

Shop Smart – the art of shopping with minimal waste

Finally, we have discovered the cure for the *'I have nothing to wear'* syndrome. This ailment unnecessarily afflicts millions of fashion consumers around the world (despite an estimated 150 billion new garments being produced annually) and is characterised by delusional thoughts that are often accompanied by frustrated cries, all of which may be particularly prevalent before evenings out or before holidays. Too often, sufferers' cries are heard only by their horribly overlaid closets, whose hinges also moan to their owner's *'I have nothing to wear' groan*.

Our cure is 'Shop Smart' - the art of shopping for a wardrobe with minimal waste.

We consider Shop Smart to be the antidote to bad shopping. Here, sufferers over-shop and fall prey to erratic impulse buys or they repeat their regular purchasing mistakes resulting in clothes languishing unworn in closets – approximately 80 percent of clothes in a typical wardrobe are not worn regularly – or being prematurely exiled to landfill – which have witnessed horrific increases in textiles waste over recent years.

Cue Shop Smart. This simple shopping concept yields a more sustainable wardrobe with no compromise in personal style whilst racking up many savings. Firstly, you save cash on bad buys and instead buy what suits you best; you save unwanted and unworn clothes from clogging your closet; and you spare your share of environmental pollution as you save unnecessary clothing production and wastage.

So if you're up for the challenge, here are our tips to become the ultimate smart shopper.

Be smart with money



- Remember 'Buy cheap, buy twice'. It's better to choose quality over quantity for long lasting pieces that you will live in and love for longer. Invest in your wardrobe as much as you invest in your style.
- Could you swap? This is a cheap and cheerful technique for renewing your wardrobe without opening your wallet.
- Could you rent? There are various dress rental organisations around the world that give you the look but without the credit card bill (and the environmental footprint) to prove it.

Be smart with shapes



- If it fits, you will wear it. Most off-the-peg clothes need tailoring and so remind yourself that not one size fits all.
- Know what suits your body shape best. Different fabrics flatter different body shapes. For example, silk and satin work well for slim figures as their shine creates the illusion of curves whilst jersey fabrics are more versatile as they can be worn ruched or draped along the bias to be figure-hugging and flattering for most body types. Accentuate your best assets (belts are essential) to keep you and your clothes living happily together.
- Buy what fits you now and not for the body that you think (or hope) you will have. When in sizing doubt, buy slightly bigger and see a tailor rather than succumbing to a diet.

Be smart with tones



- Not all colour pallets and people match. Know what colours suit your skin tone so that your clothes suit you, and work for you, longer.
- People can wear all sorts of colours but the aesthetic outcome depends on the colours' particular tones and shades. For example, cooler skin tones look best with more pink/purple reds and warmer skin tones look best with pillar-box red.

Be smart with habits



- Do you *really* need to shop? Get into the habit of doing a 'wardrobe review' before shopping to identify any *real* wardrobe gaps and to learn from your previous shopping mistakes.
- Avoid impulse buys at all costs! Try on first and then leave to cool off and if you're still thinking about the piece days later then buy it. Alternatively, if you are worried you will miss the chance and then consider buying it and keeping the receipt for possible return.
- Recognise your emotions. Get out of the habit of shopping when feeling emotional as a means of cheering yourself up as this may result in more impulse buys that will add to your wardrobe misery. Instead, shop when you are in a positive mood.

With these tips in mind and to put our Smart Shop concepts into action, we were joined by stylist [Pricilla l'Anson](#), stylist [Crystie Li](#) and the online organisation celebrating body shapes [Fitbay](#). Throughout the month they, along with our avid shoppers at our Get Redressed Pop-up secondhand shop at PizzaExpress, shared their smart and stylish shopping intelligence.



On day 285, stylist Priscilla l'Anson shared with us during our Get Redressed Pop-up that belts are a simple way to accentuate silhouettes to give your clothes the fit that will flatter you. Priscilla is a keen advocate for visiting tailors to shift your wardrobe from off the peg into couture-fit.



On day 288, stylist Crystie confirmed that many shoppers repeat buy, particularly 'safe' colours like black. Instead, Crystie advises to buy key colour items to inject a dose of colour bit-by-bit to re-invent your existing wardrobe without excessive new consumption or expenditure.



On day 294, Fitbay shared 'Buy clothes that fit into your current wardrobe so that you invest in items that can complete an outfit based on what you already own.'



On day 287, avid shopper Julie shared 'Select your shopping partners carefully - a truthful friend is better than a kind friend for avoiding shopping mistakes!'



On day 299, we reinforced the importance of checking clothing care labels before heading to the cashier. Assessing how you will launder and care (and of course wear) your purchase is an important part of building a sustainable wardrobe. But remember, some brands instruct 'dry clean only' when they can be hand or machine-washed.



On day 276, Sofia from Redress shared *'Whenever I shop I browse and try on first to avoid impulse buys. I only buy if I am still thinking about the piece days later. I saw this top in Copenhagen and fell in love with it but as I don't normally wear patterns, I held off buying to make sure my feelings were real! Now, I wear it a lot and am pleased that my patience paid off!'*

Next up... [Swapping](#)

In November, we will set our pre-loved clothes free for another chance of life by swapping them and sending them back into the fashion loop. Join the challenge by [#GetRedressed](#) on [Instagram](#).