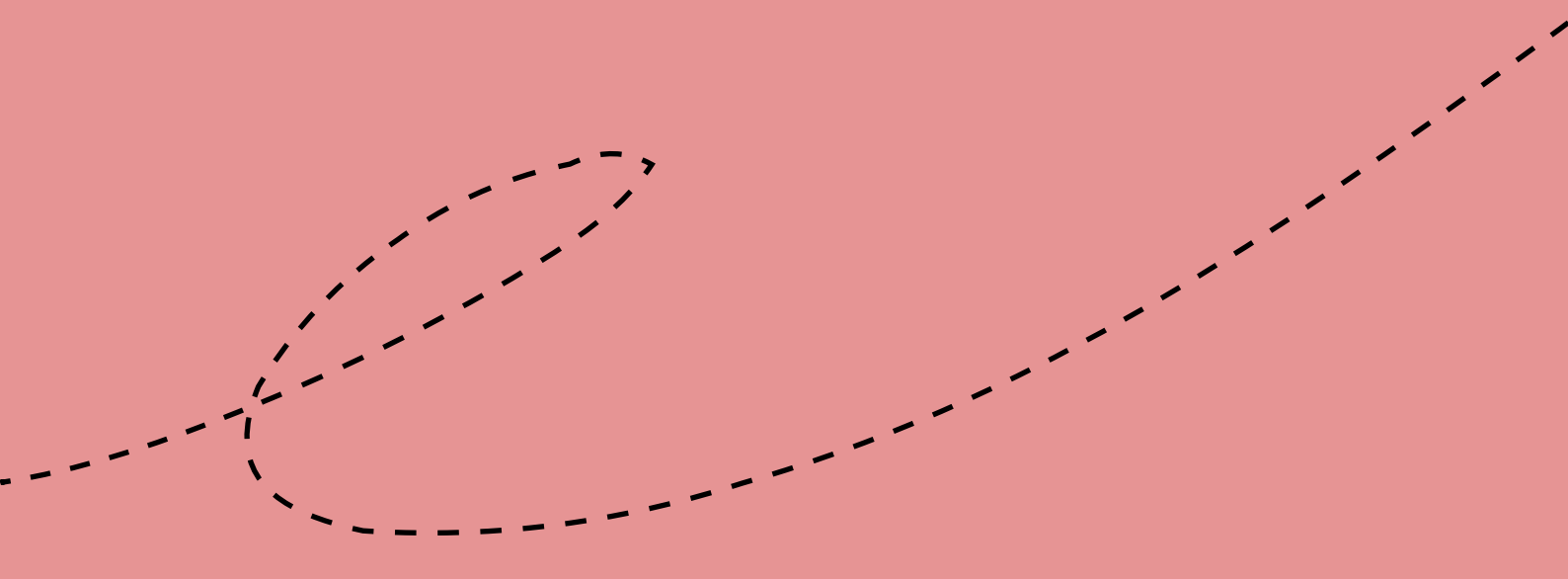


A-GAIN GUIDE

Repair Price Check

A decorative graphic consisting of a long, sweeping dashed line that curves upwards from the left towards the right. A smaller, more complex dashed line loops back and intersects the main line, creating a stylized, abstract shape.

Discover why repairing your clothes is so valuable – and how we determined a minimum fair price for Berlin repair services based on our research!

WWW.A-GAIN.GUIDE

1. Unique characteristics & challenges of repair services
2. Repair Price Check: Your tool for fair prices and sustainable decisions
3. Methodology: The development of repair price check
4. Bibliography

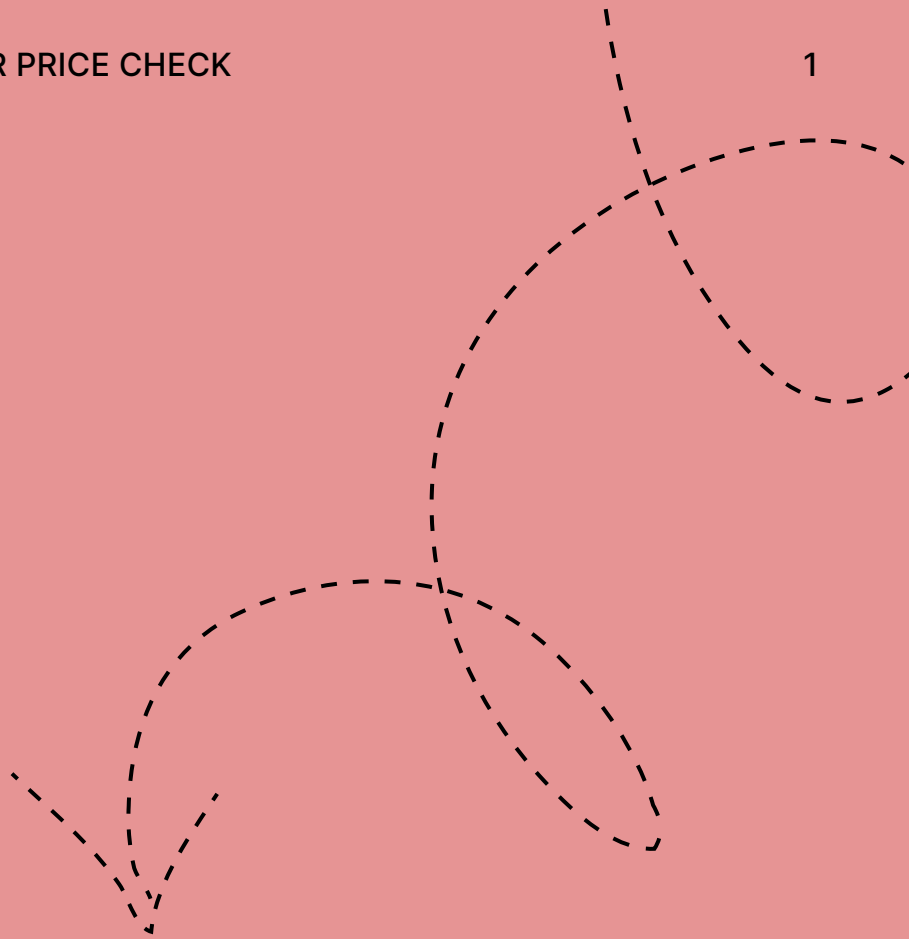


Circular City - Zirkuläre Stadt e.V. (Circular Berlin) is an open, non-profit initiative that accelerates the transition of the Berlin metropolitan region to a circular economy. Through knowledge and community building activities, pilot projects, and educational programmes, the local circular economy agenda is shaped and material flows within the region are redeveloped. Circular Berlin works very closely and

mostly in cooperation with the Berlin federal Ministries for the Environment and for Economics as well as with the local ecosystem of enterprises and start-ups involved in the local Circular Economy - with focus on sectors with high resource consumption and circular potential: textiles and fashion, construction, urban development, product and material design, technologies, as well as food and biomass.



LoopLook is a B2C online marketplace for textile reuse services and products. As a social business case and local community platform, it promotes the visibility of repair and upcycling offers from small businesses and gives consumers easy access to revitalize their closets.



The background of repair services and why they are so important for the future of our clothing

Is it worth repairing your pants or is buying new more attractive?
We often opt for new clothes – without considering the value of repairs.

Fast fashion means that clothes are ending up in the bin faster and faster - in Berlin, every citizen sorts out 18.3 kg every year.¹ Since fashion is so cheap and available everywhere, repairing seems unnecessary, even though it saves resources and protects the environment. If we wear clothes for longer instead of buying new ones, we significantly reduce our ecological footprint. Repair service providers can help us do this, but the industry is suffering. Many of these important businesses are struggling to stay afloat because reasonable, fair prices are often either unknown or perceived as too high. The repair price calculator helps you to better understand the value and effort of a repair and to get to know and appreciate the fair price including all hidden costs.

1. Unique characteristics & challenges of repair services

The following information is based on the exciting insights we gained from interviews with garment repairers (↪ methodology chapter 3), and provides an insight into the challenges they face on a daily basis.

It became particularly clear that clothing repair providers are often in a difficult position. Customers expect low prices, but these are often at disproportionate with the real time and labor involved in repair. Despite high demand, many small workshops are struggling with economic challenges such as inflation and recession, as well as high electricity and rental costs.

A major problem is that there is a lack of suitable tools for pricing that enable uncomplicated and fair calculation. Without reliable data and support, most providers must rely on empirical values and customers' assumed willingness to pay. As a result, the real costs of repairs are not always covered, and many self-employed repair providers do not earn a living wage - in some cases even falling below the statutory minimum wage.

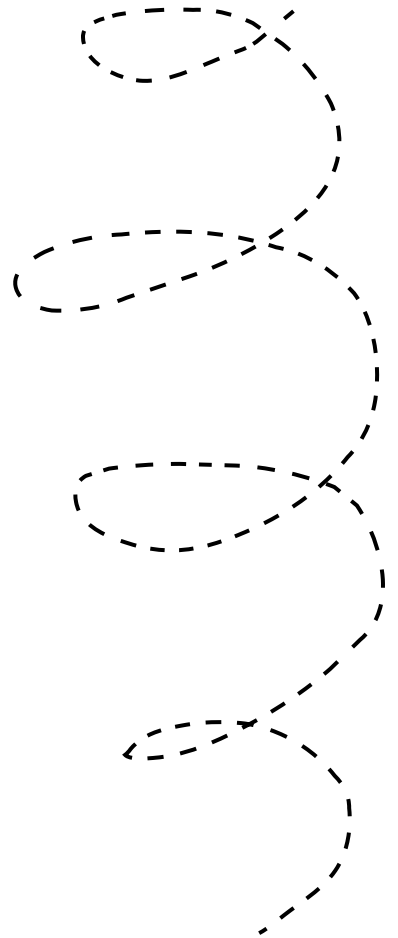
To cover their costs, they work an average of six days a week, 9.5 hours each.²

What makes these repair businesses special – and how can we support them?

1. The love of craftsmanship. Why are fair pay and appreciation so important.

Many tailors and repairers are passionate about their work and proud of their craft. When customers happily hold their favorite repaired items in their hands, it reinforces their work and shows how valuable their repairs are.

But setting fair prices for this work is a challenge. Advice and careful craftsmanship take time - but it is precisely this time that is often not paid for. At the same time, cheap fast-fashion alternatives and efficiency-driven low-cost repair stores are putting pressure on prices. Despite the challenges, repairers enjoy their work – especially when they work with high-quality fabrics and their customers appreciate their work.



Janine Fränzel, Kaschmir Kintsugi & Jawoll Baby

„The individuality of my work has both advantages and disadvantages. But what particularly fascinates me is that all the garments I work with tell stories. Every sweater has a story behind it. Sometimes there is a name in it, a reference to the fact that it once belonged to someone else – perhaps someone who has sadly passed away. But the clothes are not simply thrown away. They find their way to me and take on a new meaning, perhaps even becoming baby clothes. These stories make things special for me.“

Tip

By opting for repairs, you are supporting important local craftspeople. Your favorite piece deserves a second chance – and the people who repair it deserve your appreciation!

2. Transparent pricing and honest communication. Why do repairs take longer than you think.

The prices for a repair are often difficult to calculate because every item of clothing is unique. Details that affect the time and cost are only revealed when the garment is opened during the repair. Many repairers usually do not charge for the entire work and consultation time, resulting in unpaid work. Good advice and open insights into the repair process promote customers' understanding and appreciation of the craft.

However, many companies are barely keeping their heads above water despite full order books. They have to accept more orders than they can handle in normal working hours in order to make ends meet financially. Although inflation-related price increases have been partially accepted through transparent communication, rising operating costs such as electricity or heating can often not be fully passed on to customers.

Anke Freytag, Trash Berlin & Anakind

„It can always happen that you make a big mistake over time, because as soon as you open a garment, you can really see how it has been finished and whether you need to undo and sew up one or more seams. These are hidden costs. There is always the risk of misjudging the time and the message to the customer.“

Tip

Ask specifically about the work involved, show appreciation for the craftsmanship and be open to a fair, flexible price – because every repair is unique!

3. Existential pressure and fear of the future. Stress on a personal, economic and operational level.

The heavy workload and little free time are putting a strain on repair businesses – both personally and financially. In order to be able to offer repair services, many of them include additional sources of income in their offer, such as workshops or their own products. Some even take on a second job. Only a few can claim state subsidies or support from the job center. Reserves for vacations, illness or private pensions are often a distant dream and cause anxiety about the future. Rising rents, high operating costs and expensive materials make it even more difficult for many. Repair businesses with employees are also struggling with rising personnel costs – and it is becoming increasingly difficult to find well-trained specialists.

As it is almost impossible to pay skilled craftspeople above the minimum wage, many are moving to other sectors – which makes it even more difficult to recruit new talent.

Ala Hadji, á la mode

„I'm definitely proud of what I've achieved. It was particularly hard at the beginning - it was tough. I usually worked more than 10 hours a day. And now I have two permanent employees.“

Tip

A fair price for your repair not only strengthens the business but also makes the skilled trades more attractive to young people – so even more textiles can be saved in the future.

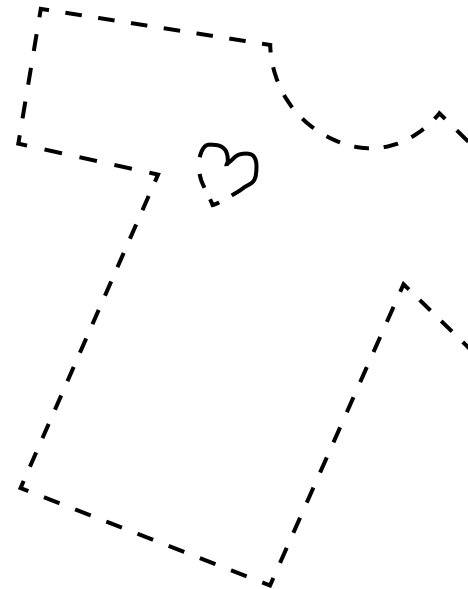
4. Diverse challenges: How price pressure, time constraints, material quality and sustainability awareness affect repair businesses.

The repair industry is under pressure: repairers attach great importance to quality, but many customers are price-sensitive, which means that repairs are often given less time than they need. Another problem is that the quality of materials and workmanship of newly produced clothing is constantly decreasing, meaning that repairs are sometimes not useful and have to be rejected.

More than half of customers use repairs out of sustainability awareness, followed by the desire to save money. Interest in circular services such as repair is increasing in parallel with repair requests for ultra-fast fashion products, despite the challenge of repairing them.

Tip

Although repairs sometimes require a little more time and effort than buying a new item quickly, they are a valuable and sustainable decision that helps you to enjoy your clothes for longer and protect the environment at the same time.



2. Repair Price Check: Your tool for fair prices and sustainable decisions

Our repair price check was developed for you based on interviews and surveys with textile repair services in Berlin!

It allows you to calculate a fair minimum price for the four most frequently requested services in the four product categories. It shows you the price based on the product type, the material and the type of repair.

4 Services:

Replacing a zipper

Fix a seam

Repair a hole

Shorten sleeves or trousers leg

With our repair price check, you can find out what a fair repair should cost in a simple and fun way. The calculator helps you to get a feel for the minimum price that enables repairers to cover their costs and make a living from their work at the same time. The time required for consultation and repair work is also taken into account.

At the moment, repair services only charge an average of around 52% of the fair minimum price for their repairs. Especially for common services such as “seam repair” or “hole repair”, the prices are often only 30 to 40% of the minimum price we charge. The fair prices determined here correspond to the usual tradesmen’s costs. They can be calculated by multiplying the time required by the living wage and a mark-up of 2.0 to 2.2, plus VAT. The mark-up factor corresponds approximately to a lower factor used in the fashion trade.³

Use the repair price check and see for yourself how easy it is to act more sustainably and support fair prices!

What is a fair price?

What a fair price can mean is not uniformly defined and can be interpreted differently, as it depends on various factors. In this study, we understand a fair price as a price that enables the repairer to earn a living wage for a regular 40-hour week after deducting all operating costs.

A fact that might be surprising

The minimum price is often higher than expected, because repairs require more effort than you think!

3. Methodology: The development of repair price check

Data collection via surveys and qualitative interviews

In order to develop a transparent repair price calculator for you, we conducted two Berlin-wide surveys and individual expert interviews with repair businesses.

Initially, a quantitative survey was distributed in October 2024 via social media and the A-Gain Guide network. The aim was to gain an understanding of fair prices and government subsidies for repair and upcycling providers. The data from a total of 33 participants (47.1% repairers, 52.9% upcyclers) was statistically analyzed. A second survey in November 2024 with eight tailors and repair stores collected data on workload and cost structures in order to refine the calculation of the fair minimum price.

In addition, interviews were conducted with five repair providers who were specifically selected from the A-Gain Guide network to represent different business models and districts. The interviews with the owners took place in person, by telephone and digitally, and were recorded and transcribed anonymously. The results were evaluated to derive recommendations for practice.

Service selection and data integration

Based on experience and surveys, we have focused on four classic repair services: Fixing seams, replacing zippers, shortening trouser legs or sleeves and repairing holes. Important factors for the price calculation are the product type and the material (e.g. pants, jackets, denim, leather). We have focused on simple repairs such as unlined jackets and basic tops.

The prices and working times of these repairs were collected from twelve Berlin repair providers and used for the minimum price calculation.

Below we have broken down the previously mentioned formula to make it even easier to understand. This will help you understand exactly how we have evaluated the results and how the price is calculated:

$$\text{Fair minimum price} = \left(\text{expenditure per hour} + \text{living hourly wage} \right) \times \text{time spent incl. consulting fee} \times \text{VAT factor}$$

Calculation of average expenditure per hour

Based on the second survey with 8 (alteration) tailor shops

Data collected (Rounding up serves the purpose of clear calculation and corresponding median values):

Ø Expenditure per month = 3.738,00 € Ø Working days per week = 5,75 ≈ 6 Ø Daily working hours = 9,25 ≈ 9,5

For a fair price calculation, however, we assume a 40-hour week.

The monthly costs incurred for rent etc. are thus spread over 40 hours a week instead of the average 57 hours, which is too high.

Number of weeks per month⁴ = number of weeks per year (52) / number of months (12) = 4,35

Expenditure per month / monthly working hours (working days per week x daily working hours x number of weeks per month) =
3.738,00 € / (5 × 8 × 4,35) = 21,48 € Expenditure per hour

Calculation of the living wage

To calculate the living wage for Berlin, the minimum wage (gross) for (1) Germany and (2) Berlin was considered first:

- (1) Statutory nationwide minimum wage in 2025 = 12,82 €⁵
- (2) Berlin state minimum wage from May 2024 = 13,69 €⁶

However, this does not yet constitute a living wage, for which there is no uniform definition. According to the EU Minimum Wage Directive, the minimum wage should be at least 60% of the gross median wage for full-time employees in order to provide a living wage.^{7,8} According to the Hans Böckler Foundation, the minimum wage in Germany is currently less than two thirds of the median wage, i.e. below the low-wage threshold.⁹ This was used as the basis for calculating the living wage for the fair repair price check at 66% of the Berlin median wage with a working week of 40 hours.¹⁰ The nationwide value was also calculated as a reference.

- (1) living wage = nationwide gross median wage in 2024 * 66% = 43.750€ * 66%¹¹ = 28.875€ = 13,88 € per hour
- (2) living wage = gross median wage in Berlin in 2024 * 66% = 46.500€ * 66%¹² = 30.690€ = 14,75 € per hour

The formula of the calculator is dynamic, so that an adjustment to increases in the minimum wage can also be adjusted in the future.

Calculation of the time required

Time for implementation

The average current value was determined for 40 different repair services in the first survey. 12 (alteration) tailor shops took part.

Consultation fee per service

Average minutes per repair service (incl. customer meetings at drop-off and pick-up) calculated based on the second survey with eight (alteration) tailor shops = 12.5 minutes*

Time for carrying out the repair service xx minutes + consultation fee xx minutes = xx minutes

*The median value was chosen as one value in the survey represented a strong deviation from the other values and would therefore have had a strong influence on the result.

The other seven of the eight values were used for the median value: 3×15 minutes and 4×10 minutes.

VAT Factor

1.19 corresponds to 19% on each taxable turnover

Fair minimum price (Alternative Markup Formula)

= Time spent × living hourly wage × markup factor × VAT factor

Markup-Factor Calculation

There are various specifications for a markup factor in fashion retail. The price calculation using the markup is generally suitable for enabling quick and simple price calculation.¹³ According to the underlying data collection and research, the fair markup is around 2.5 in order to approximate the previously calculated fair minimum price.

This is in line with information on a rather low mark-up factor in fashion.¹⁴

4. Bibliography

- 1
Vogt, Harju, Gonser, Barfried (2021). SKU-Bilanz für das Land Berlin. IFEU. <https://www.ifeu.de/publikation/stoffstrom-klimagas-und-umweltbilanz-2020-fuer-das-land-berlin>
- 2
Own data collection based on qualitative interviews with repair businesses, November 2024
- 3
Farra, E. (June 2020). What Is the Right Price for Fashion? Vogue. <https://www.vogue.com/article/what-is-the-right-price-for-fashion>
- 4
Lanuschny, S. (December 2020). Arbeitszeit und Arbeitszeit in Prozent berechnen: mit unserem Online-Rechner. Papershift. <https://www.papershift.com/blog/arbeitszeit-berechnen-taeglichen-woechentlichen-monatlichen>
- 5
Mindestlohngesetze im Überblick. (o. J.). Berlin Senatsverwaltung für Arbeit, Soziales, Gleichstellung, Integration, Vielfalt und Antidiskriminierung. <https://www.berlin.de/sen/arbeit/beschaeftigung/mindestlohngesetze/>
- 6
Ibid.
- 7
RICHTLINIE (EU) 2022/2041 DES EUROPÄISCHEN PARLAMENTS UND DES RATES vom 19. Oktober 2022 über angemessene Mindestlöhne in der Europäischen Union. (2022, Oktober 25). Publications Office. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022L2041>
- 8
Mindestlohn 2025: Warum er deutlich steigen muss. (o. J.). Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund. Abgerufen 14. November 2024, von <https://www.dgb.de/service/ratgeber/mindestlohn/>
- 9
Mindestlohn schützt noch nicht vor Armut. (2016). Hans Böckler Stiftung. <https://www.boeckler.de/de/boeckler-impuls-mindestlohn-schuetzt-noch-nicht-vor-armut-7139.htm>
- 10
unter Nutzung des Stundenlohnrechners: Stundenlohnrechner: Jetzt einfach & schnell Stundenlohn ausrechnen. (o. J.). Handelsblatt. Abgerufen 14. November 2024, von <https://www.handelsblatt.com/stundenlohnrechner/>
- 11
Gehaltsvergleich: Durchschnittsgehalt & Median-Einkommen 2025. (February 2024). finanz.de. <https://www.finanz.de/gehalt/>
- 12
Ibid.
- 13
Glossar: Markup Pricing. (o. J.). Schuppar Consulting. Abgerufen 14. November 2024, von <https://www.schuppar-consulting.com/de/markup-pricing/>
- 14
Farra, E. (June 2020). What Is the Right Price for Fashion? Vogue. <https://www.vogue.com/article/what-is-the-right-price-for-fashion>

Closing words

The A-GAIN GUIDE team would like to thank all project partners who have supported and contributed to the development of the repair price check. Special thanks go to Cecilia Palmér from Cecilia Palmér Studio, Lisa Dannebaum, Eric Dannebaum from Büro Bum Bum and Maximilian Mauracher and his team from NEW STANDARD.STUDIO.

A big thank you also to the Berlin Senate Department for Urban Mobility, Transport, Climate Action and the Environment whose funding made this project possible in the first place.

Our journey continues - we explore new ways to strengthen the repair industry, from fair prices to support programs for sustainable repair! Stay tuned for new findings and exclusive insights. Subscribe to our [newsletter](#) or follow us on [Instagram](#) - we look forward to the exchange!

hello@a-gain.guide!

Imprint

Editors:

Circular Berlin and LoopLook

Institution:

Circular Berlin / Circular City
- Zirkuläre Stadt g.e.V.

Authors: Stefanie Barz,
Alessandra-Isabel Hager, Sarah
Keller, Sarah Maria Schmidt

Research Assistance:

Sofía Johnanheth Nava González,
Leo Breitzkreuz

Layout:

NEW STANDARD.STUDIO

Year of Publication: 2025



Funded by:

