

Wardrobe

ESSENTIALS ON A BUDGET

by Stefania Bartolomei

When it comes to dressing for an occasion or a season, you may feel like you have to have a full wardrobe to accommodate. In current times, going out and buying lots of pieces just isn't effective for the environment, our wallets or our sanity!

As a personal stylist, many people come to me with 'I have nothing to wear-itis'. However, when I see their wardrobes, they are overfilled with a concoction of fast fashion items that don't serve their needs.

In fact, the secret to curing the daily struggle of what to wear is to invest in good quality, versatile pieces that work across seasons and events - and you'll save time and money. What are my three most important pieces to have in your wardrobe?

- A great pair of jeans that suit your body shape
- Two to three blazers
- Three to four dresses

Seems pretty simple, right? The thing is, many of us are buying with the trends and filling our wardrobes with items that we don't know how to use outside of the 'norm'. So, while you may have these items already in your wardrobe, you may not be maximising the ways to use them or know how to reuse them without feeling like you're re-wearing the same outfit over and over again.

ONE OF A *Style*
BY STEFANIA BARTOLOMEI



The Jeans WE LOVE

Let's start with a girls' best friend (when she finds the perfect pair) - jeans! Now, you may be recoiling at the thought of jeans, but I promise you, when you know the shape for your body type, you will want to wear them day in and day out.

Here's a whistlestop tour of the shapes I recommend:

- Flares - for pear shapes and petites
- Mum jeans - for hourglass, rectangle and pear shapes
- Boyfriend jeans - for inverted triangle, oval and rectangle shapes
- Skinny jeans - don't be surprised by this, but most body types can wear this style, you just need to be conscious of how skinny you go with them!
- Cropped jeans - for petites



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TIPS

If you're an hourglass shape or a pear shape, add a belt to define your waist and avert the gap that can sometimes happen at the back. Now, let's play with how to style them.

The casual look

Paired with a cotton tee, square-toed shoes, a long line cardigan and your favourite everyday earrings for a 'I just threw this together' look. Add a leather jacket with combat boots or DMs for something a bit edgier, or invest in a silk blouse with a relaxed cut and add a pair of platform sneakers to still feel casual, yet chic.

Jeans for work

A high quality, dark washed pair of jeans with a blazer, blouse and heels can be a powerful, professional look. Your favourite deep blues worn with a silk shirt, a pair of dolly shoes and an elegant blazer and handbag is great for an on-the-go professional style. Or make your personality shine by wearing your jeans with a pair of metallic Vivienne Westwood-type sneakers you can find on the high street with a tunic top and a funky bag.

Ready for date night

Adding a sparkly bag or sequined top to your outfit always brings out the glam. Perhaps drape a blazer over your shoulders, pick up a shoulder bag and pop on a pair of stilettos to finish the look, and add a necklace or earrings to really finish it off. Be bold with a mesh long-sleeved top over a beautiful piece of lingerie (or a vest), with a red lip, leather jacket and block heels - and you're ready to take on the night!

Now you're ready with the jeans that work for all occasions, let's move on to dresses. >>

Dresses FOR ALL SEASONS

Dresses come in many different patterns, colours, shapes and cuts, so they can work across many different style personalities, when styled correctly. The thing is, I often hear that the dresses we love for the warmer months don't get used during autumn and winter. There are lots of ways we can work with them to make them stay an integral part of our wardrobe, no matter the season.

Spring

Dresses come out of hibernation and are fresh and inviting for a warmer season, but a jacket, blazer or light cardigan over the top will keep out any chill. You could also pair these with a pair of light denier tights and a pair of combat boots or sneakers.

Summer

Pop on a pair of strappy heels for brunch with friends. Sneakers or platform wedges are fun, and sandals are a more casual option. Add a crossbody bag or a shoulder bag for your essentials, and let your dress do all the talking.

Autumn

Try to resist the chunkier, long-sleeved options and maximise the garments already in your wardrobe, just by rethinking how you see your dresses. Add a cosy jumper or a long-line cardigan worn as an additional layer, with thick tights and boots to add extra warmth.

Winter

Swapping out the cardigan for a thicker jumper or winter jacket is one quick way to keep wearing your dresses into the cooler season. You could add a polo neck top or jumper (if the dress has a strappy sleeve) underneath for an additional layer, and add a necklace to draw the eye down. Invest in a pair of great quality suede or leather knee high boots at this time of year, as they will work with your skirts, dresses and even your skinny jeans. I'd recommend a pair with a block heel so you can stay comfortable, warm and elegant. And don't forget accessories such as a warm woollen hat, a scarf and gloves that won't go amiss at this time of year.



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HOW TO STYLE

blazers

Finally, one of my favourite essentials for any wardrobe is the blazer. It's a quick way to style up a look, add a pop of colour or pattern and is a great layer for the cooler months.

There are lots of different ways to style a blazer, but I want to share just three to inspire you. The great thing is, if you haven't got a blazer in your wardrobe yet, there are lots of charity shops that have a variety of options for you to try (you can even find some gorgeous men's blazers that you can get tailored to your shape for a unique option with a sustainable edge).

Three ways to style your blazer

With a midi skirt.

When you style your skirt with a blazer, it's a way to add definition at the waist and shoulders so it can work really well for many body shapes. If you wear a tee with your skirt, the blazer can transform the look to be more professional.

If you have a patterned or colourful blazer, this can be the way to add your colours to a more monochromatic look underneath. I'd recommend a midi skirt as it can work across different occasions, but if you love showing a bit of leg, go all out and pop on a mini skirt, knowing your blazer brings a professional edge to the look.

With wide-legged trousers.

Wide-legged trousers are a beautiful, elegant option for any occasion, particularly suited for pear shapes or hourglass figures, as they skim the legs and accentuate the hips. Pop on a belt under your blazer, a blouse and a pair of block heels for a professional look. You can dress the look down by simply changing the blouse for a camisole or slogan tee. Add a pair of platform sneakers to make the look even more comfortable, and pop on a bag for your essentials, and you're ready to go.

With your knitwear.

Finally, adding knitwear under your blazer adds an additional warm layer, while also jazzing up your look.

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A cashmere sweater with your favourite jeans, and a pair of heeled brogues has an elegant yet cool outfit for autumn. Whereas your chunky high-neck knitted jumper, with a pair of tailored trousers and heels, flips the script on professional dressing while remaining warm!

I hope this guide to dressing in a recession inspires you to continue to use your investment pieces in more diverse ways. While we may be in a space to want to treat ourselves to more and more items for our wardrobe, I suggest you take a step back, consider what you already have, and perhaps invest in versatile pieces that you'll wear over and over again.

If you're unsure on where to start, or have a wardrobe that is spilling over, yet causing you more stress than pleasure, please get in touch. I can support you with a wardrobe edit, a personal style masterclass or a personal shopping experience so you have someone there, by your side, to help you invest wisely for your future outfits. ■