

STEP 4

Optimize your castoffs

Quick—before you change your mind, round up the rejects and reference this guide to the best places to donate or sell.



CHARITY CONCERNS

Are the donation bins in parking lots and on street corners legit?
You may want to do a little research first. Some of the companies who own them have come under fire for misrepresenting how much of the contributions go to those in need and how much is resold for profit. Goodwill and the Salvation Army are among the most reliable places to unload clothes; some locations pick up for free.

What should you do with the holey sweats that you think no one wants?
Donate those, too, says Goodwill spokesperson Lorie Marrero. (Do the sorting team a favor and label bags of beat-up items RECYCLE.) Articles unsuitable for resale in the organizations' stores are sold to textile recyclers, who use the fibers for insulation, carpet padding, and stuffing for toys.

GIVE WHERE IT COUNTS

Goodwill and the Salvation Army are always great choices for dropping off donations (see Charity Concerns, right). But there are other options out there where you can dump and do some good—and possibly save a little dough, too.

TYPES OF ITEMS	WHERE TO DONATE
CLOTHES IN USED CONDITION	Stores such as H&M, Ann Taylor, Loft, Levi's, and the North Face allow shoppers to send or bring in clothing, shoes, and accessories (any brand) in exchange for discounts on purchases. The donated items are then reused or recycled.
OUTDATED DENIM	The Blue Jeans Go Green program (bluejeansgogreen.com) organizes denim drives with universities and retailers. (Currently they are partnering with Madewell.) Some of the old jeans will be reborn as insulation for communities in need. Donators receive a discount to buy a new pair.
WELL-WORN SNEAKERS	Thanks to the Nike ReUse-A-Shoe program, you can bring up to 10 pairs (any label) to a Nike or Converse retail store or mail them to the recycling facility (nikereuseashoe.com). There the rubber, foam, and fabric from the shoes are ground into a material used to make sports and playground surfaces and new Nike products.
UNDERUSED FORMAL WEAR	Let another bride enjoy your beautiful wedding dress: BridesAcrossAmerica.com puts gowns into the hands of military brides. As for bridesmaid dresses and other fancy frocks, direct them to Project G.L.A.M. (wgirls.org), which distributes prom dresses to needy high schoolers.
OLD EYEGLASSES	Send used specs to New Eyes for the Needy (new-eyes.org) and they will be dispensed to adults and children in developing nations or recycled to raise funds for new eyeglasses for disadvantaged Americans.

CLICK AND CONSIGN

Hot trends, designer names, tags still attached. These are a few things that may score you beaucoup bucks—without having to leave the house. Online resale sites vary in terms of the types of items they accept, their commission rates, and the level of DIY involved. Below, vitals on some of the top contenders.

RESALE SITE	WHAT TO SELL	HOW TO SELL	AVERAGE PRICE	YOUR PAYOUT
POSHMARK.COM	Fast fashion and luxury and vintage women's clothing in new or gently used condition. Buyers browse members' "closets" in the app and attend virtual real-time shopping events centered on a designer, a product, or a trend.	Snap photos with your phone and identify one for your "covershot," write a description, and set a price. Mail items to your buyer with a prepaid U.S. Postal Service (USPS) shipping label; you supply the box.	\$30 for a mass-market item; \$250 for a designer piece	80 percent on sales of \$15 or more; under \$15, the company takes a \$2.95 commission
THEREALREAL.COM	Pre-owned luxury goods in excellent condition that pass a brand-specific authentication process; menswear too.	Send your items to the company via a free prepaid FedEx shipping label. Pros photograph, price, and list your merch and mail it to the buyer when it sells.	\$300 per item	60 percent of the sale to start; 70 percent if you reach \$7,500 in annual sales
TRADESY.COM	New and gently worn women's fashions in mass-market to designer categories. The site also has more than 50,000 wedding gowns.	Upload photos and include a description. Choose your price, or let the site suggest one. Mail to the buyer with a free prepaid USPS shipping kit.	\$20 for a mass-market item; \$300 for a designer piece	91 percent of the sale in store credit; 88 percent if you want cash
THREDUP.COM	New and like-new women's and kids' styles from top mainstream and designer labels. Check the website for a list of approved brands.	Order a free prepaid "clean-out kit," pack it with goods, and return it to the company via FedEx or the USPS. Experts list and ship qualifying items for you.	\$20 for a woman's mass-market item; \$100 for a designer piece	50 to 80 percent on sales of \$60 or more; under \$60, 10 to 40 percent

THE GUIDE
fashion

ONLINE SELLING 101 Learn how to sell your stuff like the pros do at realsimple.com/sellonline.