

Fashion

“In any season, you should be able to come up with at least 25 outfits from just 8 or 9 pieces in your closet.”

Wardrobe manager
Susan Dresner



TAKING STOCK

Some of the best-dressed women may have less clothes in their closet than you do. What they do have, however, is a collection of pieces that all work together. You can get the same kind of fashion mileage with this advice from Susan Dresner, president of Successful Ways & Means, a wardrobe management service in New York City. Divide your clothes into three piles: those you wear most frequently, those you wear occasionally, those you almost never put on. Then set out your accessories. Assemble the outfits you wear most often and try them on. Check fit and condition; create new pair-ups (like trousers with the jacket of a business suit); and play with accessories for different looks. Next, examine the occasional- and almost-never-wears. Be objective: Would these clothes work with a change of buttons, a different length, etc.? Keep what works; toss what doesn't.

MIX IT UP

For real flair, combine patterns and textures instead of playing it safe with solid-on-solid. Team a tweed suit with a subtle hand-painted silk blouse, a plaid jacket with a shirt in an embossed fabric. The trick is to keep colors unified (see swatches, left and above) to create texture, not visual confusion.



INSIDERSECRETS

Do break up an outfit. Wear the jacket of a solid-color suit as a blazer over a print dress.

Check that black separates match in tone before pairing them. Different dye lots can appear more grayish or brownish.

Treat yourself to one great jacket with varied flecks of color so you can wear it with everything.

Mix textures as well as patterns. The nubbiness of a wool tweed looks fabulous against a smooth gabardine, sleek silk or soft velvet.

SHOPPING SAVVY

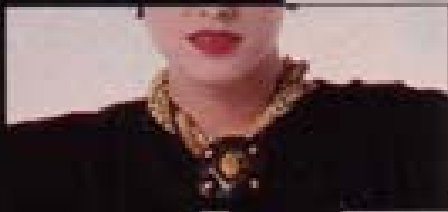
There's an art to successful shopping. Before you leave home, write down the item you're looking for, preferred color/fabric, where you think you'll find it and how much you'd like to spend. If you want to coordinate colors, attach fabric swatches snipped from a seam or hem. Or take along the blouse, suit-jacket you're trying to match. When shopping for a dressy outfit, don't wear sneakers and socks.

Once you've cleared your closet of extraneous clothes, keep it neat and organized by doing the following: ● Put out-of-season clothes in another closet or cover with sheets and pack away in boxes. (Never store in plastic bags—these retain moisture that can fade or discolor your clothes.) ● Always inspect clothes for stains before putting them away. Soil attracts moths and other insects. ● If closet space is at a premium, invest in a closet organizer that can stretch existing space or build an additional rung at bottom half of closet for hanging blouses and jackets.

ACCESSORIZE!

A basic black two-piece—long-sleeve tunic, swingy circle skirt—becomes three entirely different looks with a quick switch of accessories. Here, the simple boatneck top goes glamorous when you lift up the collar and pin it to form a jewel neckline. To top it off—an important beaded choker.

ACCENT IT



BELT IT



TIE IT

A striking leather and gold-tone belt nips in the tunic at the waist to form a trendy peplum look.

It's the little things that can finish off an outfit in style, advises Susan Dresner, whose book *Shopping on the Inside Track: A Professional Shopper's Guide to the Best Women's Stores in America's Most Travelled Cities* will be published in September 1988 (Peregrine Smith). Scarves, jewelry, belts, hats, etc., instantly update old favorites, stretch a small wardrobe. To get the best effects, keep these accessory tips from Susan in mind: Buy the finest quality—you want to make a statement that's says chic, not cheap! Choose one main



Add a tweed jacket for instant polish, then dress it up with a print scarf.

color family that goes with most of your wardrobe, plus a few brights. Avoid black, which can be difficult to match up. Vary your pair-ups. And use accessories in different ways. Wear a scarf as an ascot, knotted into a shawl, tied in a bow in front or on the side. Use clip-on earrings as pins. Hang a brooch on a chain to create a pendant. Choose accessories that will complement outfits. Showcase dramatic belts, scarves and jewelry against simple styles. Wear an oversized watch to make a timely statement. And remember: Less really is more! (For other tips, see page 18)

AT-HOMEHINTS

Hang separates together, jackets with jackets (break up suits), skirts with skirts, etc., to encourage mixing-and-matching.

Subdivide clothes into categories: business, casual wear, dress-up and travel.

Further subdivide categories by tailored versus

trendy and by color. This makes accessorizing and coordinating outfits much easier.

Hang belts on a belt ring, scarves on a tie rack. Keep shoes boxed, and label boxes so you can find what you need at a glance. Keep knits folded in a drawer (hanging stretches the shape).

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HOW TO UPDATE

You can look hot without becoming a fashion victim, states wardrobe pro Susan Dresner. A few well-chosen trendy add-ons will zip up basics. Case in point: the classic red jacket and silky white T-shirt, right, made new with this season's divided skirt. An oversized watch and one-of-a-kind earrings, both found at craft/flea markets, add a chic personal note. Check out antiques stores, thrift or museum shops, even kids' clothing stores for other interesting pieces.

WHAT TO BUY

A basic late spring/summer business wardrobe should contain:

- A business suit of lightweight wool, silk, linen, hard-finished cotton or a blend of these in a solid shade (vanilla, navy or pastel).
- A well-cut jacket in neutral-colored (natural, pecan, light gray) woven raw silk or linen.
- Silk or cotton skirt in a solid shade or small print.
- 3 short-sleeved blouses.
- 2-piece blouse-and-skirt set in lightweight cotton.
- Solid-color dress in cotton or silk, small-print dress in a different style.
- 54"-long silk scarf in summery colors.
- 2 pairs of shoes and 2 leather belts, in a cream color and a vibrant shade.
- Lightweight raincoat in silk or polished cotton.

COLOR IT RIGHT

Don't overlook your coloring when choosing your wardrobe. The interplay of skin tone, hair and eyes is an important factor, says Dresner, author of *Managing Your Business Image: A Practical Guide to Personal Style**. Before you make any purchase, hold the fabric next to your inner forearm and face. Check whether the shade fades into or overpowers your skin tone. Be especially careful about neutrals like black and beige, which can be draining. (A vibrant scarf and more vivid eye shadow and lipstick can help perk up your complexion.) To figure out the top color choices for your skin tone, check out the chart, right.

YOUR SKIN TONE	YOUR COLOR GROUP	PREFERRED COLORS
Yellow beige, pink beige, olive	Golden	Rose, blue-green (e.g., turquoise), gold, primary colors infused with gray
Pink beige, ivory	Subtle	Soft shades of rose, purple, blue, green, blue-green (e.g., teal) (Note: Avoid washed-out tones.)
Ivory, pink beige	Contrast	Primary colors of red, blue, green and their combinations (Note: Avoid sharp contrasts like black/white.)
Yellow beige, olive, copper brown	Earthy	Combinations of blue-green, deep red and rust, all infused with gray (Note: Avoid strong-based yellow colors.)
Dark brown	Ebony	Primary colors of yellow, red, blue, green and vibrant combinations in rose, turquoise, purple (Note: Avoid somber colors.)

Find the shade that most closely describes your skin tone and read across to discover your color group and the shades that will look best on you.

Photo, above and on cover by Ben Hootman. Clothes by Jones New York.

*To order your copy, send \$4.50 plus \$1.50 for postage and handling to Successful Ways & Means, 34 W. 89th St., Box 4A, New York, NY 10024. Allow 2 to 3 weeks for delivery.