Your Ultimate Guide to Creating Wardrobe Capsule



Imogen Lamport www.insideoutstyleblog.com



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able of ('ontents

- 4 Introduction
- 5 What Really is a Wardrobe Capsule?
- 6 Two Important Factors to Consider When Creating a Capsule Wardrobe
- 7 How Many Clothes Do You Need in Your Wardrobe?
- 9 How to Organise Your Wardrobe?
- 13 5 Excellent Reasons to Build a Capsule Wardrobe
- 14 Where do You Start in Building a New and Stylish Wardrobe?
- 16 How Do You Plan a Colour Scheme for a Wardrobe Capsule?
- 22 Create Different Capsules For Different Aspects of Your Lifestyle
- 23 6 Powerful Strategies for Replacing Wardrobe Workhorse
- 26 11 Questions to Know it's a Winner Should Be Added to Your Wardrobe
- 30 Tips for Creating a Cohesive Wardrobe
- 32 16 Wardrobe Storage Tips to Make Finding Things in Your Wardrobe Easy
- 35 How Long Do We Really Keep Most Clothes?
- 39 4 Easy Tests To Know if You Should Keep it Or Let it Go
- 40 How to Assess Your Wardrobe Needs
- 43 What is Your Body Telling You About Your Wardrobe?
- 46 3 Common Reasons You Have A Full Wardrobe And Nothing To Wear
- 48 9 Essential Steps for a Successful Wardrobe Transition
- 53 How to Create a Coordinated Wardrobe

- 55 5 Tips for Transitioning Colour Palettes in Your Wardrobe
- 58 8 Tips to Help You Declutter Your Wardrobe
- 60 Change Boring Items in your Wardrobe into Something Interesting
- 62 Capsule Wardrobe Inspiration and Advice
 - 63 Corporate Wardrobe Capsule
 - 66 Casual Business Wardrobe Capsule
 - 67 Relaxed Business Wardrobe Capsule
 - 68 Evening Wear Wardrobe Capsule
 - 69 Capsule Wardrobe to Look Taller
 - 70 Wardrobe Capsules for the Tropics
 - 71 Summer Wardrobe Capsule in Warm Colours
 - 72 Busy Mum wardrobe Capsule
 - 73 Post Pregnancy wardrobe Capsule
 - 75 Maternity wardrobe Capsule
 - 76 Staples wardrobe Capsule
- 77 How to Create a Wardrobe Capsule Around a Patterned Hero
- 5 Steps to Creating A Simple Relaxed Wardrobe In Your Colours
- 82 Where to Shop When You're On a Strict Budget
- 84 Your Printable Wardrobe Chart



Introduction

There is so much out here on the internet about <u>wardrobe capsules</u>.

When I started writing about them back in 2008 ago, it wasn't something that people talked much about.

Now, they are everywhere and there are hundreds (if not thousands) of blog posts giving advice on how to create your ideal capsule.

But what I notice, is that so many of these capsules really aren't capsules.

They are 30-50 garments (basically a decent-sized wardrobe) that don't all work together. That's not a wardrobe capsule.

What Really is a Wardrobe Capsule?

A capsule is a small number of garments – say 10-15 – that work together, that can be worn in a myriad of ways (like I explained in this video on how to pack 72 outfits into your carry on luggage) and of course they are ideal for travel.

Very few of us want to live with just one wardrobe capsule in our life. But if you are building a wardrobe from ground zero, need to create a maternity wardrobe capsule, planning on doing lots of travelling, or really just like the idea of having a really versatile mix-and-match wardrobe then they are an ideal starting place.

Most of us need a number of wardrobe capsules in our wardrobes. We may need them for work, home, social events, for different seasons (if we live in a seasonal environment which has a distinctly different summer from winter).

One capsule does not suit all occassions. Work with the current/upcoming season first too. No point in buying for the opposite season when you won't be able to wear it for ages and you may be struggling with finding anything to wear right now and in the coming months.

What you wear is how you present yourself to the world, especially today, when human contacts are so quick. Fashion is instant language.

—Miuccia Prada



Two Important Factors to Consider When Creating a Capsule Wardrobe

PRINCIPLE OF VOLUME AND A CAPSULE WARDROBE

Many of you love the idea of creating wardrobe capsules to suit your lifestyle and personal style. It's a great concept that can be used to segment your wardrobe and also get the best bang for your buck as you really can create lots of combinations from a well thought out capsule.

If you have a more casual or bohemian style, it can feel a little harder to create a capsule, but do consider a few elements when putting one together.

If you love floaty tops – such as the ones here in this tunic inspired capsule wardrobe, then ensure your bottoms are more fitted. You could replace the jeans with leggings or a slim trouser or even a maxi pencil style skirt.



Add shoes and accessories for interest, colour and detail

If you want to wear more voluminous bottoms – such as bohemian flared or gypsy style skirts, then keep your tops more fitted so that you are not overwhelmed by fabric (this is particularly important if you are petite).



ADDING PATTERN TO YOUR WARDROBE CAPSULE

Many people worry about incorporating pattern into their wardrobe capsules as they feel it may restrict them. There are two easy ways to include pattern:

- Include pattern only in the garments that can't be worn together – such as your bottoms or tops (if you are not planning on layering them) or jacket/cardigan layer.
- 2. Include patterns that can be worn together read up my tips on how to mix patterns like a pro

Remember you can always take a pattern and make it the foundation of your capsule and work your other colours around that pattern and colours contained within.

How Many Clothes Do You Need in Your Wardrobe?

It could be a small wardrobe or a large one. Our different personality aspects mean that for some of us a capsule wardrobe is perfect and manageable, and for others, that would feel stifling and boring (read up about which you might be here, in are you about options or procedures).

It could be large or small depending on your lifestyle. How do you spend your time? If you have multiple roles in your life that require very different kinds of clothes, such as more formal work clothes, weekend casual, hobby related clothes, smart casual, formal evening clothes etc. Then this is going to be a larger wardrobe. Versus if you are a stay-at-home mother who sometimes socialises, your wardrobe will be based around casual and smart casual clothes and can easily be smaller, but of course if you have to wash your clothes all the time because your baby makes a mess of them, then you may need more clothes to cope with that!

Your wardrobe could be large or small depending on the climate where you live. It could be smaller if you live somewhere that is temperate and you wear pretty similar clothing all year round, as compared to someone who lives in a climate that requires very different clothes each season because of large temperature variations.

Your location may also influence how much you have in your wardrobe. Do you live in the country and require only a few everyday clothes and the very occasional item for special events, or do you live in a big city where you are regularly seeing clients, going out after work and taking in many events over the weekend?

And of course, how much space do you have to store it so that it's easily manageable for you?

Each person's wardrobe needs are different. Only you can figure this out for yourself. You are the one who has to live with your wardrobe and can work out what works for you and just what is manageable for you.



How to Organise Your Wardrobe?

There are so many different ways to organize your wardrobe that there is no one right way. You need to consider what works for you and your organizational skills and preferences, including your space requirements. Do you prefer to have all your items visible and displayed or would you prefer a streamlined look, where items are hidden in drawers and behind closed doors?



1. Organizing by Outfits

Organizing by outfits is where you hang the whole outfit together, so they are ready to pull out the closet as a ready-to-wear outfit to save time each morning. This system is quick but it isn't very versatile as it removes items out of rotation and you can't wear those pieces in other outfits. When your closet is arranged by outfit it can be hard to mix-and-match what you already own and discover new ways to make your wardrobe work.

It's important to take the time to organize your clothes into wearable outfits. You might stumble on combinations you didn't think of before and turn your items into a new look.

If you have large wardrobe where you can create several weeks of outfits without repeating any garments then spend a few hours one day trying on creating lots of different outfits and hanging them together to make it easier to dress and go.

I recommend photographing outfit combinations so you know exactly what goes together so if something changes, you can go through your album in the morning and pick a different outfit. I like to start with a hero piece – it could be a jacket or a patterned garment, then see just how many different ways I can style it with other existing pieces for different moods and occasions.

l describe this in my free eBook **5 Step Formula for a Fabulous Wardrobe on a Budget** – which if you haven't got <u>you can sign up for it and download here</u>.



Even if you choose to organize your wardrobe differently, playing in your wardrobe; creating outfits and photographing them is a great idea. You can print them out or keep them as an album on your phone and arrange them by season.

If you don't have the time or can't be bothered to get in your wardrobe and create all the outfits first, then document your outfits each day with a simple outfit photo in the mirror. That small investment of time each day will make it faster and easier for you to get dressed stylishly every day without too much thought, especially when you are looking for an outfit and you've got limited time to think about what wear. Hate taking photos? Here are my tips on how to pose for photographs to help!

You may also want to start using a wardrobe app to help you remember what's inside your wardrobe; get some tips on the different apps available here.

By playing in your wardrobe, you'll also identify any wardrobe gaps needed to complete outfits.

2. Organize by Garment Type



If you don't want to hang your wardrobe by outfit then I would suggest you create sections in your wardrobe for different sorts of garments – tops, skirts, trousers etc.

The final look of this type of organizing will depend on your wardrobe layout. A wardrobe with lots of cubby holes will be organized very differently to a wardrobe with one long hanging rail. Working in groups of items will help you figure out how much space you need and the best way to store each type of item.

Reserve the most accessible area of your wardrobe for clothes you wear most often. Out-of-season clothes, garments you only wear a few times a year, such as Halloween costumes and formal wear should be stored toward the back and on the upper shelves (or even under the bed if you have limited wardrobe space)

Within each section, I like to organize by colour making it easy to find specific garments. I start at white and work my way through to black via the rainbow (red / pink / orange / yellow / green / blue / violet / brown / grey / black). With patterns, put it into the colour section of the most dominant colour in the pattern. Ordering your clothes in type and colour is the easiest way to start to see more outfit options as you can take a coloured or patterned item and find all the other pieces that go with it easily.



I hang my necklaces by colour using lots of cup hooks so I can easily find ones that related to the colours I'm wearing. If it's easy to find coordinated accessories and organize them, then you will take the time to wear them (or wear a greater range of them).

Here are a few of the best storage ideas I've found for accessories.

I'm not the person to keep their shoes in their shoeboxes. I can't be bothered placing the shoes back in their shoebox but I do have a shoe drawers from Ikea. I can lay my shoes out in an orderly fashion and it's not difficult to put them away. If you have a lot of shoes in boxes, sticking a pictures of the shoes to the outside of the box will help you identify which shoes are in which box, saving you precious time.

If you want to see the inside of my wardrobe and how I organise you can <u>check it out here</u>.

What is important is that you figure out a way of storing your items so they are easy to access and that keeps them in some sort of order so it's easier for you to get dressed.

> Don't be into trends. Don't make fashion own you, but you decide what you are, what you want to express by the way you dress and the way to live.

-Gianni Versace



You Want to Keep it Simple.

You enjoy owning very few clothes. You want to own little, but you need everything to be versatile to give you the greatest number of outfit options out of the least number of garments. You've not got much space and you like the simple, uncluttered life.

You're Starting Again.

You have to rebuild your wardrobe from scratch. Maybe you've lost or gained weight, are pregnant or have just worn out all your old clothes and you need to build a new wardrobe from scratch. Then starting with the capsule concept will ensure that you build a cohesive and relevant wardrobe that's versatile and gives you lots of great options. You'll be buying with a plan!

You're On the Road

You are travelling (or planning on travelling). Having a great wardrobe capsule that you can use for travel will ensure that you can carry less and still have many options of outfits to enjoy whilst on your travels.

You Want Versatility.

You have a variety of personal styles. You are more eclectic and enjoy mixing it up. Say you have a boho style for the weekend, a business wardrobe for work, and a smart wardrobe for various events and casual Friday. Rather than build one wardrobe capsule, you may build one or more capsules around each personal style and lifestyle need. Creating capsules for each personality style ensures that you can put a variety of outfits together, vs just purchasing and wearing one-outfit garments. Much better cost-per-wear!

You'd Love a Uniform.

You love the idea of a uniform. Capsules work best for those who like to get up and dressed without having to think and are happy rotating through the same clothes frequently (read up more about this and whether or not it's you

here). They enjoy a look and more of a 'uniform' style of dress (even if it is a uniform of their own). A capsule makes this easy. And you don't have to just have one capsule, you can enjoy a variety of capsules for different areas of your life and activities.

Where do You Start in Building a New and Stylish Wardrobe?

Start with a plan. You may already have a few items that are the basis for your capsules. Download my <u>printable guide to creating wardrobe capsules</u> to give you an easy to follow format for an effective capsule.

Then note into the plan what you have and what you need. This will assist you in making a shopping list of items to look out for that will help you create an effective capsule that all works together (and that's the key).

1. Do you start with the heroes or start with the basics?

When I'm in a wardrobe and I'm helping someone create new outfits, I start with a hero and look for which basics work with it to create a variety of different outfits.

This is where a colour palette is so useful, as you'll want to build your wardrobe around colours that flatter, plus when you're choosing new items using this palette, you'll find that you easily find many ways of putting together different pieces as the colours work harmoniously together easily as they have colour properties that align. This makes creating a wardrobe capsule really easy.

Build outfits around a hero – this hero skirt is in my palette of colours and I've built the outfit around the colours in this skirt.

Always wear a HERO!



Once you've worked with one hero and the basics you own (try downloading my wardrobe capsule guide to help you find all your possible outfit options), then take a second hero garment and do the same again, using your existing basics.

This process will assist you in discovering your gaps and holes, the things you need to shop for, to build your wardrobe.

2. What do you love?

A more organic way of creating a wardrobe can revolve around this question. What do you love?

Find pieces that you love (and <u>don't buy "it'll do"</u> items as you're building your wardrobe), and then use these to create outfits around.

You may find that you just create a series of outfits (rather than a wardrobe capsule) if you work with this concept.

3. Does it bring you joy?

Your basics need to still give you some joy (I've talked about the concept of interesting basics before here). Even your basics need to be garments you enjoy wearing, so don't settle for not quite right.

Look at your existing favourite items (basics or heroes) and note down what you love about them.

This information can really help you make better purchasing decisions for anything new that you bring into your wardrobe.



4. Understanding of how your wardrobe works together

No piece in your wardrobe exists in a vacuum. This is part of the value of knowing your ideal colour palette (as immediately you'll see your wardrobe is harmonious in its colours working easily together).

Have you thought of creating a style book of your favourite items or using a style or wardrobing app that can help you see how all your existing pieces work and how they can work together? Doing this can help you see what they have in common – such as details in construction, colours, shapes or elements of design.

How Do You Plan a Colour Scheme for a Wardrobe Capsule?



1. Start with Your Hair Colour

The first place to start when choosing the neutrals to base your wardrobe capsule around is with your hair colour. You can choose 1 or 2 neutrals that are within your hair.

If you have multi-tonal hair, like many greying heads, or if you have highlights and lowlights, these are a great place to start as they will work well with you!

- So, if you have black hair choose black.
- Brown hair, choose a similar shade of brown.
- Red hair, choose a cognac or tan that is similar to your version of red.
- Blonde? Find the kind of neutral that relates well to your hair colour.

Simple!

2. Look Into Your Eyes

Another place to find good neutrals is to repeat colours that are within your eyes.



If you have blue eyes, you will find the softer grey blues, and navy shades can be a perfect choice. Green eyes? If they are warm look for olives in both lighter and darker shades. Brown eyes may be more bronzed, more burgundy or more golden, check yours our and find brown tones that are similar and will provide a perfect backdrop to your colours.

Then repeat your eye colour in a variety of garments as well – though the more colourful, less neutral versions of these colours.

3. What Are Your Skin and Lip Enhancers?

Skin and lip enhancers are contained in your skin and lips (ergo the name). These may be shades of orange, coral, pinks, reds, burgundy and even red-violets, depending on your skin (you'd be amazed at the variety of different colours you see in people's skin and lips).

If you have a warm undertone choose the warmer tones of orange, pink, coral, red and burgundy. And of course, if you're cool, the cooler pinks, reds and plums are going to make you look healthy and alive.



Build Your Capsule Colours Around a Patterned Garment 4.

Now if you want to get tricky, look for a garment in a pattern you love that has at least two of your signature colours (hair, eyes, skin, lip enhancers) in it, and then start building a capsule around the colours within that patterned garment.



COLOURS FROM IN IT TO CREATE YOUR SCHEME

Here are four examples using patterned skirts as the basis for the colour scheme, let's look at them from left to right:

- 1. Far left, this would suit someone with cool colouring and dark brown to black hair, fair skin and blue or brown eyes.
- 2.2nd left, will suit someone with warm light colouring golden blonde hair, and turquoise blue eyes.
- 3.2nd from the right, will suit someone with warm dark brown/black hair, and fair skin
- 4. Far right, will suit someone with warm medium-light blonde or greying hair and brown or blue eyes

It's important to remember when building a capsule, that the colours of the tops don't necessarily need to go together as you are unlikely to wear them at the same time. The tops need to work with the bottoms, and the outer layers (cardigans/jackets/coats) for maximum versatility.

5. Wardrobe Capsule Colour Scheme Examples

I've put together a couple of capsules, one warm and one cool to show you more about the process of building your capsule around your colours and also using patterns as often people feel they can't use patterns in their capsules.

6. Wardrobe Capsule for Warm Green Eyes and Mid-Brown Hair

There are a plethora of greens in this capsule as you will always find that there are are multiple different shades of green within your eyes and can therefore select a few and are a great place around which to build your capsule.



I've chosen two green based skirts with patterns, one tweedy that has a light blue and yellow fleck through it, the other the pineapple skirt. From there I've found a skin enhancing top in orange, a yellow top that works well in colour with both skirts and a warm blue top that's colour is within the tweed.

I've also chosen two jackets, one in the olive green (eye) and the other in a brown that would be a hair enhancer, which is a great colour for shoes, coats, bags and belts too.

Then I've selected a variety of accessories, these don't need to work with every piece, and you can add more interest, pattern and colour into your capsule if you choose using your accessories.

7. Wardrobe Capsule for Cool Blue Eyes and Grey Hair

Here in this capsule for someone who is grey or greying and has a cool undertone, with blue eyes I've made this selection.



WARDROBE CAPSULE COLOUR SCHEME

As blue is a signature colour, I've repeated this in a number of ways through the capsule, blue jeans, blue and teal tops, blue pants and a denim jacket, plus a floral chiffon top with a blue background.

Then I've repeated the most likely multi-tonal grey hair colour (most grey heads are not just one hair colour but is many lighter and darker shades of grey) which is why I've chosen grey background patterned skirts – one plaid and one snakeskin with a range of lighter and darker greys.

A Capsule WardrobeDoesn't Have to Be Boring.

There is not reason why your capsule has to be boring, or lack pattern, colour or interest. You can create a capsule around a hero garment or even mix prints in your capsule, it's your choice and relates back to your personal style.



Imogen Lamport

The grey trousers are also a tweed which gives them a harmonising multi-tonal effect too. Then I"ve repeated that grey in patterned grey shoes (as when you pop on a shoe in your hair colour, it creates a top-and-tail (bookend) effect that is very pleasing aesthetically.

The other tops come in skin and lip enhancing pinks and reds, plus a range of scarves and accessories that pull colours from this capsule and relate to these items.

7. Using Your Colour Palette

If you have a colour palette from a personal colour analysis, the first colours to look for are your signature colours (hopefully these have been marked for you), these will be your eye, hair and skin/lip enhancers, along with some intensifiers (these are often colours that are complementary on the colour wheel and make the colour pop – so a chartreuse green that makes your red hair look brighter for example).

If you have your signatures this makes following this guide super easy (like it's seriously almost done for you). If you don't have signatures marked, go through your colour palette whilst looking in a mirror in great natural lighting, and pick out the colours you see in the palette that are contained in your skin, lips, eyes and hair – these are your signatures. Here are <u>more tips on finding your</u> <u>signature colours</u>.

Because the colours within a colour palette are designed to work well together because they have the same colour properties.



Create Different Capsules For Different Aspects of Your Lifestyle

Plan your capsules thinking about the different areas of your life:

- 1.<u>Work</u> (you may need 2-3 capsules for each season depending how many days a week you work, and how different your seasons are, or even a capsule for Casual Friday if you are in a Corporate Capsule during the week)
- 2. Casual at home/weekend wear (you may need a couple of these if you spend lots of time at home, say as a <u>busy mum</u>)
- 3. Smart casual/going out
- 4. Exercise
- 5. Formal/<u>Nighttime</u> Functions

These capsules may have garments that overlap (and I show you how that works in my free ebook <u>Your 5 Step</u> <u>Formula for a Fabulous Wardrobe on a Budget</u> – if you haven't got it, grab your copy now.)



Update Your Wardrobe Capsules Seasonally

The sad fact is, clothes both wear out and go out of fashion. So you'll need to add garments (and take a few away) over time to keep your capsules fresh and working well for you.

As you notice garments wearing thin, getting pilled, faded or stained. Then add that item to your shopping list so you can keep your eyes out for a new and improved version when you next hit the shops.

You certainly don't need to update your entire capsule each season. But a few new pieces here and there will breathe new life into your outfits and keep you looking current and modern.

By working with the capsule concept you'll avoid buying wardrobe orphans which can be <u>costly mistakes</u>.

6 Powerful Strategies for Replacing Wardrobe Workhorse



CAN YOU GET AN EXACT REPLACEMENT?

If it's a particular cut/style/brand – can you buy an exact replacement? If so, this is an easy way of keeping those workhorses looking fresh and stylish.





WHAT IF IT'S UNIQUE?

If the garment that is wearing out is something that is either more unique or you just can't get the exact replacement for – it's time to do some analysis before rushing out to replace so you don't buy the wrong item. Ask yourself – what do you like about it? What are its features and benefits: shape, style, fabric, details, structure, how it sits, and how it fits.

Once I know what you like about it, then you can start to look for a similar replacement that has the elements of design and construction that are in keeping with your list of criteria.

IT'S OUT OF FASHION

If it's no longer in fashion – and you can't find anything that is even related, then you need to find something that will fill that wardrobe hole that is current but still fulfils your needs.

What was it about that garment that worked so well (use the criteria list above if that helps). Then consider too your current lifestyle to figure out why it is that what you are trying to replace gets so much of a workout in your wardrobe.

You need to work out why it is that the one you love is the one you love.



YOU'VE GOT MULTIPLES

Jill buys multiple items of similar garments – such as her leopard print wrap dresses – which are different, but still similar. For her, this gives her the permission to wear them (if she only had one, she'd worry too much about wearing it out too fast, and so wouldn't wear it at all – she'd be keeping it for "good"). So she doesn't have the same driving need to replace a garment the minute it wears out.

Her approach to wardrobe gaps is now one where she likes to keep the gap for some time rather than rush out to replace an item immediately, as she already has a large wardrobe with multiples, there is not the same need to replace as she already has similar garments she can wear.

This allows Jill to discover if the gap is really a gap – or maybe it's something that is no longer a gap as she has discovered that there can be a cyclical nature of her wardrobe preferences.



WARDROBE EVOLUTION

The evolution of wardrobe can be related to mood, season, fashion, lifestyle – all sorts of different things. You may find you wear trousers all the time one year, then the next barely wear them. If something has worn out – does it really need to be replaced? Not Always.

It's worth noticing what you reach for more. Are you wearing dresses now instead of trousers? What about the season? If it's the end of the season and you won't wear that garment for some months, is it worth waiting until the new season to replace as fashions may change in the meantime?

Wardrobes evolve over time, so it's good to take notice of where you're at right now.



WHAT'S IN YOUR WARDROBE PIPELINE?

When you are considering adding extra items into the wardrobe – what are your criteria to make sure they will be of value to your style:

- Really different that is not exactly the same as what you already own unless you are replacing something exactly.
- Really love- it should rate and 8 or more, you should really want to wear it, it should meet your criteria (as above)
- Really need a replacement for an existing item that is wearing out, or a wardrobe gap you've identified that does need filling
- Suits your current lifestyle no point in buying a ball dress if you never go to balls!
- Represents your current style recipe- it's great to reassess your style recipe every so often (we talked about that in this video post), as you evolve and grow and so should your wardrobe.

It's so helpful to apply some analysis to find out why something works so well. Knowing what you love helps you make fewer mistakes (I don't believe anyone doesn't make mistakes – we are all human, and retailers play all sorts of psychological tricks on us to make us buy – we are human and fallible – and that's OK). Here are <u>11 questions</u> to ask yourself to make sure it's a winner and should be added to your wardrobe.

Don't treat yourself as a failure if you've bought the wrong thing. If you've done this – treat this purchase as a learning experience and analyse why the item doesn't work in the way you'd hoped. This can inform you so that you don't make that same mistake twice! The more you know about your

colours/styles/values/shapes/preferences – the easier it is to make <u>good purchasing decisions</u> (this is why I created my <u>7 Steps to Style program</u>, to help you do this).

11 Questions to Know it's a Winner Should Be Added to Your Wardrobe

To help you make sure that you're making the best decisions for your style, wardrobe and budget – here are questions to ask yourself before you buy.

1. Is it in my colour palette?

As much as it's fun wearing colours that aren't flattering, it usually doesn't take long for colours that don't flatter you to end up as fillers in your wardrobe, taking up space, not easy to mix and match with other garments. So why waste your money, space and time for a fleeting fancy – instead choose the colours that work together easily, the ones that make you look amazing, bright, vibrant, alive and healthy.



2. Does it fit?

Ok – let's be frank and realistic. It's super had to buy clothes that fit perfectly. You are a unique human, clothing manufacture is made to for as many bodies as possible to put the clothes on (not to make them look good!). So of course, you will find it hard to find clothes that are a perfect fit.

That said – does the garment fit well? And if not, can you and will you make the necessary alterations to make it fit well?

If not, leave it behind as it will never rate an 8 or more.

3. Does it flatter my body shape?

Fashions change all the time – as Heidi Klum says time on Project Runway "In fashion, one week you're in and the next week you're out".

And shopping for clothes is like this – one week you'll find something that flatters your shape, the next week the fashions will have changed and there is nothing that works for you. Don't feel bad about this – remember in a few more weeks something else will appear. But what I've found is that if it doesn't flatter your body, you just won't keep or wear it long. So if you want to play with a fashion trend that isn't flattering for you – make it a cheap one that you're happy to dispose of quickly.

Think about the clothes that have been in your wardrobe longest (and are worn the most) – what do they have in common? Most likely they are really flattering on. So why torture yourself with unflattering clothes? Make a decision that you want what works for your body shape, proportions, colouring and variations. This knowledge will empower you and save you a fortune over the years as you stop buying unflattering clothing.

4. Does it fit my personality?

This is so key to being able to rate something an 8, 9 or 10/10 as without this key piece of the style puzzle, you'll find that your choices are hit and miss.

There is a direct correlation between personality and style choices – you can discover your Style Essence (approach to style) with a <u>16 Style Types Report</u>.

5. Does it fit my lifestyle?

Another super important factor – your clothes must suit your lifestyle. One of the wardrobe issues I see most commonly when doing wardrobe audits is women owning wardrobes for a life they no longer lead or for an imaginary life that isn't the one they are leading.

Your lifestyle, how you spend your time, what you do each day – what you want to wear that fits each occasion and activity are something only you can figure out. This is why I don't believe there is any list of "every woman must own these garments" as how you spend your time is different from many others.

Fashions fade, style is eternal.

-Yves Saint Laurent



Don't buy anything that you can't wear immediately (season permitting) unless you are purposefully shopping for a special event. All other clothes should be something that you'd wear tomorrow!



6. Is it good quality?

When you're 20, a wardrobe of clothes that are not made from the finest fabrics with the best construction is completely fine (these are what you may call "junk food clothes") as you are still in a stage of growing up and learning who you are. At the age of 40 you're likely to be wanting to have a wardrobe of clothes that will last a few years and stand the test of time. This means better quality fabrics and good construction.

7. Is it current?

Is it current – yet not a fad about to be dated in the next 2 weeks, not something that has had its used-by-date a little while ago. Currency in fashion says that you are in-line with the times – aware of what is going on around you, and forward-thinking (particularly important in many workplaces these days). So when choosing a new item – will it last the distance or is it going to be something you have to say goodbye to very soon?

8. Is it comfortable?

This is such an important question to make sure you say "yes" to before you buy.

Ask yourself:

- Does it feel good on my body?
- Does it bind?
- Does anything irritate?
- Does the fabric feel good?
- Can I move in it in a way that works with my lifestyle?

If you answer no to any of the above questions, you'll not be rating the garment an 8 or more!

9. Is it fabulous?

Does it make you feel like the best version of yourself? Does it fit your style recipe? Is it amazing? I mean really, do you want to add "Ok" or "It'll do" to your wardrobe? I think not! Leave it behind if it's not fabulous.



10. Do you need it?

Ask yourself these questions:

- Does it fill a hole in your wardrobe or is it another version of something you already own?
- If it's another version of something you already own is it better than what you already have at home? Or is it going to be 2nd best?
- Will you wear it regularly? If not (special occasion wear only an exception), why not? Is it still worth it?
- Does it go with at least 3 other things you already own?
- Can you imagine some fabulous new outfits that you'll be able to create with this new piece?

11. Is it in my price range?

And last, but certainly not least – can you afford it? Is it in your price range? Is it going to be a good investment and have great cost-per-wear? Don't go into debt over clothing that you can't afford.

Shopping can be a dangerous sport, and there are many tricks retailers do to get you to buy.

By using these criteria to help you make a decision about whether or not what you're thinking of purchasing is an 8 or more, they will help you to stop and think before you hand over your cash and then assist you in building a wardrobe of fabulous clothes that you love and make you look and feel amazing every single day.

Tips for Creating a Cohesive Wardrobe

1. Understand Your Style Foundations

Developing personal style becomes difficult to do when you are working with a pre-existing wardrobe full of individual pieces that you're not certain pair together with other hero pieces in a cohesive way. You have to work out what you want your style to be before you buy the clothes. Just as a home (or any building) needs strong foundations, so does your style. Your foundations come from your own set of style guidelines.

Your style foundations may include the guidelines you create around:

- Your best colours– your palette, signature colours, your ideal value and contrasts
- 2.

3.

1.

Your physicality – body shape, proportions, variations and what makes you feel that you look great in particular styles of clothing

Your personality– who you are and how you want to express the inner you on the outside, it's your style DNA.

"Nine out of ten women own at least one item of clothing they have never worn and most women regularly wear less than half of the clothes they own"

Professor Karen Pine



2. Develop a Style Recipe

To help you stop magpie shopping try nailing down your style recipe and then use it when shopping.

Your Style Recipe includes the ingredients that go into making up your unique style. In my opinion, it's one of the most useful tools anyone can have when developing their style. Creating your style recipe gives you a great framework to start playing with and exploring the personality dressing styles in a way that is right and true for you.

I think of myself in some ways a bit of a magpie shopper for me because I don't need a lot. When I see something that I really like I buy it but because I only buy colours that work with me that will work with the rest of my wardrobe. I'm a magpie shopper who has the style and colour education, plus knows her wardrobe gaps plus what she already has in her wardrobe (so no buying duplicates) and can see when I stumble across something amazing how I'll be able to wear it multiple ways with lots of my existing wardrobe.

3. Know Your Best Colours

Your palette of colours is made up of colours that have similar colour properties and because of this – they work together beautifully and easily, allowing you to be the artist as you try different combinations with confidence, knowing that those colours are meant to go together.

Having a personal colour analysis and getting your colour palette so you can go out and go shopping with it you'll start to create a wardrobe that easily mixes and matches which allows you with fewer items to create more outfits. Now that's what I call a win! Plus it will stop you from buying a bunch of orphans that don't work colourwise with the other clothes in your wardrobe.

Over time as you add additional items to your wardrobe, with each extra garment your outfit options will expand exponentially – plus you won't have those colours that can only be worn in one way with one garment, making them limited in their appeal.



4. Organise and Shop Your Wardrobe

The next step to building a cohesive wardrobe is to know what you have. Organise your wardrobe so that it's easy to find what you have and see it. If you've got stuff stashed at the back of your wardrobe, then you've got no idea what you've got.

Once you've got an organised wardrobe you can see what you actually have. This is particularly easy when you organise by colour and type of garment. The combinations start to reveal themselves and you can begin to create outfits.

Keep a pen and paper handy in your wardrobe to keep creating your wardrobe shopping list – every time you get dressed and think "I wish I had a xxxx" write that garment down, and you know that it will fill an important hole in your wardrobe. Focus on what you need.

16 Wardrobe Storage Tips to Make Finding Things in Your Wardrobe Easy

Hanging Tips

2.

1. Only 1 garment per hanger

- Hang similar items together eg. skirts together, trousers together, jackets together etc. This allows you to discover more mix and match possibilities as you start to see what your options are.
- Hang in colour order. I go through the rainbow, starting at white, then through the rainbow ending with brown, grey and black. This way you can easily find your pink top when you're in a hurry. Plus you discover if you're rather colour dominant in any way I will always remember doing a wardrobe audit with one of my clients and she insisted she had no green tops, but we found about 20 of them, but because they weren't hung together she didn't realize just how many she had (and kept buying more because she thought she was lacking in green tops.
- Throw out wire hangers. They trash your clothing. They rust, leave marks in your clothes and should be returned to the dry cleaner rather than used at home. Invest in some decent hangers. If you have space, wooden ones are great, if you're space poor the slim velour hangers are fabulous as things don't slip off them.

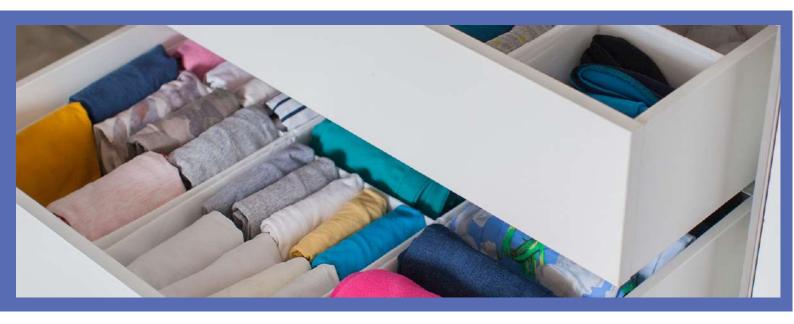
5.

6.

Find your wardrobe hot spots and cold spots (where you reach first, and where you reach last). Put your most used garments in your hot spot – for me that's tops. Then put your least used in your cold spots (for most of us it's evening wear). Make it easy for yourself to get dressed, don't have your most used clothes in a hard to reach place. One of my clients wanted to dress more smart casual than relaxed casual, yet she had all her relaxed casual tops in her wardrobe hot spot, so of course that's what she reached for each day. We swapped it around, put her smart casual tops in her hot spot and moved those more casual tops to a slightly harder to reach spot so that she'd reach for the clothes that made her look smarter first!

Make sure you hang skirts on skirt hangers and trousers on trouser hangers. They keep your clothing investment in better condition.

You can use hanging pockets to store shoes in the hanging portion of your wardrobe – it makes them easy to find and is an economical use of space.

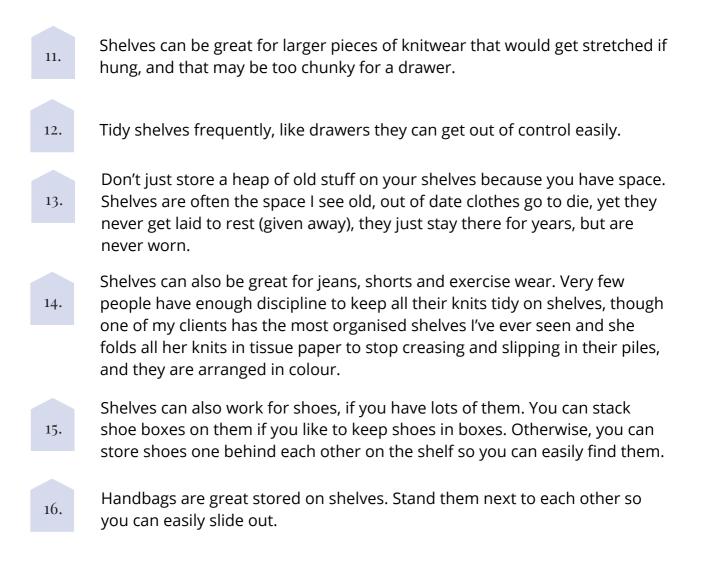


Drawer Tips

- 8. Drawers are great for underwear, hosiery, sleepwear, exercise wear, shorts, beach wear, jeans, but not much else. I can't tell you how many times when cleaning out drawers with clients they've discovered tops that they'd completely forgotten they had because they'd got stuck at the back of a drawer.
 - Use old shoe boxes to divide up smaller items such as underwear, socks, hose and bras.
- 10. Don't over fill them.



Shelving Tips





How Long Do We Really Keep Most Clothes?

A study of 620 items disposed of in a 6 month period by 16 households in Norway found that the average lifespan of a garment was 5.4 years but only actively worn for a period of 4 years.

Around 8% of those items disposed of in this study were completely unworn by anyone, and every 5th garment was either never used or only worn a couple of times. Most interestingly this study showed that a high proportion of the "never used" items were gifts or inherited items (this is because with gifts the item may not be your style, taste or the right size). What is fascinating about the inherited and 'gifted' items from others is that these were kept much longer than average. In my experience, it's not because they are being worn, it's because there is a feeling of guilt for wanting to get rid of an item that was given with love or care.

I've written about how to handle this guilt here.

A second reason why some clothes don't get much wear is that they are high-maintenance – and require special care – handwashing or dry cleaning – and many of us see the garment as "work" if we wear it, so choose to wear other clothes instead.

Thirdly, you just can't see them to wear them – poorly organised wardrobes mean that clothes get lost at the back of draws, on the bottom layer of a hanger with multiple items etc. Can't see it – won't wear it!



Firstly, what I learned is that the people who hang on to clothes the longest are:

- 1. More mature
- 2. Low income
- 3. More highly educated
- 4. Have a large wardrobe (of over 200 items and so have a high number of items they have not worn in the past 12 months)
- 5. Conscious shoppers who look to buy clothes that last and look good longer.



What Gets Thrown Out the Most Quickly?

Based on this list – it would be the lower quality clothing, the poorer quality fabrics and fast fashion items that are not made to last.

The research shows that the

- Leggings
- Bras
- Underwear
- Socks
- Casual at home clothing worn every day inside the home and garden
- Casual outside home clothing and clothing for work are the items that have the shortest lifespan.

You can imagine that underwear/bras/socks/tights – because of their "one wear and wash" nature will wear out much more quickly and therefore the turnover of them is faster.

The casual clothing category is interesting – as we generally invest less in a casual tee to wear at home than we do for a top we wear to work – and those lower quality tees then wear out more quickly, particularly if they are worn in the garden and doing chores where there is a higher chance they will become stained (cooking/cleaning) or torn (gardening).

Interestingly the clothes for outside the home also didn't have a particularly long lifespan. In my experience going through wardrobes, women tend to purchase fewer "work" clothing and more "fun" clothing – and so each work item gets worn and worn more frequently, thus reducing its lifespan more quickly.

The Clothes We Keep the Longest Are

- Formal Wear
- Sports/Outdoors clothing
- Jackets/Blazers/Coats



What is is about these clothes that make them last longer?

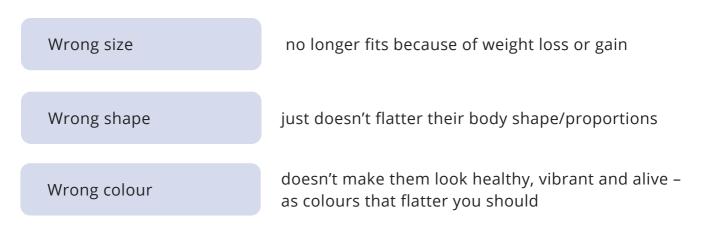
For most of us, formal wear gets worn rarely – maybe a couple of times a year – so it is not getting much wear at all and should last a long long time! Sports/outdoor clothing – often we invest more in a great outdoor jacket or specific purpose outdoor clothing – thus it being higher quality and made to last.

Now, how about that activewear? I'm not sure – for some it could be like formal wear (rarely worn by those who buy with the intention of doing more exercise but don't end up doing it) or it could be a better quality fabric and made for all that stretching and bending – so it lasts longer. It's hard to tell from the data.

Jackets/Coats and Blazers are obvious – they are generally better made, from higher quality fabrics, and made to last. Plus their styles change less quickly than other fashion items, many fall into the Classic category and so turnover on these items is much lower.

Why Do We Get Rid of Clothing Items?

What are the reasons people get rid of their clothing? There are a few reasons I'm aware of from the time spent in wardrobes helping people dispose of what is not working for them:



Wrong style	doesn't fit their personality or personal style – very often these items are bought because the owner is bored with their current wardrobe so they buy 'different' but sadly it's the wrong kind of different (and they don't know how to buy the right kind of different for them).
Not fit for purpose	bought it for a reason but it didn't really work for the purpose you bought it for
Not your lifestyle	I've seen this many times – purchasing an item of clothing for an imagined or hoped for life that doesn't exist in your real world, or a changing lifestyle – work to retirement or child-rearing, change of location and climate.
Out of fashion	find out how you can figure this out for yourself here
Worn out	<u>pilled, stained, torn, saggy, baggy etc.</u>

Middle-aged (adults over 51) kept their clothing for longer before disposing of it when it was 10 years old. Many of these 10-year-old items had not been worn for some years but had been kept for some time before disposal (letting go can be hard for many).

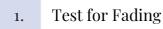
While teenagers kept theirs for only 3 years at most (not unexpectedly, as this is both a period of changing body shapes and size, but also a time of self-discovery and trying out different fashions and following fashion fads, also garments made for this demographic are generally of poorer quality).

What was interesting, was that if clothing was going to be disposed of and it was still in good condition – so it would be either sold or donated – it was let go of more quickly at around 3 years after purchase (letting others get wear out of it while still in fashion) than if it was going to be thrown in the bin (then it was kept for 1.6 years longer).

So if you don't want to have clothes in your wardrobe you don't wear – say no to the "gifts" that really are a burden not a gift and learn more about what suits you so you can make informed and conscious shopping choices.



4 Easy Tests To Know if You Should Keep it Or Let it Go



Take the clothes out of your wardrobe that you think may be getting old. Take them into a^3 space that has great lighting. Look inside the seams or inside a pocket and see if there is a difference between the colour there and the colour on the outside. This is a good way to see how much fading the garment has had.



Now run the garment by the "Thrift Shop Test". Imagine that you are in a thrift shop. Would this garment pass your quality test for purchase? If it was someone else's 'old thing' would you still want it?

3. Currency Test

Go online (or to the stores) and see if you could replace it with a very similar item. This will tell you if the shape and style is still current, or not. If you can find very similar garments in store, then it's still current. If there is nothing like it in the chain stores (and it's not a really creative or unique item to begin with) then maybe it's a fashion of another era.

4. Out of sight, out of mind Test

Put your clothes in a box. Label it and store it somewhere in your house where you can't see it (not in your closet). If you haven't look for the clothes after some time, it's probably time to let those go.

These three quick tests will help you evaluate if that old favourite should stay or leave your wardrobe forever.



4. Inventory

How to Assess Your Wardrobe Needs

1. Climate

Consider your climate – do you need separate summer and winter wardrobes plus items for those in between seasons?

2. Personality

Do you get bored easily liking change? Do you prefer more of a <u>uniform approach to dressing</u>? Knowing what you like really helps you decide what you need in your wardrobe.

3. Lifestyle

Note down what your average weeks look like and all the things you do. Then think about clothing requirements for each of these activities and how much time is spent in each dressing style (such as formal business, relaxed business, smart casual, casual, exercise, special event wear etc.). Relate the percentages of time spent in each to your the volume of each in your wardrobe. Remember, even though you may only spend 4 hours a week doing exercise, you will most likely need to have multiple exercise outfits as they need to be washed after each short session.

You could take a complete inventory of your wardrobe – you can use one of the wardrobe apps on your smartphone, or you can turn around all the hangers in your wardrobe and only turn them back when you've worn an item (when it comes back from the wash) and after a year you'll see just what you've been wearing and what hasn't been worn. <u>Photograph your outfits</u> and keep all the pics in an album, then you can see which items get worn and which don't, which will help you understand more about what you wear.

5. Plan your outfits

Download my <u>Weekly Outfit Planner here</u> and then start planning outfits for the coming weeks. You will start to see which garments get lots of use, where you are lacking in clothing and what you prefer to wear. You will need to do this over each season to ensure that you're not ignoring clothes because the weather doesn't allow for wear.



6. Try a wardrobe capsule challenge

Create a mix and match wardrobe of around 30 garments and ignore all other clothes in your wardrobe. Wear them for the next 2-3 months and see how you feel. Are you feeling bored and stifled by the lack of clothes or do you feel more free? This is another way to discover whether you need more options or prefer a more uniform style of dressing.

7. Wear everything

This is the opposite of a capsule challenge. Instead of limiting your choices, challenge yourself to wear everything in your wardrobe over the coming 6 months.

Turn all your hangers backwards and try each day to reach for something with a backwards hanger (as in step 4 turn the hangers to face forwards when you've worn an item). Photograph your outfits and then see if you like how they appear on you. You may want to make alterations, you may discover a new outfit, or you may find that you're just not a "dress person" or a "pants person" or whatever it is that those garments that languish in your cupboard are. Doing my Evolve Your Style challenge can give you lots of ideas to try as you are working through your wardrobe.

8. Clear out the clutter



Once you've worked through what you do and don't need, what you do and don't like, what does and doesn't work. get rid of the stuff that doesn't make you feel good. Ask yourself when you put on an outfit "Out of 10, how does this make me feel?" If you can only say "this outfit is a 5" (or less), then try and understand why. Fit? Fabric? Quality? Personality? Colour? etc (download the <u>Closet Menu</u> to choose the items from your wardrobe that fit your lifestyle, preferences and needs?. If it can't be improved, then let it go. As they say, if you can't see the woods for the trees, you need to clear everything out to create a better functioning wardrobe so you can see what you really do have that works. Without clearing out the clutter your wardrobe will never be manageable.

Once you've got a better handle on your personal needs, you can make a better assessment of what is the right kind of number of garments for your wardrobe, what you enjoy wearing (so say you've got a bunch of dresses but you never wear them ... then let them go, or play around and style them in a way that does fit with your personality, lifestyle, climate and occasion needs) will always come into this equation too.

Don't Forget the Accessories

I don't consider accessories to be part of your capsule. They are the icing on your cake and allow you to really make best use of your capsule by changing the way that each outfit looks so it feels as if you are wearing something different.



Having a range of scarves and necklaces that you can put with your more basic items (and colours) in different colours and levels of refinement will help you really get the most value from your capsule. Your accessories can also really assist you in making your capsule more versatile, so you can dress it up or down more easily.

Don't limit yourself to just a few accessories. Look for a range of colours and styles to expand the colour scheme within your capsule. There is no reason why every accessory has to go with every outfit. Wearing a red scarf one day with your white top, then a blue necklace another, and then a pink and yellow scarf will make it look like you have way more clothes than you really do.



What is Your Body Telling You About Your Wardrobe?

When you truly listen to your body it will tell you all sorts of things. It's just often with the busyness of life and loading different expectations, feelings, ideals, thoughts onto yourself, you often either don't hear or ignore the signs you are getting.

My question is, why aren't you wearing them? What are the reasons? If you're not sure, maybe it's time to start listening to your body, as often there are clues from your body and mind that tell us why you're not wearing certain clothing that's sitting in your wardrobe unworn.

Have you ever been annoyed by a flapping scarf, or earrings that are heavy and pull on your ears, or a pair of shoes that pinch your toes? These are all common examples of your body telling you something about your outfit choices and what is making it less than happy. But what else will your body tell you?

Why Did You Buy It?

The first question to think about is why did you buy the thing that you're not wearing?

Was something going on in your life that caused stresses in you and so you indulged in retail therapy and that small hit of that feel-good brain chemical dopamine you get on the acquisition of a new thing, giving you a momentary high, even though it's not something that is right for you in some way? If this is something you tend to do, it's really important to start listening to your body and discovering how stress influences your shopping, Jill Chivers has some great articles to help you think about how your emotions influence your shopping (and for some overshopping) tendencies and describes a physical feeling she gets before she would go out and shop for the wrong reason. If your shopping has become a salve for emotions, do read this very real and revealing article by Jill on dealing with this aspect of what's going inside your mind and the feelings inside your body when you go for retail therapy for the wrong reasons. If you do tend to suffer from this kind of shopping to make yourself feel better in some way, it's really common to have a whole bunch of items that don't work in your wardrobe, and then you feel a guilt about getting rid of things too. That guilt can also be a heavy feeling. Jill has great tips on shopping successfully if this is an issue of yours, that I urge you to read.

Are you just bored with your style? Have you a wardrobe of similar garments, and you end up buying more of the same rather than something different? Do you have a first best, then a second best, then a third, fourth or fifth best of basically the same thing? If this is your issue – read this blog post on how to deal with some of the issues of closet boredom here.

What are your clothes saying to you? Do they make you feel great or make you feel guilty?



What Does it Feel Like Wearing It?

One of the most common reasons that a garment isn't worn is that it just doesn't feel comfortable (either physically or mentally) when it's on your body. Clothes are such a personal object, even those who say that they "don't care about clothes" will still eschew some clothes and choose to wear others. There is the physical aspect of comfort and how you like to feel clothing on your body (tight or loose), the kinds of fabrics you find pleasant on your skin (stretch or woven, crisp or soft), and how the clothes let you move and perform all the activities in your daily life and of course how they fit (or don't fit).

Then there is the mental/emotional feel – does it feel like "you" or someone else. Imagine your house burned down and all your clothes were lost. Your friends all gathered round and each gave you something to wear to replace your wardrobe and miraculously, everything fits. You would most likely like maybe one or two items out of the 20 that you've been given, the rest just don't "feel" like you mentally, physically or emotionally. Choosing clothing to wear is actually something very personal. Listen to what your clothes are saying to your body, are they saying "I'll make you feel amazing and look gorgeous" or are they saying "You won't be naked if you wear me". "Not naked" is not the look most of us are going for! So if they are telling you this – it's time to make a reassessment of why your clothes aren't working for you. Do you need to take some steps to understand more about your style? Maybe your body shape has changed which is why they are not comfortable or don't fit correctly. Or maybe you need a few alterations to make your clothes fit your body (not a store mannequin or coat-hanger).

If your clothes don't fit you your body will tell you, you'll be adjusting them, tweaking them, or not feeling great in them.

Does it Make You Feel the Right Temperature?

One of the reasons there is no such thing as the "ideal wardrobe" for everyone is that there are hot people in the world (who don't need many layers, long sleeves or thick layers) and there are cold people (who need layers, find it hard to stay warm or even get warm in cooler weather) and so their wardrobe needs are vastly different. When I do a wardrobe audit with a client, it's one of my first questions, to find out what they will need (no point in me telling them they need a whole lot of jackets or jumpers when they'd never wear them as they run hot).

Your body will tell you which of these you are, and this can change in menopause and pregnancy. It's important to check with your body now as to what makes it feel comfortable temperature wise as if you have the wrong temperature clothing for your body, you'll never feel truly comfortable.

Does it Fit Your Current Lifestyle?

So many clothes we own that don't wear are either from a past lifestyle or for an imagined lifestyle or event. I've written about how you need to think about creating a future-focused wardrobe.

Are your clothes telling you that they fit your current lifestyle? That they are appropriate and right for who you are today and what you're doing with yourself? Or are they telling you that something isn't quite right (or in fact that you're rejecting invitations because you don't have the right things to wear?)



Let Your Body Do the Talking

Take a moment each day, often at the end of the day, to listen and see how your body felt, physically, emotionally and mentally in what you wore and then you can think about how you may want to tweak or change an outfit or let an item go if it's no longer serving you the way you'd like.

Knowledge is Power

In my book, knowledge is power – the more you know about your style, shape, personality, colouring, clothing values, lifestyle etc, the better your clothing and outfit choices become, this is why doing a program like 7 Steps to Style will pay you back hundredfold as it will give you key insights into what's right and wrong with your wardrobe and style.

What is your body whispering to you about your wardrobe?

3 Common Reasons You Have A Full Wardrobe And Nothing To Wear

RANGE OF COLOURS THAT DON'T WORK TOGETHER

My first suggestion is to look at the overall colours in your wardrobe. Do those share the same colour properties or do you have a wardrobe with a combination of warm colours and cool colours? Perhaps a blend of bright and muted colours? When you try to wear colors which have very different colour properties, it can create a disconnect and make it harder to create outfits as these colours just don't work nicely together and clash in an unpleasant way. You in the end have only single garments or perhaps outfits, but not an easy mix-and-match versatile wardrobe.

The mark of a well-balanced closet is one that can mix and match easily. In order to achieve this, you need to have some neutral and base colors that share the same colour properties.

The colours of your wardrobe should also be colours really make you shine. If you're not sure, one of the first colour challenges you face is figuring out if you have a warm or cool skin undertone.



THE PRINCIPLE OF VOLUME IS KEY TO FLATTERING OUTFITS

Do you have lots of voluminous garments? The oversize trend which has been around for the past couple of years means that you may have lots of comfy voluminous garments, the problem is, that they don't always work well together. When everything appears voluminous, it will be hard to put things together. Excess fabric will overwhelm you and make you appear larger. When two voluminous items are worn together, the look becomes boxy and shapeless.

Combining voluminous items with more fitted ones is one of the key principles of coordination and helps you avoid looking frumpy and shapeless.



Pairing an oversized shirt with slim-cut jeans (rather than a wide leg trouser) or a straight skirt works well. Or an oversized T-shirt tucked neatly into a high waist trouser will show body shape beneath the bagginess.

WHAT'S THE LEVEL OF REFINEMENT?

The smoother and often the shinier the fabric, the more formal it generally is. Generally speaking, denim is more appropriate for jeans than suits, and linen is more appropriate for casual trousers, not dress pants. As a general guideline, if there's strong visual evidence of the weave or texture, it's more casual. A larger print or more colourful print also makes a garment less formal.

In assessing the formality of a garment, prints and patterns also play an important role. Clothing with patterns tend to be less formal than those that are plain. Within prints and patterns, smaller and less dominant patterns are more formal and refined than the large and loud patterns.

Another consideration is the construction of the garment. A garment with some structure, and made from a woven rather than stretchy knit fabric is viewed as more refined. This could be clothing with lining or padding; pleats and darts; pressed creases or collars and lapels.



Not just the bi-annual wardrobe transitions from summer to winter and back again. What do you do when your wardrobe needs a major overhaul? Where to start?

You first need to define your personal style. Watch the video and discover how to transition your wardrobe to one that works for you, your lifestyle and personal style.

Why Do You Need a Major Wardrobe Transition?



Change in location or climate – moving to a different climate or country can mean a whole new wardrobe



Change in job or dress code (or from college to career) – what's the standard for where you are working today?



Change in culture – moving to a different culture will mean that there are new "norms" that you may need to adapt your wardrobe to.



Changes in physicality – from weight loss and weight gain, to pregnancy and menopause, all changing the shape of your body. Plus medical issues that impact on what is comfortable and what you want to wear



Change in colouring – whether it's a change of hair colour from a bottle or one that nature has brought about, this will impact your wardrobe.



Change in lifestyle – Retirement, new mother, full time to part-time work, a hobby that requires specific clothing, ... the list goes on, but all these things impact on what you need in your wardrobe

Before You Throw Anything Out or Go Shopping For Anything New

1. Do a Lifestyle Analysis

Take the time to work out what your average week looks like, and then your average month. What kinds of clothes do you need to wear and how much of the time will you be wearing them?

Look at what you like to wear – do you prefer pants or skirts? Look at your favourite outfits and figure out what you wear more of the time than less. If you're replacing items – even for a different colouring, body shape etc. You need to know what you prefer to wear and then plan to invest in the right items for your new wardrobe.

What kinds of shoes will you wear with your outfits? If you have specific footwear needs, this may impact on the kinds of outfits you put together as well. Then you can look in your wardrobe and see what you have that still works for this and start to figure out what your gaps are.

How your lifestyle influences your clothing choices – <u>read it here</u>.

2. Create a New Style Recipe

This is the perfect time to relook at your style recipe and update it if necessary. Your style recipe is will give you the <u>ingredients</u> for your new wardrobe. It will stop you from going off track and help you create a wardrobe that you love.

If you're not sure how to create a style recipe I've got masses of posts about this <u>essential wardrobe tool here</u>.

Then with your Style Recipe in hand, start a Pinterest board and start collating images of things you love the look of – yes clothes, but also other things – when

you have 30 items you will really start to see what your style aesthetic is – which will help keep you on track when purchasing new clothes for your new wardrobe. Look at what each thing you've included in your board has in common with others. What are the patterns you're seeing in what you've chosen? How can you add this to your personal style? Can you see your style recipe on your Pinterest board? If not, what is different? Does your style recipe need tweaking?

Check out <u>9 Keys to Unlocking the Style Puzzle</u>.



3. Determine Your Style Values

Your personal values impact on clothing choices. Whether you have a high sensory need to make sure everything is comfortable (or you just won't wear it) to whether you have religious reasons to wear certain garments, to the ethical impact of your clothing choices and their origin. There are 12 style values (which you can discover in my <u>7 Steps to Style program</u>) and you will find that when you understand your values then it makes shopping for clothes so much easier. When you have a values conflict, you can feel very uncomfortable mentally or emotionally. So understanding these really helps you to make the best decisions for you.



4. Love it and Loathe it List

Create your love it and loathe it list. Think about your favourite clothes, what do you love about them? List every detail you can about this that makes you love them. Then think about the stuff you don't wear (or would never wear) and why you just don't like them. Write down those details. Your personal love it and loathe it list will help you NOT make mistakes when shopping.

5. Hot or Cold

<u>Do you run hot or run cold</u>? If one of these is you (and you'll know it) this will also impact on all your wardrobe choices. You want to make sure that what you have works for you and makes you feel comfortable at all times! I'm a cold person and this really impacts on my style choices!



6. Colour Palette Changes

If your colours have changed – whether it's a new hair colour, or you're embracing your natural "new" colour, it's a great time for a colour analysis update – and once you know your new best colours, new ideal value, value and colour contrasts and signature colours – then you can start to think about where to start building your new wardrobe.

You'll get advice like "just start with neutrals" but if you're colour contrast dominant, this is not the right advice for you! I advise you to start with hair colour as a great 'base neutral' and then use your signature colours – eye colour, skin enhancers as the next colours to start looking for. When wearing colours that harmonise with you, you'll always look even more beautiful!

Start finding your new colours from the top down and make sure what is next to your face and on your upper body is what you buy first in your new palette. Then you can move down the body til you have a harmonious whole outfit. Here are some tips on how to lighten up a dark wardrobe (if you've been wearing way too much black and have realised it's not flattering you anymore).

Remember you can use scarves to put great colours next to your face as you're rebuilding your wardrobe!

7. Body Shape Changes

If your body shape has changed in some way, it's time to reassess what works and what doesn't work for the body you have today (rather than thinking about what you used to have). Learn your new body harmony guidelines. Work out your 3-5 most important guidelines to follow (as it's almost impossible to get everything you want in every garment). Then go through your existing wardrobe and see what works with these guidelines so that you can start figuring out your wardrobe holes.

8. Plan Your New Wardrobe

Now that you have a better understanding of what you may need in your new wardrobe you can make a plan. I always recommend looking at what you have, what is worn out that you love that needs replacing and start looking for those first and then moving on from there.

Work with the current/upcoming season first too. No point in buying for the opposite season when you won't be able to wear it for ages and you may be struggling with finding anything to wear right now and in the coming months. You may want to start with a <u>Capsule Wardrobe</u> and then expand from there. If you're building your wardrobe from scratch it really is a great place to start (but can be totally limiting in the long run if you like <u>more options and variety</u>).



If you're needing a total wardrobe transition, then starting with defining your style, getting your body and colour fundamentals under your belt will help you make the best purchasing decisions and this is why I've put my 7 Steps to Style program together as it helps you to identify the clothing and styles that work for you, that creates harmony with you. SO you can have a cohesive wardrobe that works well together, easily, and so that you feel confident and stylish every day.

9. Now Go Shopping

Only start shopping when you've considered all these points! It's so easy to rush out to the stores and make more mistakes (and the average woman wastes \$900 per year on clothes she NEVER wears) rather than taking the time to educate yourself and actually work out what is your best path forwards!

Just as Rome wasn't built in a day, the best wardrobes are built over time. Don't expect to find everything on your list the first time (or second or third) you go shopping. A slow and steady approach, that is thoughtful and conscious will have you much more satisfied with your style and wardrobe in the long run, than rushing out and buying anything in your new colours just because it's in your colours, without actually assessing if you also love the fit, the shape, the style, the fabric and whether of not it really fits with your lifestyle and needs!

How to Create a Coordinated Wardrobe

A coordinated wardrobe has a cohesive feel. The personal style of the owner is fairly definable, there may also be a range of signature style elements too. There is a relationship of colour properties within the colour palette so that garments are easy to mix and match.

You can see in the following pictures how when colours have similar colour properties, they coordinate easily together.





www.insideoutstyleblog.com | Page 54

Warm and Soft

A wardrobe capsule (or series of wardrobe capsules) will help you create a coordinated wardrobe. (if you haven't signed up for my Newsletter you can do so by clicking here, also download my free ebook 5 Step Formula for a Fabulous Wardrobe).

Defining your signature style will allow you to find elements that you love that you put into each outfit and will create a sense of cohesion too.

Look at the types of fabrics in your wardrobe. One of the issues I often see in an uncoordinated wardrobe is that the fabrics don't work together. You may have some lovely smart printed skirts, but all your knit tops are made of a cheap ribbed cotton (which tends not to hold its shape well). Those t-shirts were fine with casual shorts, but really didn't work when you want to look smart. So the solution is to buy some tops in a higher quality knit that could be dressed up with skirts and dress pants.

Consider the <u>principle of volume</u>. Wearing slim with volume looks best. I remember working with a client and finding in her wardrobe that all her clothes had volume, so nothing really worked together. We had to go and find slim bottoms to pair with her voluminous tops, and more fitted tops to work with her more voluminous bottoms. Then we had a coordinated wardrobe. Also, remember to look for the relationship of accessories to other elements of your patterns and necklines to ensure that they work together.

5 Tips for Transitioning Colour Palettes in Your Wardrobe



This is a common issue for many of us as we age and our hair naturally lightens up, and goes "light black" (as my son would call my grey hair when he was a tiny tot and didn't know the word for grey). Even if you add highlights to blend the grey, that's adding more lightness to your overall appearance, and will also change your contrast levels.

Now if you go the whole hog and totally embrace the grey, you will most likely transition palettes. This can mean that your wardrobe of clothes are in colours are no longer as flattering.

Give it Time

It will take time to transition your wardrobe, both mentally and emotionally, as well as in the physical process of replacing your clothes. Your colouring doesn't change overnight and neither does the process of changing your wardrobe. It takes years to move from one palette to another and so it's Ok for your wardrobe to take some time too.

It will take you time to adjust mentally and emotionally to your new palette. If you've been wearing the same palette for a decade or longer, it can be really tricky to make a sudden change, to see yourself in a new light, to adjust to this example that you are actually ageing (if this is the reason for the change). It can be a true jolt, a reminder that you don't stay the same your whole life. I know that I am sometimes shocked about looking older, I don't think of myself as old, and yet I'm truly in middle-age. So having a physical reminder of this can be something that takes a lot of time to adjust to.

It's not just a physical thing, there are a lot of psychological aspects that go along with transition. You may be struggling with these aspects and it's important to be kind to yourself.

1. Check Your Neutrals

Go through your wardrobe – have you already got a bunch of neutrals that are in both palettes? You may be like Jill, where the majority of her neutrals are very similar in both palettes so she already had a good basis for her new palette. You may be like me – who's old best neutral (black) is now no longer any good, and so I've had to replace my black with white and light grey, but I got to keep a lot of my colours as my intensity didn't change, just my hair (when I went from <u>brunette to blonde</u>).

Start replacing items using your new best neutrals – these are the workhorses of most wardrobes! Make them great ones and they'll carry you through.

2. Add in Pieces in Your New Colours

Don't wear a full outfit of your old colours if it feels too radical, instead, start introducing your new colours into outfits, the first element I added into my wardrobe in my softer palette (that I'm currently transitioning to) was a scarf.

Bring in the new colours here and there and gradually over time you'll replace your old palette with the new. Interweave the new colours in with the old.

3. Let Go of the Least Right

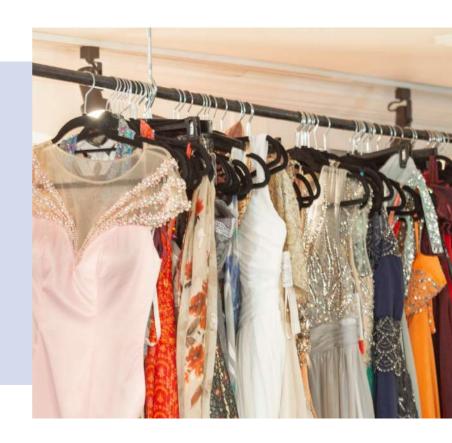
A transition can be a great time to let go of what you never really loved anyway. There may be some pieces that you've kept but don't really wear but feel bad about getting rid of because of the "sunk cost", so a change in palette is a great excuse to just let them go without guilt.

Let go of the least right first – this makes it mentally and emotionally much easier. I know when I first got my colours, it made it easy for me to get rid of the too-warm reds, the yellow jumper (what was I thinking) and the camels and tans that I knew never made me feel great. I'd got verification that they were just wrong.



The dress must follow the body of a woman, not the body following the shape of the dress."

-Hubert de Givenchy



4. Concentrate on Contrast and Signatures

Work with your <u>contrast levels</u> – if your <u>value or colour contrast</u> has changed with your changing colours, start wearing your old wardrobe just in new contrast combinations. Colours that aren't quite right never look as wrong when the contrast is great. Work at creating outfits in your new ideal value – if this is the element that has changed.

Wear your <u>signature colours</u> – replicate your hair colour, eye colour and lip colour in an outfit and you'll always be wearing an outfit that has harmony with you. As you replace items, look for your new signature colours as you'll always look your very best when wearing them (provided of course that you love the styles and shapes too!).

5. Don't Bin it, Dye it!

So you've gotten rid of the clothes that never felt good on in your wardrobe purge. But how about those items you've loved, those favourites that fit your style recipe and work for your shape. These are the hardest to let go. I say don't let go! Instead, overdye your colours – dyeing is a great way to keep those favourites in your wardrobe working for you with your new palette. Need to soften down your colours and take away the brightness? This is super easy (get all the details <u>here</u>) and will give your clothes a whole new lease on life.



1. Do a mini-assessment at the end of each day

At the end of each day, be like Jill and ask yourself:

- How does it make me feel?
- Is it still in good condition?
- If it's not working how can I make it work? Can I create a better combination?
- If there is something about a particular item that you've tried wearing a few times in different ways that still isn't working then it's time to let it go.
- If it's a physical comfort issue, can it be fixed? If not, let it go.

Ideally, the process of assessing for comfort, fit, personality, colour etc. – should first be done pre-purchase! Being a more conscious shopper will help you avoid your closet filled with things you don't wear.

2. Haven't worn it in a year? Should you get rid of it?

Haven't worn it in a year? Well, that's no reason by itself to let it go (and something that Jill and I discussed in this video post). If' it's pilled, stained or just plain worn out – why are you keeping it? Seriously – let it go!

If you haven't worn it in 5 years – can you still imagine wearing it again in the future or is it something from the past (remember you want a <u>future-focused</u> <u>wardrobe</u>)?

Does it still meet and fulfil your style recipe requirements?

3. How do I know it's still in fashion?

The easiest way to go to a departments store and see if you could purchase an item very similar to what own. Go to a bunch of brands and find the most similar items and take them to the change room and try them on, as without trying on you won't know if the cut is similar to yours, or completely different and therefore creating a dated silhouette. Sometimes it's time to let go of the trends you love.

Dust on the shoulders? You can't remember the last time you wore it? Can't imagine wearing it again? Try it on and ask yourself – would I buy it again today and be excited to wear it tomorrow or really really soon? If not then it's time to ask yourself why you're still keeping it?

4. Not sure why you don't wear it?

Does it <u>fit in all the aspects</u> of fit? Colours, style, lifestyle, style recipe, comfort? Read my tips here on whether you should keep it or bin it <u>here</u>. Still not sure?

On the hanger, you may not have enough information to make a good decision. When you try on a garment you get a fuller, richer suite of information to make decisions upon. You may wonder why you haven't been wearing it as it fits so many of your current criteria, or you may realise just why you haven't worn it (and so it's an easy decision to let it go).

Is it the "me you are today"? As the "me in the past" may not be the same "me" of today or even tomorrow.

5. Does it Rate an 8 or More?

Anything that's in your wardrobe or is going to enter your wardrobe needs to be <u>rated by you to at least an 8 (that's 80% great) or higher</u>. If you're choosing to buy or keep clothes that you feel are only 70% or 60% (or lower) great, then this is why you're not loving what you have to wear.





Change Boring Items in your Wardrobe into Something Interesting



Alter – They often think I'm going to throw a garment out, when in fact all it needs is just needs a small <u>alteration</u> to make it totally wearable and a great working item in their wardrobe



Dye – Another way to revamp your clothes is to dye them. Quite often people have white shirts that are no longer that white, or white doesn't really suit them, so rather then throw them out, I suggest they go and get a pot of dye and give that a whirl. They are often surprised how well this works and how they can turn something they never wore into something great. Get tips on <u>how to overdye</u> and the results you can expect here plus everything you need to know about dying <u>here</u>.



Revamp – If you have some unworn accessories, try your hand at refashioning. A pair of earrings could be shortened or transformed into a pair of hairclips. A vintage brooch could find new life as a necklace. You could restring several broken or older necklaces into a multi-strand masterpiece. Refashion isn't just limited to accessories. <u>Pinterest</u> is full of ideas on how to upcycle clothing that you no longer wear.



Mend – Sometimes there are items we don't wear because they need mending so sew on any missing buttons, fix any hems that may be coming down, depill and defuzz your sweaters. Make some time to complete all those little niggly sewing jobs and you'll return some garments back to useful service, extending the life of your wardrobe and stretching your dollar further.

6. Is it Cluttering Up Your Space?

Space is an important factor. Very few of us have unlimited space in which to store items we don't use. Remember that your <u>wardrobe is like a kitchen</u> – full of useful, practical, day-to-day items that need to be easily accessible.

Space and energy of a cluttered space is something to consider – what is the value of the item worth compared to the energy that was used to purchase the garment? Which is more important to you now? Is it time to build another closet or room onto your house or let go of pieces that don't work for you in one way or another?

7. Is it Weighing You Down?

If you're prone to regret – think about will you regret it more if you keep or release? Don't keep items that are weighing you down. Hanging onto items that are no longer serving you can feel like a burden (gifts from others of clothing you never wear can often feel like this).

<u>Can't decide to keep or donate</u>? Ask yourself if it feels heavy or light emotionally to keep it... you may find an answer in this question.

8. Be Empowered by Style Knowledge

The more you know about your style the easier it is to know if an item is right or wrong (or will ever be right for you) is so freeing. Being empowered with knowledge, such as discovering your Style Essence found through your <u>Style Type Report</u> and then having a full suite of information about how you can express your style through your clothing in a way that flatters your body, personality, colouring and lifestyle – which are all part of my <u>7 Steps to Style program</u> along with what I share here on Inside Out Style, means that you make fewer poor purchasing decisions (or you figure out the "what's wrong" much more quickly and can potentially return before it's too late).





Capsule Wardrobe Inspiration and Advice

- Corporate Wardrobe on a Budget
- Wardrobe capsule to look taller
- Wardrobe capsule for the tropics
- Summer wardrobe capsule
- Post pregnancy wardrobe capsule
- Maternity wardrobe capsule
- How to Work Your Wardrobe Capsule
- Casual Business Capsule
- Relaxed Business Capsule
- Evening Wear Capsule
- Busy Mum Capsule

An inspiring message or quote is also a great section-breaker. Write yours here.

Don't forget to cite your source!

www.insideoutstyleblog.com | Page 63

CORPORATE WARDROBE CAPSULE

Creating a work capsule or two will give you the very best bang for your buck. It will allow you to buy the best you can as you don't need to buy lots and lots.

Make sure of the dress code where you're working before you go out spending lots of money. Do you need suits or just smart separates? Check out the company reception and its website. Make sure you ask the dress code when you get employed.

Corporate Business Wardrobe

When you are wanting to build a corporate wardrobe, you want to ensure that your clothes reflect the dress code.

Corporate dress codes are more formal. They require:

- Structured garments
- Opaque garments
- Collars
- Notrevealing

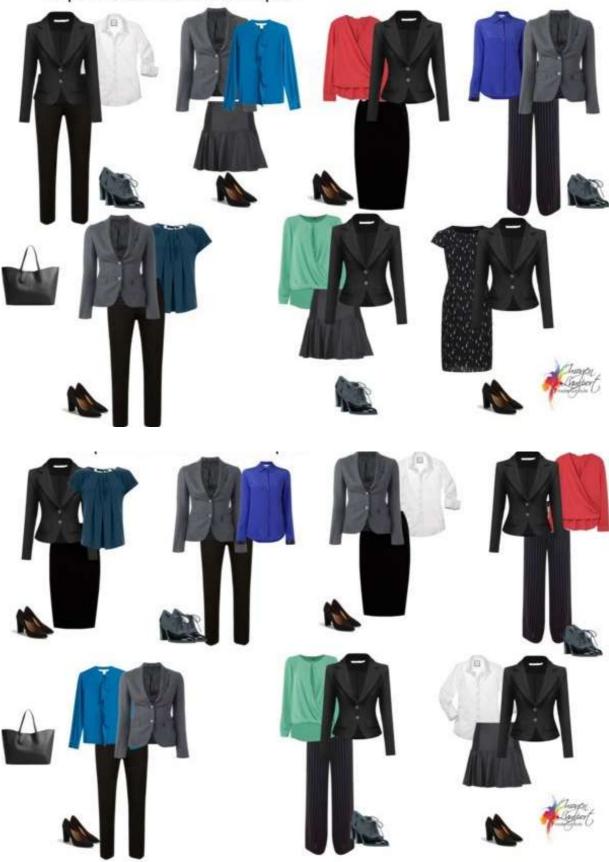


These elements fit with their more yang (read about that here) style. You want to communicate strength, power and success. Authority and expertise in the corporate jungle, so ensuring that you understand just how your clothes are communicating before you open your mouth is paramount.

Here I've created a simple capsule that would be appropriate in most corporate offices. What you'll see is that both jackets and all the bottoms (pants and skirts) work with all the tops, but the tops don't need to work together. This is how you get the feeling of variety in your wardrobe. Adding more tops in different colours and with some more subtle patterns will allow you to feel like you have a much larger wardrobe than you do.

Keeping your jackets and bottoms in neutrals (here I've chosen grey and black which are both very office appropriate) will allow you to mix and match easily. Plus, we don't really notice neutrals, so they allow us to wear the same garment multiple times easily without anyone thinking we have a tiny wardrobe to choose from. What people notice is the colour of your top changing (<u>find out more about that here</u>.) Here you can see how it's really easy to create multiple outfits with these very few outfits. If you had a few accessories – scarves – necklaces – brooches to add more colour and variety, you could change the appearance of the outfits up even more. Here you have 21 different outfits from these few garments, giving you an easy 3 weeks of outfit choices.





Corporate Business Wardrobe Capsule

CASUAL BUSINESS WARDROBE CAPSULE

Here is a capsule with plenty of options, each cardigan can be worn over each top, the jacket and coat also work as a layer over each outfit.

Don't forget to add some accessories – they are your focal points, which you always want, if you're distracting someone to be looking at your necklace, then they're not looking at your thighs are they?

Here with these 12 garments you can easily create over 64 different outfits and looks. Then change up your accessories for even more options.



Keep your denim on the darker side and with little distressing.

You can wear more pattern and more relaxed fabrics, from suede to denim, from florals to animal prints.

Shoes should still be in good condition, though unlike with most other dress codes, they don't need to cover the toes.

Stretch knit fabrics are comfortable and appropriate, just make sure that you're not showing too much skin – such as midriff or too much cleavage, it's always better in the workplace to keep your shoulders covered too.

RELAXED BUSINESS WARDROBE CAPSULE

Many who work in the corporate world now wear a relaxed business rather than formal business style of dress. Formal business is easy, team a suit with a shirt and put on some hose and pumps and off you go. It's kind of like a school uniform. Relaxed business is so much trickier to interpret and is where so many people go wrong, most frequently wearing clothes that are too informal for work. So how about putting together some great relaxed business capsules to make your work life easier.



Working Your Relaxed Business Capsule

Don't forget your accessories, adding a scarf or necklace will change up your look and provide that all important focal point.

This capsule of clothes will provide for 7 weeks of alternative outfits. Not too shabby for 11 garments.

Relaxed business is a step down from the suit of formal business wear, but still requires some structure, so a jacket that can be worn over the top is an essential item. Tops are best in woven fabrics or fine knits. Shoes should still cover your toes, and avoid showing too much skin.

EVENING WEAR WARDROBE CAPSULE

Many of us find dressing up for a wedding or out for an evening, not the black tie type, but the smartly dressed type, hard work, our wardrobes just don't cater for it if we don't do it too often. Too easily when invited out we feel we have nothing to wear so we go shopping and spend money on a garment that we might only wear once or twice, which is a waste of money and resources.

Instead, don't fall for this expensive trap, instead start creating an evening wear wardrobe capsule so that you have a variety of pieces that can be mixed and matched to create a few looks from smart to dressy so that you have something appropriate to wear, no matter where you're invited.



Here I've created a capsule that gives you over 16 outfits, plus of course add in the accessories to mix it up.

Don't forget to look for a fabulous evening coat, you may think that you can wear anything as you'll take it off when you get to your destination, but finding something that has great impact as you walk into the room will really finish off your appearance.

This capsule can take you from dinner at a restaurant, to a cocktail party to a wedding. Absolutely black can be an easy option for evening wear, but don't base your whole evening wear capsule around black, instead look to add in some colour as it will make you stand out from the crowd.

CAPSULE WARDROBE TO LOOK TALLER

Wardrobe Capsules with a Column of Colour

Vewellery or scarves will draw attention to your face Match your top to bottom or your jacket or cardi to your bottom as long as tops and bottoms are similar in depth of colour, you don't need to match colours exactly

Don't forget to match your shoes to your bottom or go slightly darker



A column of colour can be created in two ways:

- 1. Through the centre of your outfit so find a top and bottom of similar colour and value (that's the technical colour word for depth of colour)
- 2. Through the outside of your outfit a suit is an easy example of this, but you can create it simply just by choosing a cardigan or jacket that is a similar colour to your trousers or skirt.

Don't forget that if you want the most elongation, you need to continue the unbroken line of colour through your feet – so wear shoes that are either a similar colour to your bottom (or your version of nude if you're wearing a skirt and no tights), or go slightly darker (won't draw attention the way a lighter colour will).

If you really want to stick with always wearing a column of colour, you won't find that your capsule will be as interchangeable as if you don't, but you can get many outfits still from working with these principles.

WARDROBE CAPSULES FOR THE TROPICS



When you're in hot tropical weather the last thing you want to do is wear layers. In fact, you may find that you also don't want to wear much in the way of necklaces as it can feel heavy and hot, so instead look for tops with interesting necklines so that you don't need to add extra.

Alternatively, find some earrings to draw attention up to your face.

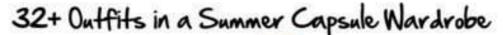
Look for lightweight fabrics. You may need a light cardigan for when you're inside in air-conditioning.

As you won't be layering, you'll need a few extra tops in your capsule. Just make sure that they all go with all your bottoms.

Instead of jackets, why not introduce some dresses which can be worn as stand-alone outfits and don't need to work back with your tops or bottoms.



SUMMER WARDROBE CAPSULE IN WARM COLOURS





It's often much harder to have a summer casual and summer work wardrobe that are a capsule. Here I've added in a pair of shorts and jeans which will give you some more casual options as they can be worn with the same tops. Having a jacket in a lighter summer colour that you can slip over your clothes, particularly if you work in air conditioning, will help to make a summer knit look less casual and more professional.

To extend this wardrobe, just add a few more tops in colours that work with your bottoms.

Make it more casual with a denim skirt or other casual skirt that works with the tops.

The sleeve issue is a really common one. So many women want sleeves, so often fashion designers don't put sleeves into their garments (it's cheaper not to). So you have to search harder, or you can layer a fine knit top underneath your knit, or add a lightweight cardigan, shrug or bolero over your sleeveless garments.

BUSY MUM WARDROBE CAPSULE

8 practical easy care garments along with 3 pairs flat shoes for chasing the kids, plus some scarves and accessories to change up the look and add focal points and detail. This combination can all be mixed and matched for versatility and can create easily, garments alone, 22 different outfits, before adding in the options of changing up your look with different shoes and accessories to create some hero action.



Each accessory adds at least 8 more outfit options totaling over 78 different looks. If you added in a pair of chocolate trousers you'd then create another 20+ outfit options, just with one more garment that works with all the others.

When figuring out what works in your wardrobe, why not go shopping in your wardrobe and see if you can create some capsules like this to make getting up and dressed each day fast and easy but with style. You may discover you have part of a capsule, but may need to add in a jacket or a top or two, these are the holes that need filling in your wardrobe to make it work really hard for you. No more random purchasing, find your capsules and save money as you don't buy orphans when getting your next shopping fix.

This is also an ideal capsule if you were travelling for a week or two, and would fit in carry-on luggage!

POST PREGNANCY WARDROBE CAPSULE

Pregnancy, birth and feeding can all change your body shape, and it's not the ideal time to start building a new wardrobe as weight can fluctuate wildly during this period. I know after feeding my son for 8 months I was thinner than before I got pregnant, but after he stopped feeding I went back to my more average weight. Rather than build a whole new wardrobe, I'd suggest creating a capsule, a bit like you do with a maternity capsule, that will carry you through the first year or two of your child's life (and then you may end up back in your maternity wardrobe with another pregnancy anyway).

Ideally, you want clothes that have give in them, so look for fabrics with stretch (cotton elastane mixes, lycra, denim with stretch, ponti) that all will allow you some growing/shrinking room.



Then, of course, choose a colour scheme that is flattering for you and work with this colour scheme so that you can mix and match.

Don't expect everything in this new capsule will work for you for years to come, some things won't work when the boobs go, I made the mistake when pregnant of buying a jacket, that I thought would work fine when I didn't have the bump, and discovered that when I had my baby that the collar looked odd without that tummy (it was a long low collar). Also, this is not the time to be spending up on the higher quality end of town as baby vomit, banana hands, pumpkin stains are all part of a mum's life when her baby is in its first two years of life. There is nothing worse than wrecking a favourite garment that cost a lot. Instead go for practical pieces at lower price-points to put together your capsule. Everything also needs to be machine washable, and preferably with little need to see an iron!

Think practical, if you're breastfeeding, you need to be able to access your boobs easily so most dresses are not ideal – though I have included a nursing dress and tunic which have built in features for nursing mothers.

Shoes need to be comfortable so you can walk and push a pram. You may find your feet have grown during your pregnancy as the hormone relaxing and extra weight can make them spread and expand (my feet grew 1/2 a size so I had to start a whole new shoe wardrobe!).

As with all wardrobe capsules, think about your ability to layer items and mix them together so you can create multiple looks.



MATERNITY WARDROBE CAPSULE

The time that most women find it easiest to create a really effective wardrobe capsule is when they're pregnant. Aware that they won't be wearing these clothes for the next 2-5 years, they buy judiciously. Carefully choosing clothes that all work together, that can be mixed, matched, layered, dressed up and down.





When you are putting together a maternity capsule make sure the colours work together. Here I've chosen black, grey and navy as my neutrals, then added in the analogous scheme of red, red-violet and blue as my colours for versatility.

These pieces can be layered easily, which is important when you're pregnant as you may find that you run hotter than your normal body temperature, so it's good if you can take off a layer as you warm up.

You will also find that you can bring in garments from your pre-pregnancy wardrobe and wear them, particularly things like jackets and cardigans. For example, add in a denim jacket to this capsule which won't be able to be buttoned up (but we tend to wear them unbuttoned anyway) over the top of the dresses and tops.

You might also find that if you're in a cooler climate, you have some long sleeve knit tops that can be worn underneath the dresses and tops to add that extra layer, but you don't have to worry about them riding up and exposing your stomach as they are not the top garment.

STAPLES WARDROBE CAPSULE

Winter and summer may change what you need as your wardrobe staples, particularly if you live in a climate with very different weather seasonally. When we think about what we really need in our wardrobe, it needs to work with your current lifestyle, personality, the environment and reflect your personality

There is no one list that works for everyone, but there are some staples that I look for in most wardrobes. Of course, take into consideration your personality and lifestyle – as what works for you and what you like to wear. There is no point in wearing dresses (or trousers) if you don't like to.



Now of course your lifestyle will dictate exactly what you need in your wardrobe, but these are some ideas of what you need. They are very general and bland – the whole point of a staple is that it can be worn with lots and lots of other pieces (and is also known as a <u>basic</u>, or <u>supporting act</u>). Work in an office and you may need more smart staple clothes than relaxed versions. If you are a stay-at-home-mum then you will be looking at relaxed and casual versions of these garments. Knit or casual cotton jackets instead or structured wool for the corporate person. Denim or cotton rather than wool skirts. More t-shirts than blouses.

If you live in a hot climate, your jackets will be lighter fabrications. You may add some shorts. If you are in a cold climate, add in more jackets, long sleeve layers and cardigans.

How to Create a Wardrobe Capsule Around a Patterned Hero

One of the easiest ways to plan a wardrobe capsule is to take a multi-coloured patterned hero garment and use the colours in it as inspiration for your colour scheme. I have a real life example of one such capsule in this post about how to pack 72 outfits into carry on luggage where my skirt is the hero that created the colour scheme for my capsule!



A <u>hero</u> garment, like this patterned coat, can help you discover colours that work together and have your create a cohesive wardrobe capsule.

This capsule wardrobe would be ideal for travel or just for daily life. You have pieces that are more casual for more relaxed dressing and pieces that are more formal for those occasions you need to look smarter.

Don't forget to add a variety of accessories and shoes to your wardrobe capsule. You can choose colours outside of those in the capsule to help you feel like you're wearing a different colour to the other colours in your capsule.

My formula here will create 84 outfits:

7 x tops + 4 x bottoms + 3 toppers = 84 outfits

Remember that all your tops, bottoms and toppers must mix and match with each other. But of course the tops don't need to work together, nor do the bottoms! Though of course you will have even more scope for outfits if your tops do mix as you may be able to layer them as well.



Beauty bundles of different coloured accessories are a great way to add interest and detail plus variety to your wardrobe capsule. Each coloured bundle of accessories doesn't have to be able to be worn with every outfit or even every colour within your wardrobe capsule. Their aims is to make you feel like you're not just wearing the same old thing all the time but something different as we notice colours changing much more than neutrals.

This is why it's good to base more of your capsule around more neutrals than lots of colours and then spice things up with your coloured accessories.

5 Steps to Creating A Simple Relaxed Wardrobe In Your Colours

1. Simple Vs Complex

Some people's version of simple is somebody else's version of complicated. Simple because everything works together or it could be simply because it means there's no patterns or any extraneous detail or simply because it's a smaller sized wardrobe (you have less choices).

There are two main things to consider when deciding on whether you are a fan of simple outfits and patterns or complex ones. The first and most important one is your personality and values. The second and only marginally less important is your physicality.

2. How do you define simple?

Alternatively your version of simple may mean you really do like clean lines and no pattern. Knowing the shapes that suit you physically (your body shape, proportions and variations) plus your best colours will also simplify your choices. You will know if something will or won't work so much more easily, saving you time, energy and money.

Your style is unique to you. You will not find it by copying others. You may find inspiration from others, but your style is your own. Your bit of a twist is different from my bit of a twist which is different from somebody else's bit of a twist.

— Imogen Lamport



3. What's going to be practical?

Patterns are incredibly practical, particularly for a preschool teacher. Busy patterns are less likely to show up any stains. Practicality includes good washand-wear fabrics that you can throw in the washing machine. You don't want to be dry cleaning around preschool-aged children.

Your clothes need to be comfortable to wear. Look for fabrics with ease of movement but are still fitted (never sloppy or baggy), and movement in a fabric that gives it more elegance. Drape and lightness can add that little extra feeling of comfortable ease and elegance.



When you are looking for colours in stores, you need to understand just like fashion, the style of clothes changes, you'll also find that there'll be colour trends. Colours will appear and disappear and some colours will seem like unicorns that you can't find at all. If you are really determined to have something in a particular colour, you'll need to consider dyeing your clothes so make sure you're buying fabrics that dye easily...

Here is an example of a simple wardrobe capsule in soft warm smoky colours (my Intriguing palette).



www.insideoutstyleblog.com | Page 81

4. Start online

Traditional shopping means heading to five stores to discover that basically, it's more of the same stuff rather than anything different. We tend to get into a habit of going to the same stores all the time and who knows what we're missing.

Doing some online research can also be really useful, especially for new-to-you stores. You can either say there's something there for you or there's nothing there. You don't even have to walk into the store if you feel like there's nothing there for you at the moment. If there is something that looks suitable, you can then decide then whether you want to go into the store to see it and actually feel it touch it try it on or not.

5. Build it Over Time

Expecting to find exactly what you want instantly is unlikely – or even to find lots of things in one shopping trip. The best wardrobes are generally built up slowly over time as you stumble across fabulous pieces that you love, that fit, that works for you and that are great. Keep your eyes open when you're out and about – that's often when you see the thing (not when you're looking specifically).

Don't get frustrated with the lack of options right now. You have no control over what is currently available in store. You'd be amazed at how fast stuff turns over these days and how frequently stores get new stock.

Knowing what really works for you is also important as you can more easily understand why something doesn't work, instead of thinking that there is something wrong with you – as I always say – it's the clothes, not you, that are wrong. Give yourself a big old break (and a hug while you're at it).



Where to Shop When You're On a Strict Budget



1. Consignment Stores

Are great for gently used high quality garments. Sure the sizes won't all be there, but when you're shopping with your capsule wardrobe plan you will be able to spot the bargains and leave the rest easily.

There are consignment stores both online and bricks and mortar. Check out the ones in your town as well as the online options for the best result.

2. Charity Shops

You can pick up some amazing bargains in charity shops (Goodwill, Salvos Stores, Savers etc.). But, never shop without your plan and list. And make sure that you take a good hard look at the quality. Unlike in consignment stores which tend to have very strict criteria and standards (where they just won't take the item), charity stores will sell anything (well almost). You need to ensure that what you're buying isn't worn out.

Frequently you will find clothes still with tags on them there, never worn. Or clothes bought and barely worn. You just have to take the time to really peruse the racks picking out the best items and leaving the rest. Remember that if you look worn out, then people will assume that you don't take good care of your work.

3. Outlet Stores

Outlet stores are often a really great way of building a wardrobe on a budget. You can purchase good quality items at a fraction of their original cost. There will usually be more sizes than in a consignment or charity shop, but likely, still more limited than regular retail. The best bit is, everything is new, though do look for faults in case this is why they are in the outlet store.

These days, stores send clothes to their outlet all the time, it's not all last season's or last years.

4. Sales – Online and In Store

There are always sales on. It's not longer a twice yearly event, but weekly. So many stores reduce their stock heavily to move it out so they can move new items in. Checking sales racks, signing up to store newsletters so you know when items are going on sale can help you get the best bargains to build your wardrobe.

As with all sale shopping, making sure that you really need that garment, and that it fits your lifestyle, body shape and personality are all so important, as it's only a bargain when you would have bought it full price. If you don't need it or it doesn't fit or flatter. Then it's just a waste of money.

HOW TO USE YOUR PRINTABLE WARDROBE CHART?

You can fill it in with descriptions or photograph your items as a reminder. Take the wardrobe chart shopping if you're trying to find pieces to fill in your gaps. Remember each jacket or cardigan must go with all tops and all pants/skirts. The tops don't need to work together, but must go with all bottoms and outerwear pieces. Accessories don't need to work with all outfits or even stay in the desired colour palette, but are there to provide you with variety and interest—think scarves, necklaces, earrings, brooches, bracelets and belts.

Make a note circled here in red) of everything you need to buy to complete your capsule. Print out multiple charts and use them for all the relevant lifestyle categories in your life and for each season.

LIFESTYLE Work—relaxed business			SEAS Spring/S	COLOUR PALETTE Navy/beige/turquoise/ green/ white				
JACKET/CARDIGAN Navy Blazer				JACKET/CARDIGAN Beige soft jacket				
		Nav	TS/SKIRT y and white rint skirt	PANTS/SKIRT Beige skirt		PANTS/SKIRT Turquoise/green/ white skirt		
TOP Turquoise knit	TOP White button down shirt		TOP Green knit	TOP Navy blouse	TOP Navy and white stripe top		TOP White knit top with embellished neckline	
SHOES Black pumps			SHOES Beige kitten heels		SHOES Turquoise sling backs			
ACCESSORY Turquoise long beads	Pin	SSORY k and e scarf	ACCESSORY Purple and blue scarf	ACCESSORY Silver necklace with red pendant	ACCESSORY Purple drop sparkly earrings		ACCESSORY Red belt	

Wardrobe Capsule Plan

LIFESTYLE			SEASON		COLOUR PALETTE			
JA	ACKET/(CARDIGAI	N	JACKET/CARDIGAN				
PANTS/SKIRT		PANTS/SKIRT		PANTS/SKIRT		PANTS/SKIRT		
TOP	ТОР		TOP	TOP	TOP		ТОР	
SHOES			SHOES		SHOES			
ACCESSORY	ACCESSORY		ACCESSORY	ACCESSORY	ACCESSORY		ACCESSORY	

The Wardrobe Formula

2 x Jackets/Cardigans

4 x Pants/Skirts

6 x Tops

When combined will create 72 outfits

For each extra Top you add in you get an extra 12 outfit options and for each extra Jacket/Cardigan you add to the equation you will increase your number of outfits by 22!

Substituting a dress instead of a top or bottom will reduce the total number of outfits. You may want to add a dress in as an additional piece to increase your variety. Remember it must work with the Jackets/Cardigans.

Everything must be able to be mixed and matched (except for the accessories). You can expand on this capsule (you don't have to stick to 12 or 13 garments), but if you're rebuilding a wardrobe for any reason, or planning on travel, it's a great starting point to make your wardrobe more effective.

For a comprehensive explanation of wardrobe capsules please download my ebook Your Five Step Formula for a Fabulous

Wardrobe on a Budget which is available at www.insideoutstyleblog.com.

Please do refer too to the examples of wardrobe capsules I've created on the blog (just search up Wardrobe Capsule on www.insideoutstyleblog.com and you'll find a whole bunch of them!



GET A HEAD START ON DEFINING YOUR STYLE

Evolve Your Style - 31 Day Challenge

This fun 31 day style challenge that will get you out of your style rut

- Are you stuck in a style rut?
- Do you wish you were a little more adventurous or stylish but are not sure where to start?

Evolve Your Style is the ideal place to start discovering your style as you work through fun small daily style challenges which will have you evolving your style in only 31 days.

Discover more here.



7 Steps to Style System

Discover your unique style so you can save money, feel confident and look fabulous every day! The answers to all your style questions are here!

- Are you sick of wasting money on clothes that don't suit you?
- Would you like a professional opinion on your body shape and colouring?
- Would you like to define your personal style?
- Would you like to know once-and-for-all what really suits you?
- Would you like to feel confident and discover your true beauty?

Then **7 Steps to Style** is the right next step on your journey to style. It's the most comprehensive and individualised program available that will assist you in discovering what really works for you so you are empowered and confident when you shop.

You learn how to put together outfits that really work for you, your body, your colouring and your values along with my professional opinion to ensure that you get it right.

Start feeling great about your style and see the positive impact it has on your life (and wallet). Would you love to finally find your style and stop wasting money on the wrong clothes then <u>click</u> <u>here.</u>

<u>Plus we have so many great style resources in our shop to help you become more stylish every</u> <u>day. Check out our shop.</u>