are also released.

**Useful Resources**

- **GreenMachine Desktops** ([www.greenmachineshop.com](http://www.greenmachineshop.com)). One-stop shopping for eco friendly computers and accessories. Also offers a free e-class on buying efficient PCs.
- **ENERGY STAR** ([www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Find_a_Product](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Find_a_Product)): Comprehensive resource for information on energy-efficient electronics and appliances. Energy Star is a U.S. government program that provides guidelines and promotes best practices for energy-efficient homes and businesses.
- **EPEAT** ([www.epeat.net](http://www.epeat.net)): Excellent resource for energy-efficiency and environmental ratings for desktops, laptops, and monitors. Maintained by the Green Electronics Council.
- **HP**: Through its Planet Partners program, HP offers pickup, transportation, evaluation for reuse or donation, and recycling for a wide variety of its products, ranging from PCs to printer, scanners, and print cartridges.
- **Dell**: Will pick up your old computer, regardless of the brand, for recycling or donation. Dell also uses up to 25% post-industrial recycled plastics in its desktop computer, portable computer, and server chassis plastics.

**Toshiba**: Will trade in your old (functioning) Toshiba equipment and will give you a discount on a new Toshiba. The company recycles and reuses old parts. [http://toshiba.eztradein.com/toshiba/](http://toshiba.eztradein.com/toshiba/)

**Phillips**: Launched its EcoDesign program in 1994 to minimize product weight, reduce packaging, increase recyclables and lifespan, and optimize energy efficiency.

**Panasonic** *(made by Matsushita)*: Manufactures more than 475 ENERGY STAR products under its Panasonic brand name. Homes equipped with Panasonic energy-efficient appliances could emit 34% fewer greenhouse gas emissions from 1991 levels, a remarkable achievement considering that the average household used 14 times more appliances in 2005 than 1991.

**General resources on socially responsible companies and products**:

- **Better World Travel**: [http://betterwoldtravel.com](http://betterwoldtravel.com)
- **Responsible Shopper**: [www.coopamerica.org/programs/rs/](http://www.coopamerica.org/programs/rs/)
- **Treehugger**: [www.treehugger.com](http://www.treehugger.com)
Simple Tips

- Minimize your electronics purchases. Just because your cell phone company offers a free new phone after one year, or a new printer or TV is on sale, don’t feel you need to accumulate more electronics.

- Use a toaster oven or crockpot over electric stove tops or gas and electric ovens. Toaster ovens use up to 50% less energy than full-sized electric ovens. Microwaves are more efficient than gas and electric ovens but less efficient than gas stove tops.

- When choosing a computer, buy a laptop over a desktop. Although generally more expensive than desktops, laptops use 75 – 100 fewer watts than desktops.

- Chose a low-energy computer to save up to $300 per year in energy costs and use up to 70% less energy than standard computers.

- Choose a flat-panel monitor for TVs and computers – they use up to 30% less energy and contain far less lead than the older cathode ray tube (CRT) monitors.

- Save energy and money by setting your computer to “sleep mode” and turning it off overnight – this saves an additional $25-$75/yr. (New PCs are designed to handle more than 100 years’ worth of on/off cycles.)

- Recycle your old PCs and other electronic equipment.

- Unplug appliances (like TVs, computers, etc.) when you’re not using them. In the average home, 40% of all electricity is used to power home appliances while they’re turned off.

- Recycle regular alkalines and rechargeable batteries.

- Buy compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL) instead of standard incandescent bulbs. By replacing a 100-watt bulb with its CFL equivalent, you’ll save $100+ in electricity costs over the lifetime of each bulb because CFLs use 90-95% less energy and last up to 15 times longer. If you replace ten 100W light bulbs with CFLs, you’ll reduce the same amount of CO$_2$ that an SUV emits over a year.

“Jainism presents various solutions of the ecological problem through its focus on Non-Violence. Jains hold that not only humans and animals but also earth, air, fire, and vegetables are also sentient and living beings (or harbor them). For Jains to pollute, to disturb, to hurt, and to destroy them means committing violence against them.” — Professor Sagarmal Jain

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