

# Work Wardrobe

The tips and tricks  
you need to look  
chic...for cheap!

FROM THE EDITORS OF  
**WORKS** & **THE BARGAIN QUEENS**  
BY NICOLE WILLIAMS



WORKS

THE BARGAIN QUEENS

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Do You Dress Well For Work?

# WORKS



*“To be irreplaceable one must always be different.”*

*-Coco Chanel*

Dressing for the office is more than just wearing the latest trends. Each day when you pull on your power suit, pencil skirt or shift dress you should be wearing confidence, intelligence and poise.

Your look is a huge part of your personal brand—make sure you are conveying the right message.

We know it's tough...your closet is overflowing with “nothing to wear”, you're running late for a 9am meeting and you have NO time to shop. So I am making it simple for you! We collaborated with The Bargain Queen herself, Sara Goldstein to create this book to help you discover your own personal style and put together a wardrobe that will finally end the marathon fashion show you do every day before your morning coffee. Plus, it's packed with tips and tricks to save you some cash...which you can of course spend on more shoes!

...and that's what WORKS

be a bargain queen

don't let your personal style break the bank!

# Bargain Shopping 101

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Bargain shopping is about exercising your intelligence and creativity to meet your material needs, rather than spending a stack of money.

Here's the basic tips you need to know to get the best bargains.

**Browse, browse, browse.** To get great bargains you need to know what's available, and where. How do you know this? By browsing a lot.

Whenever you have a few minutes and you're near a shop, take a look inside. See what sort of things the store stocks, and what their prices are like. If the stock and prices are good, make a mental note that it's a good place to go for that kind of item. Soon you'll know exactly where to go get anything you need at a great price.

You can do the same thing with online shopping — browse and bookmark when you have time to look for the best deals, so you have a personal bargain shopping directory at your disposal when you need it.

*Also try:*

- ✓ Secondhand items
- ✓ Garbage Day!
- ✓ Last year's model
- ✓ Items with minor damage

**Don't impulse buy.** You can only browse often enough to know where the really great deals are, if you don't purchase every single well-priced thing you spot. Before you buy something, make sure you really need it.

Tip: if you didn't know you needed it 'til you saw it, you can probably live perfectly happily without it.

**Keep an open mind.** When you're out browsing, take a look in places you might not normally consider. Some fantastic stores are hidden behind grubby shop fronts

and in odd locations — they don't need the flash to attract people when the deals are great (and remember, the flashier the store, the more the goods have to be marked up to pay for it).

**Know what's desirable — and avoid it.** Different things are desirable at different times, and in different places. If you buy outside these times and places, you'll save a lot of money.

Two examples: flowers cost more on Valentine's Day, and warm jackets are most expensive in the first cold snap each year. If you can anticipate your needs and buy ahead, or make do with what you've got and wait until after the peak demand time, you'll get a much better deal.

**Avoid 'convenience' options.** Convenience is a strong selling point for retailers. If they convince you that buying everything from them is the easiest way to do things, they can charge you more for the privilege. If you can avoid these options, you'll save a lot of money.

# Bargain Shopping 101

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For example, we save a lot of money by shopping at six different specialty stores instead of buying everything at the supermarket. Most weeks, we visit the greengrocer, bakery, Italian deli, Asian grocery store, butcher and fishmonger to buy our food. Because we're served quickly in each store, it takes the same amount of time and effort as walking miles in supermarket aisles and waiting at the checkout would... but we eat better and spend less because we do it.

**Try all your options.** Whenever you have an opportunity to try an alternative to something you use right now, give it a go. You never know when a better, cheaper option will become available. For things like clothing this is easy: take things that you wouldn't normally consider into the change room and see what happens. If they're hideous, they can go back on the rack.

For other things, keep a look out for samples and testers. Friends' places can also be a great place to try things — about a quarter of my beauty finds come directly from my best friend's makeup bag!

**Buy 'exotic' things where they're normal.** 'Exotic' items often attract enormous markups — but what's exotic to one person is completely standard to another. You can work this to your advantage by finding out who considers the 'exotic' items you like to be completely normal, and buying there.

Asian groceries are cheap in Chinatown. Great olives are cheapest in Italian or Greek areas. Longchamp and Petite Bateau cost less in France, whereas Thailand is great for silk.

You can probably think of a dozen more examples!

**Read your local guides.** In most areas, there are bargain shopping guides available. They can give you some good ideas about places you might want to check out.

Just be warned that 'bargain' shopping is a big industry now, and retailers know they can make good profits offering their stock at 10-20% off in a shabbier version of their regular stores.

Hold out for better deals — I regularly find beautiful clothes for 50-90% off retail and you can too.

**Share your bargain shopping tips.** The best resource a bargain hunter can have is great friends. Swapping your best tips with one another helps you all get great deals.

If none of your 'real life' friends are interested in bargain hunting, don't despair. You'll find lots of bargain shoppers to share tips with online... for example, at my website [The Bargain Queen!](#)

And if you find a really brilliant deal, make sure you tell us too!

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# Splurge vs. Save

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With the change of season comes a desire to update your wardrobe. But deciding what trends to spend your bank on is always a problem. Remember that pink poncho you bought in 2003 that cost a fortune and is now relegated to the back of your closet? To ensure you don't make the same mistake again, let WORKS help you decide what pieces are worth the investment and which ones you can cheap out on.

## *Splurge vs. Save*

### WINTER COAT

When it comes to bundling up, you should never sacrifice warmth—or style—for a buck. Not to mention that a classic coat can last through several seasons and be worn with evening attire or jeans and a sweater. When it comes to coats, nobody does it better than Burberry.

### TRENDY JACKET

This fall, the short leather jacket is making a comeback. This daring look is adding a hard edge to more feminine frills of seasons past. With trend revivals, always stay under budget because it probably won't be popular for more than a season.

### BOOTS

Platforms or wedges, round or pointed toe, ankle or oxford bootie—the shoe runaround is sure to cause a dizzy spell. When it doubt, remember this: You can never go wrong with a pair of high black boots. Good in the winter and perfect for pencil skirts, miniskirts, and even jeans, you'll get the most wear out of this wardrobe staple. And since your shoes take quite a pounding, you want to ensure they'll last for more than one season.

### BOOTIES

Sure, Victoria Beckham and Jennifer Lopez have unlimited funds to blow on every trend that may arise, but most of us can't finance fashion's fickle tendencies. This fall's debatable booties are one thing to save on. Opt for a non-name brand at first and get a feel for the look. If you love it, you can always upgrade later.

### UNDERGARMENTS

Nothing can make you look more cheap and tacky than an ill-fitting undergarment. Whether we're talking pesky bra straps or nasty underwear lines, your confidence—and comfort level—will undoubtedly be squashed. Dish it out for your undies and everything on top of them will miraculously look and feel better.

### TIGHTS

Let's face it: Tights are bound to run whether you spent \$20 or \$200 on them, so why shell out? Stock up with hose from Hue, which look great for less.

# Splurge vs. Save

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## *Splurge vs. Save*

### SUIT

There are two things every woman needs in her wardrobe: a perfect black dress and a well-cut suit. And you ain't gonna get either for \$100. Look to a major fashion label to give you the professional yet chic city look you covet. And if you balk at the price, just think of it this way: You have to look successful if you want to be successful.

### OXFORD SHIRT

If you've seen one button-down, you've technically seen them all. No need to break the bank if your dry cleaner is reliable or you iron on a regular basis.

### BAG

In a time when your bag speaks volumes, never take the cheap way out. Limit yourself to two really fabulous bags a year and stick to classic styles to get the most bang for your buck.

### BELT

With fall fashions calling attention to the waist, belts are a must-have accessory. But why buy one when you can really have them all? Start with a versatile, affordable cincher and go from there.

# The Scoop on Sample Sales

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Once upon a time, fashion sample sales were strictly insider events. Now, there are ads for sample sales everywhere... except that a lot of those heavily promoted sales aren't really sample sales at all. The real sample sales are barely advertised and rarely use the words 'sample sale' in their ads, so only insiders can tell that they're sample sales.

Sounds confusing? I'll cut the confusion by explaining what a real sample sale is, how to spot them, and how to avoid faux sample sales.

**What is a sample sale?** Simply put, a sample sale is when a designer sells sample/prototype garments they no longer need. These samples are one-offs that designers make so they can

*Look for:*

- ✓ One-off samples
- ✓ Excess stock
- ✓ Catwalk accessories
- ✓ Inspiration items

give influential fashion insiders a preview of their merchandise for a coming season. They're used in fashion parades, magazine shoots and appointments with buyers (i.e. the people who place wholesale orders for clothes that end up in department stores and boutiques).

**Why attend sample sales?** Sample sales give you the chance to pick up beautiful, unusual designer clothing for a fraction of the retail price. They're generally not the place to go for your wardrobe basics, but if you're looking for something special, they're definitely worth a look.

Just be aware that it's only worth attending if you really love the designer's work. If you aren't that into their particular look, it's unlikely you'll find anything for you... but if you love them to bits, their sample sales could be like fashion heaven!

**What you'll find in a sample sale.** At a sample sale, you'll find all the stuff the designer wants to clear out of their studio to make room for (and money to fund) their next collection. Fortunately for us, designers have some fabulous detritus:

## SAMPLES

Some of these prototypes are literally one-of-a-kind, because the garment didn't end up being produced commercially. You'll also find the outrageous, hot-off-the-catwalk versions of clothes that did make it to the stores. (They're often toned down so they'll sell.)

Sometimes these are even sold, steeply discounted, while the mass-produced versions are still full-price at retail, because the designer's already selling the next season's clothes to the stores.

The downside is that samples are usually tiny — they're made to fit models, and to look good photographed flat, so don't expect to fit into them unless you're very lean.

# The Scoop on Sample Sales

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## **EXCESS STOCK**

These are leftovers of the garments the designer did sell to the stores. You'll often find a reasonable range of sizes and some great discounts, but nothing is one-off. They'll also often be a season or two behind. No worries for a classic piece, but if you care about being seen in 'last year's coat', you might want to skip these.

## **CATWALK ACCESSORIES**

At some sample sales, I've seen big boxes of gorgeous shoes, bags or other accessories from other designers being sold very cheaply. Most seem to be the accessories the models wore in the catwalk show. I'm not sure how the designer ended up keeping them (I think they're usually loaned items that are returned after the show?), but since they were often freebies, they're practically given away in sample sales.

**How to spot a sample sale.** If an ad doesn't use the words 'sample sale', how do you pick what it is? Here are some tell-tale clues:

1. They're held in the garment district, usually in the designer's studio. In Sydney, these are often in Surry Hills, and are usually found by entering an unremarkable old warehouse building and climbing a few sets of stairs.
2. They're short and happen in business hours. These sales rarely last more than four days — the designer (or rather, their staff) have other things to do. They often start on a Thursday so they're open for one or two days of that weekend. The weekday hours will roughly correspond to business hours, and the weekend hours are usually short.
3. They're often cash-only, but not always. (Some take credit cards too now.)
4. They mention one-off pieces. If you see a mention of 'one-off pieces you'll never find in stores', that almost always means the designer's selling their samples.

**Fake sample sales.** Sometimes a heavily hyped sample sale isn't really a sample sale. Sample sales have a 'get to be an insider' cachet that marketers have tapped to get people to attend sales of less-desirable merchandise.

If you see big ads all over the place, especially on TV or radio, it's probably not a real sample sale. At most, the real deal will have a couple of listings online. Real sample sales don't need massive hype to be well-attended, the deals alone are enough to attract a crowd.

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# Thrift Shopping Tips

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Looking for fantastic, cheap clothing? Thrift stores offer some great deals.

I volunteer at my local thrift store occasionally, so I've seen the best (and worst) shopping techniques in action.

Here's how to get some great deals.

## *Tricks:*

- ✓ Shop on weekdays
- ✓ Find out when they restock
- ✓ Be polite to the staff

**Thrift shopping basics.** For the few readers who don't already shop in thrift stores, they're a great place to find cheap clothes, accessories, furniture, homewares, books, craft supplies and all sorts of other things.

If you don't know where your local thrift stores are, look in the phone book to see if one of the big chains operates in your area: The Salvation Army and Goodwill have stores in a lot of places all over the

world. If you've never been thrift shopping before, be prepared to look through a lot of strange things to find the great stuff. If you view it as a treasure hunt, it's a lot of fun, but it's still a lot more work than going to the mall. So what's the incentive? Fantastic bargains!

Here's how to get the best deals:

**Go thrift shopping on a weekday.** Thrift stores are usually packed on weekends, so the great bargains sell out early. Plus the staff are so busy they don't put anything new on the shelves, meaning stock can be seriously depleted by the end of the day. If you can, go on a weekday — the stock will be more interesting and the store less crowded.

**Find out how the store is re-stocked.** Different thrift stores receive their stock in different ways, and knowing how stock arrives will help you find the best deals.

Some stores get their stock entirely from over-the-counter donations (i.e. things that are brought into the store). Other stores, usually in big chains like Salvation Army and Goodwill, get their stock from a central warehouse. Some stores use a combination of both methods.

The best way to find out how your favorite thrift stores are re-stocked is to volunteer occasionally. If you really don't have time, try chatting with the staff next time you're there shopping and see if you can find out.

**Shop on the day the store is re-stocked.** Depending on how the store receives stock, you'll find better bargains on different days.

# Thrift Shopping Tips

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Stores that sell over-the-counter donations usually have the best stock early on Monday morning, because Saturday is the busiest donation day. Customers who work during the week bring in bags of stuff, but the store is so busy that it's not put out until Monday.

If stock comes from a central warehouse, there's usually one drop each week. The best selection of stock is available on that day and the day afterwards, because it takes a little while to shelve it all. Wednesday is a common day for drops but it varies between chains and stores, so it's best to check with an individual store. Again, volunteers find this out very easily, or you can ask the staff.

**Don't leave those clothes in the change rooms!** If you try something on in a thrift store change room and decide you don't want it, don't leave it there!

Unlike retail stores, where people are paid to put clothes back on the shelves, thrift store volunteers don't get paid and often have a lot of competing demands — sorting stock, cleaning and fixing things for sale, making the store look nice and dealing with occasional crazy customers. To put your unwanted clothes away, they might have to interrupt their work re-organizing 1,000 books with broken spines so they look attractive, or something equally challenging.

If you want to be waited on, go to the mall and pay retail. You can't expect that level of service from volunteers. You won't be kicked out of the store for making more work for the staff, but you won't get information or discounts either.

**Be polite to thrift store staff.** Thrift store volunteers deserve your politeness — they're giving their time to a charity, doing a job that's tougher than it looks.

Apart from being the right thing to do, being polite to the staff means they're more likely to give you tip-offs, discounts and even freebies.

**Don't ask for discounts.** If you can afford the sticker price, don't ask for discounts. The money thrift stores raise goes to charities to fund their other work.

If you are struggling financially and genuinely can't afford a \$4 top, let the staff know. Many charity-run thrift stores will give you clothes, furniture and/or food for free if you're ever seriously down and out, but please don't abuse this if you're not.

**Do let them know if the pricing is wrong.** I just said not to haggle, but there are some exceptions to the rule. Here are three circumstances when it's OK:

1. If you spot something great but the price looks really high for what it is, wait a while. If it's still there in a month, you're probably right. You can politely ask the manager: "I notice this has been in stock for a while and I think the price is a bit high. Would you accept \$X for it?"

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# Thrift Shopping Tips

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2. An item you want to buy has no price on it, and when you ask the price, they state an amount you think is excessive. If you're well-dressed, you might've been mistaken for a dealer and given an inflated price. Gently let the staff member know you're not, and sometimes they'll lower the price. For example: "Oh, I'm just student, I can't afford that!". But be honest — if you are a dealer, or as well-off as you look, give the charity the money already.

3. You find a damaged item that's been priced the same as similar undamaged items. If you point this out to a staff member, sometimes you'll get a small discount.

But if you do haggle, remember to go easy on the staff. Using tough negotiating techniques to cut into a charity's funds doesn't make you a Bargain Queen.

**Thrift stores have sales too!** Thrift stores have clearance sales to clear slow-moving merchandise, just like retail stores do.

Many Salvation Army stores mark things down on certain weekdays. Usually stock that's been in the store for more than a month will be half price, but there will also sometimes be 'fill a bag for \$10' days, which are brilliant!



# lessons from a stylist

learn from the experts!

# Lessons from a Stylist

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It didn't take long for me to love having a stylist in my life. And now I want to share what I've learned from my beloved Nahila with all of you.

Honest outsider required. The bottom line is that you can't be your own stylist...at least not at the beginning. It's difficult to pull yourself out of your own rut, and it's almost impossible to look at your body objectively. If you don't have the money to hire a pro, ask a friend whose style you admire and then set some ground rules: a) This is about trust, so invoke the code of honesty and discretion. b) Agree to push and to be pushed to try something different. c) Take turns. As the "client," you need both undivided attention and purchase power. For example, when you find those Chloe boots on sale that you both want, who wins?

## *Tricks:*

- ✓ Bring along an honest friend!
- ✓ It's all about the brand.
- ✓ Let magazines be your guide.
- ✓ Clean out your closet.
- ✓ Know your body.

**It's all about the brand.** What do you want to convey with your style? How would you like others to describe you? Consider me—I'm a career-woman building a career business. Do I want my signature style to be all suits? It may come off "worky" but boring. Personally, I prefer clothes that make me feel a bit sexy (did I say that out loud?) but is that the image I want to take into the boardroom? Nahila questioned me for an hour not about clothes, but about my business: What do you do functionally, day-to-day in your job? What are the adjectives you would like people to use to describe you? What do you want your style to say about you? The answers to those questions will inform your look.

**Let magazines be your guide.** One of the easiest ways to define your signature style is to buy a stack of magazines and tear out the looks that click. Is your image more Jennifer Aniston, Cameron Diaz, or somewhere in between? You're not trying for a full-on, head to toe imitation. But you can take cues from people who have stylists of their own and put serious effort into the way they dress. Identify lines, colors, or particular designers you love. Get up to speed on the season's key pieces. These steps will make shopping infinitely easier. I actually tape images/ styles I like on the wall of my closet (close the door when you have guests). They inspire me and give me ideas when I'm getting dressed in the morning.

**Clean out your closet.** I have five Thomas Pink shirts hanging in my closet. I love them. I've never worn them. Nahila not only did the once over in my closet, but asked me to select my favorite pieces and explain why I liked them. Go through your closet with your "stylist" and identify things that have never left the hanger—why did you buy them and why aren't you wearing them? Do you buy things that you like the look of on others but don't work for you? Do you buy stuff that's too tight in hopes that you'll lose weight? Do you buy the same black shirt over and over again? Combing through your closet and asking "What are my shopping habits and what do I need to change?" will help you to climb out of a style rut.

# Lessons from a Stylist

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**Know your body.** I've always known that my boobs are bigger than the rest of my body. What I didn't realize is that I have a boy waist. I've spent my fair share of time in front of the full-length mirror, but was more focused on my burgeoning ass than my non-existent hips. Stand in front of a mirror with your trusted friend, and take a long hard look. I have watched way too much American Idol, but as Randy would say, "it's all about song selection." You could have a killer (or not so killer) body but looking good is all about what you put on it. Capris with flats don't look good on short girls. Pockets on the ass are never good when you have ample booty. In the vast array of choices out there, let your body be the guide.



# Nothing to Wear!?

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You're young. You're attractive. You're launching your meteoric career in a sophisticated city. And you'll be ready to take over the world as soon as you're wearing...that neon yellow tunic with no sleeves and a hood that your aunt gave you last Christmas?

We've all been there, sister. It is the day of a job interview, the night of a big date, or just another average morning when you're desperately trying to make it to the office on time. And here you are paralyzed, staring into your closet in your tattered bathrobe, realizing that there is not one single thing in there that you can possibly wear. Worse, you suddenly find that you've blown 45 minutes shoving things aside and holding them up in front of the mirror, which means that now you'll have to sprint to your destination and arrive really late, all sweaty and out of breath.

## *Tricks:*

- ✓ Define your look
- ✓ Clean out your closet
- ✓ Try new combinations
- ✓ Invest in accessories
- ✓ Plan the night before!

If you're lucky, this will be enough of a spectacle to distract attention away from your yellow tunic.

**What's a girl to do?** Below are some tips to help get you out the door on time, looking and feeling gorgeous—no sweating required.

Shop more and shop smarter. Everybody is busy and on a budget, so extra shopping may seem like one more source of temptation you just don't need. But the more you do it, the better you'll get at finding bargains, sales, or brands that work best for you.

Window shopping at stores out of your price range can often be a great source of new ideas, which you can replicate elsewhere for a lot less money. Try skipping a couple coffee breaks a week to pop into boutiques near your office or browse online.

**Use your words.** Try coming up with a few adjectives that define how you want to look. (Mine are "funky," "sexy," and/or "professional.") If what you're buying doesn't fit your adjectives, you'll probably regret it.

**Clean out your closet.** Be ruthless about getting rid of stuff you don't like. If that skirt looked bad last week and it looks bad right now, it is not suddenly going to look good tomorrow. A small wardrobe where everything is at least acceptable is much easier to face than a closet loaded with junk. It's also worth the little bit of time it takes to move this season's clothes to the top of your drawers for easier access.

**Think outside the box.** Try combining what you've already got in new ways. For example, maybe you have some cute summer capris that seem useless with an autumn chill in the air. But try them with some tall leather boots instead of your favorite strappy sandals, and you've got a brand-new look for a brand-new season.

# Nothing to Wear!?

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**Invest in a few accessories that you really love.** It is absolutely worth shelling out a heftier chunk of change than usual for a small number of versatile items like a purse or pair of shoes that match everything, and a few key pieces of jewelry. Adding a special highlight or two can transform a dress that's just okay into something that makes you feel really put together and confident.

**Plan the night before.** Sure, you can get fashion paralysis at night, too. But getting your outfit for the next day picked out and ironed ahead of time means that you'll wake up in the morning with time to breathe. Use that time getting your mind truly in the game for work, or better yet, relaxing over the paper with a cup of coffee, luxuriating in just how fun and stylish your life truly is.



# Taking Trends to the Office

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Celebrities always look impossibly chic, don't they? But since your job probably doesn't involve posing on a red carpet, the celebrity look may not fly at your office. Here, we've taken five of the season's hottest trends—and made them office-friendly. Repeat after us: Professional doesn't have to look plain.

## WIDE-LEG PANTS

Just when we finally get comfortable in skinny pants, designers send super-wide-leg pants down the runways. Most commonly seen in denim (Eva Mendes donned a pair for the *Grindhouse* premiere), opt for khaki or linen trousers at the office. To balance out the look, pair your pants with a fitted double-breasted jacket or oxford blouse.

### Tricks:

- ✓ Trade in your super skinny pants for a wider leg
- ✓ Opt for a high-waisted skirt
- ✓ Introduce pattern and color to your work week
- ✓ Take your career to new heights with platform wedges
- ✓ Trade the button down for a peasant top

## HIGH-WAISTED PENCIL SKIRTS

Take note, Britney and Tara Reid—it's time to say goodbye to belly-baring low-rises. No longer just a sign of "mom jeans," the high waist is back with a vengeance. Details like buttons or belts will make your waist look smaller and your stomach flatter. (And unlike low-rise styles, high-waisted wares camouflage unsightly "muffin top.")

## PATTERNED MINIDRESSES

Nothing says summer like bright colors. This season it's all about purples, pinks, and whimsical patterns on minidresses. For the office, stick to a slightly longer dress and pair it with a dark blazer and classic pumps.

## PLATFORM WEDGES

The return of the platform wedge doesn't have to be painful. While stars like Mischa Barton show off their legs, wedges under wide-leg pants will work better for the office. Try a lower heel and metallic or patent leather for a dressier look, and stay away from cork during work hours.

## PEASANT TOPS

The loose peasant top is a must-have when the weather gets warmer. While for the weekend you can wear your white linen top casually, belt it at the waist or add a fitted vest to take it from Monday to Friday. Remember to keep bottoms fitted and straight and avoid wearing with a skirt.

# must-haves

your closet is not complete without...

# Power Suits: Today's Uniforms for Success

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Once upon a time, when medieval knights went into battle, they protected themselves in shining suits of armor. If one interlocking link was out of place, their lives could be kaput. For today's career woman, the power suit is the modern equivalent of the shining armor of yore, and while a wrong move at the suit rack won't endanger queen and country, a poor choice could cost you crucial battles in your career. Even the most delectable Chanel ensemble is just another suit on a hanger if it fails to accentuate your personal confidence and strength. But where to start, and how to choose?

## *Tricks:*

- ✓ Know what empowers you
- ✓ Know what's out there
- ✓ Trust your instincts
- ✓ Keep the focus on you!

## **YOU, YOU, YOU**

Scouting for power suits can be far more fun for women than for men simply because we have more options. At the same time, the staggering volume of jacket/pant/skirt/blouse combinations can be overwhelming if you don't have a plan of action. Power suits should empower you, and so that's where you need to start. What styles, colors and fabrics coax out your inner Warrior Princess?

## **PERUSING FOR POWER SUITS**

Flip through fashion magazines, though remember that pictorial spreads often represent the extremes of fashion; the underfed models might sport cherry red micro suits on every glossy page, but that look will not translate well to the boardroom. Stroll through the mall (or Wall Street), taking note of what you like and what makes you recoil in horror. And before you fork over your credit card, make sure the store has a return policy (because what looks perfect under the store lights might reveal its inner hideousness once you get it home).

## **GIVE YOUR SUIT A TEST DRIVE**

Well before the big meeting give yourself a dress rehearsal. Don the suit as you would on that day-working with all the props (the shoes and accessories you intend to wear) - and evaluate how it looks and feels. Does it sit well when you're standing but balloon up when you sit down? Is it itchy? Do the pants ride up your ass? Does it collect lint with every move? Trust your instincts: if it doesn't feel right during the test drive, it's probably not the right suit for you.

## **RULES OF DISTRACTION**

The power suit is an aid: it should motivate you to succeed without defining who you are. If you discover that you can't take your mind off some aspect of the suit (itchiness, lint, etc.) while you're wearing it, leave it on the hanger. Be wary of suits that are figure-flattering to the point of distraction: if it's too short, too tight, or otherwise reminiscent of Halle Berry's Catwoman costume, save it for the nightclub. The ideal power suit should keep the focus on who you are and what you're saying. You're worth being heard! A thoughtfully chosen power suit can give you the chutzpah you need to get your message across.

# Chic Shirts

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Just because your office requires professional business attire—think suits and separates—doesn't mean your look has to be dull. To give your suit a visual upgrade, add a splash of color, pattern, or texture by slipping one of these stylish shirts under your favorite blazer.

## MENSWEAR MODEL

Forgo a simple button-up in favor of this crisp Tuxedo shirt with short sleeves that transitions well from summer to fall. Perfect for pairing with every suit in your wardrobe, this texture-rich piece is versatile without being dull.

*Look for:*

- ✓ Try menswear styles
- ✓ Paisley is pretty
- ✓ Look to bright for a boost
- ✓ Take a risk!

## PERFECT IN PAISLEY

A flirty, sheer shirt goes from the office to happy hour with ease. Pair it with dark suit pants and feminine flats; play up an open neckline with a dainty pendant necklace.

## FLIRTY AND FLOWY

Give new life to a tired gray suit by wearing it with a multi-hued tank. A wide V-neck and gently twisted bodice flatters in all the right places, and gives the tank potential for weekend wear as well.

## LOOK TO BRIGHTER HUES

Brighten a dull khaki suit with a jewel-toned top that hugs the body in all the right places. Let a V-neck cut frame a gold necklace and wear the combo sans blazer for more casual days at the office.

## TAKE A RISK

Try a graphic print and bold colored detailing on a silky shell make for a striking contrast with dark suits. Wear it when you need a boost of confidence for a meeting or presentation, or simply to stand out in a crowded conference room.

# Sexy Skirts

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Whether you're headed to the office or hitting the beach, skirts are versatile enough for almost any occasion. Mix and match casual or classic tops with some of our favorite skirts for summer and you'll be ready for your day, wherever it takes you.

## FLOWER POWER

Take your cue from film noir with a classic black-and-white skirt. Some styles even have pockets, so you can stash your lipstick. The most obvious options for accessories are black and white, but you could also spice things up with a pair of red peep-toe pumps or a jewel-toned top, especially after hours. A bright-colored tank and floppy hat give a black skirt a casual feel

### *Tricks:*

- ✓ Try classic black & white
- ✓ Add a bit of print and color
- ✓ Flare = flattering
- ✓ Go gray...by choice

for a weekend outing or an evening BBQ. Dress it up with heels and a sexy top for a more formal soiree.

## SOMETHING BLUE

A bold printed A-line skirt packs a punch with its bright colors and bold print. Try a geometric design because it is less feminine than a floral, so you can add some girly accessories and play up the curvy lines. Perhaps pair with pearls and a crisp white blouse for the office or flip-flops and a black tank for drinks at a patio bar.

## ADD SOME FLARE

Try a flared linen skirt, we're partial to white because it goes with everything and screams summer. Be sure that a white skirt is lined so you won't have to worry about those Hanky Panky boy shorts showing through. A patterned blouse and kitten heels are perfect for day, but feel free to get creative after hours. For a picnic on the beach or an outdoor concert, pair it with a sequined tank or graphic tee.

## GO GRAY

With its smart sheen, the pencil skirt gives you even more fashion flexibility than that LBD. Put on some T-strap pumps and a colorful cardigan for a retro work look, then swap the pumps for gold strappy sandals and ditch the cardie after work. Add a black halter top (or another shirt in a contrasting color) and a pair of chandelier earrings for a glamorous night on the town.

# Great in Gray

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Black will always be a basic, but this season, it's all about gray. From ash to charcoal hues, gray is making an appearance this year on everything from crisp suit wear to buttery-soft bags. That makes for easy shopping for you, especially if you start by picking up one of these stylish suggestions.

## DRESS IT UP

Try a gray dress with a sophisticated cut and belted middle to create a feminine silhouette that goes from the office to dinner out with ease. Pair it with T-strap heels or high-heel Mary Janes and set those heads turning.

### *Tricks:*

- ✓ Take gray day to night!
- ✓ Gray pants are oh-so flattering
- ✓ The perfect color for a trench
- ✓ Swap your basic black for gray!

## LOVE YOUR LEGS

Look to steely, snug-fitting trousers to enhance your work wardrobe this season. Wear them with a soft cashmere sweater set, or pull a professional look together with the matching, one-button blazer for your next work trip.

## TERRIFIC TRENCH

It's bound to rain on that one day you have to walk to work; avoid getting soaked by investing in an affordable trench. Pair it with your favorite A-line skirt

and a bright berry-hued sweater and you'll be set to brave the elements.

## GO CASUAL

A soft, balloon-hem tee will quickly become your favorite weekend piece for lounging in at home. Or, play it up with trouser jeans and your favorite wedges to wear on casual Friday at the office.

## BAG IT

Toss aside your everyday black bag this season in favor of a supple hobo in an inviting ashy hue. Make sure it's got room enough to tote your office papers, and boasts a removable shoulder strap to keep the bag resting snug on your hip when desired.

# Winter Weather Wardrobe

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Just because it's snowing out doesn't mean you need to lose your sense of style. Yes, you'll need to forgo your suede heels on days when it's super-slushy out, but there are plenty of cold-weather choices out there. We scoured the racks of ski jackets and snow boots to come up with the chicest choices for you. Whoever said bundling up couldn't be beautiful?

## CAN'T-MISS COAT

The secret to looking proportioned and keeping warm in a puffy winter coat is to go with a belted style. The layers of down feathers in a puffy coat shield you from the harsh temperatures, while a belt will keep you from looking like a snowman.

### *Tricks:*

- ✓ Belt your down coat
- ✓ Swap stilettos for rubber
- ✓ Bring back earmuffs
- ✓ Wear a hot hat!

## DURABLE BOOTS

Your heels will never make it once the sidewalks get slippery. Don't take any chances and invest in a great pair of rubber boots. For more style, opt for a bit of a heel and some fancy fur lining. Not only are they warm, but they're totally chic!

## FOR YOUR EARS

Bring back the earmuffs! They double as a fun style statement and a winter necessity. Try a fur pair for added warmth.

## HIP HAT

When the snow starts to really fall, you can't avoid wearing a hat, so have fun with it! Snowstorms bring out the kid in all of us, so don a pom-pom hat that covers your ears. Opt for a cashmere blend for comfort and warmth.

## MITTEN MADNESS

Nothing says cozy like a pair of mittens. But sometimes you need your fingers free—like after a manicure—so opt for a pair of crochet convertible mittens, which will allow your digits to dry and keep the rest of your hand warm in the process.

## PUT ON A SCARF

Some days the winter wind is so blustery, you wish you had a cover for your face. A chunky scarf is the next best thing (and is infinitely more stylish). The warm wool of a bright cable knit scarf will keep your face from freezing and will feel cozy wrapped around your neck.

# Eco-Friendly Fashion

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We know you care about the environment. You clean with nontoxic products, have compact fluorescent lightbulbs throughout your home, and bring your own bags to the grocery store. But wearing eco-friendly clothes? Well, you haven't jumped on board that train just yet. Have no fear: we're not asking you to buy a burlap sack. These designers are stepping it up with fabulous clothing lines that are also good for the environment. Going green never looked so good.

## **STEWART + BROWN**

Choose from strictly organic clothing, Mongolian cashmere, green gear, accessories, and knitwear. Simple designs with soft and luscious fabrics will keep you coming back for more. You'll find a solid selection of weekend wear, graphic tees (great under a blazer for work), and dresses for a night out. Be sure to check out their ruffle slip dress for a sexy, eco-friendly option. Prices range from \$64 for a graphic tee to \$189 for the slip dress. [stewartbrown.com](http://stewartbrown.com)

## **BEAU SOLEIL**

Using bamboo, vegetable-dyed organic cottons, tencel made from eucalyptus trees, and recycled leather trims, Beau Soleil brings femininity back to fashion. You'll want to run through a green pasture in these delicate and elegant dresses. But you'll also feel good about wearing something that's so intrinsically good for the earth and for you. Also, take advantage of their recycled grocery bags and double-stick tape (ingenious!). Prices range from \$165 for the beau wrap to \$275 for the beau snap. [shopbeausoleil.com](http://shopbeausoleil.com)

## **DEUX AMIES**

Help the environment while you sleep with deux amies (pronounced doooz ah-mee) green cotton jammies. Green cotton contains zero chemicals and is responsibly cared for throughout the production-and-design process. The pajamas are so soft and cuddly, you'll want to spend all day in bed with them on. So call in sick, put on a pot of fair trade coffee, and slip into these pj's. Prices range from \$98 for a moonlight robe to \$126 for a heavenly pink pajama set. [deuxamiesinc.com](http://deuxamiesinc.com)

## **GREENLEAVES**

Get your panties in on the green action with GreenLeaves. Check out their lingerie sets, robes, loungewear, and hosiery made from organic silk, soy, and bamboo. Their GreenKnickers line even contains thermochromatic inks, so the print changes as the fabric warms up against your skin. (How's that for spicing things up?!) The collection includes bamboo thongs (not as painful as it sounds), panty hose, padded cycling briefs, and even maternity-friendly strapless bras. Prices range from \$80 for a bamboo three-quarter-cup bra to \$42 for a bamboo thong. [figleaves.com](http://figleaves.com)

now find out...

do you dress  
well for work?

# Quiz: Do You Dress Well For Work?

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There's a reason why so many of the fashion victims on TLC's *What Not to Wear* are referred to the show by their co-workers: Appearances have a huge impact on your professional image. Take this quiz to see what your look says about you.

- 1. You're giving a big presentation to a prospective client. What do you wear?**
  - a. A striped button-down and khakis
  - b. A tweed jacket with matching skirt
  - c. A classic black power suit with blue button-down underneath
  - d. A fitted blouse with a body-hugging pencil skirt and stilettos
  
- 2. Which of these TV characters most resembles your office style?**
  - a. Joey Potter on *Dawson's Creek*
  - b. Charlotte on *Sex and the City*
  - c. All the female candidates who were kicked off *The Apprentice*
  - d. Addison Shepherd on *Private Practice*
  
- 3. Where do you get most of your clothes?**
  - a. Freebies from college sports teams and credit-card giveaways
  - b. Lily Pulitzer
  - c. Banana Republic
  - d. Forever 21
  
- 4. What's your look for casual Fridays?**
  - a. Why limit yourself to just Fridays? You wear jeans or khakis most days
  - b. A denim skirt with kitten heels and a powder blue sweater
  - c. Black pants and a cashmere V-neck sweater
  - d. A wrap dress with a plunging neckline and suede knee boots
  
- 5. Time for your company's holiday party. What do you pull out of your closet?**
  - a. A clean pair of jeans with a red and green polo shirt
  - b. An A-line skirt with a carefully coordinated cardigan and vintage brooch
  - c. The standard little black dress and pearls
  - d. A silk minidress to show off your killer legs

# Quiz: Do You Dress Well For Work? ---

**6. What do you carry to work most days?**

- a. A backpack with your lunch and gym clothes for a post-work workout session
- b. A Vera Bradley tote with matching makeup case
- c. A black laptop case
- d. A Birkin bag, natch

**7. Do you wear jewelry to work?**

- a. Nope. You don't wear jewelry ever.
- b. Of course. You still wear the gold necklace and matching earrings that Daddy gave you for graduation.
- c. Diamond studs and a plain watch. Nothing too crazy.
- d. Chandelier earrings and loads of bangle bracelets. You love to accessorize!

**8. What's your footwear of choice?**

- a. Flip-flops or, if it's cold, Skechers
- b. Ballet flats
- c. Basic black pumps
- d. Thigh-high boots

**9. What's your makeup routine?**

- a. ChapStick and moisturizer
- b. Pink lip gloss and mascara
- c. Subtle, subdued makeup to define your features
- d. Full-on face, including sultry eyes and red lips

**10. How do you wear your hair to the office?**

- a. In a simple ponytail to keep it from falling in your face
  - b. Pulled back with a headband, though occasionally you do break out the curling iron
  - c. Sleek and straight
  - d. Long and loose
-

# Quiz: RESULTS

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## Mostly A's: Casual Coed

You choose comfort over couture every time. But in your faded jeans and shapeless tops you've been mistaken for the office intern on more than one occasion. Maybe it's time to take your wardrobe up a notch so you look like the competent young professional that you undoubtedly are. With ballet flats and menswear-inspired trousers currently in style, you can dress professionally and still feel comfortable.

## Mostly B's: Preppy Princess

You're all about classic, feminine looks like Ann Taylor cardigans and anything pastel. You always look nice, but unfortunately "nice girls" don't always get promoted. If you want your wardrobe to balance maturity and professionalism with a willingness to take calculated risks, shake things up with (still feminine) fall trends like tie-neck blouses, medallion flats, and, depending on your office, peep-toe pumps.

## Mostly C's: Corporate Clone

You want to be taken seriously, so you follow office dress codes to the letter. Dressing conservatively can work in your favor if you're in a field like business or finance. But if you're in an industry that allows for creativity (like a design firm or a nonprofit), you can afford to experiment more with how you dress. Even if you work in a formal office, you can choose pumps or a purse in an eye-popping color to dress up a drab uniform and show that you've got style.

## Mostly D's: Sexy Secretary

Either you're trying to catch the eye of that cute guy in accounting or you're oblivious to the sexy signals you're sending. Nothing wrong with a pencil skirt or a fitted jacket, but you might want to button that blouse or tone down the makeup (at least during work hours). That way your male colleagues will focus on your design ideas rather than your décolletage.

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