

Coming out of the **CLOSET**

The key for all successful dressing is to dress to your personality. By Brittany Monico, Miss Teen America 2006. Photos by Steve Azzara.

Monday is here and getting up early is not always easy, especially when you don't have a clue what you are going to be wearing 30 minutes from that final wake up call. You are rushing against the clock to take a shower, fix your hair, put on some makeup and then comes the dreaded question that looms over the head of every teenager. What am I going to wear?

We all know fashion is about personal expression and therefore your wardrobe should be a reflection of who you are. It is very important to have a wardrobe that works; a wardrobe that is versatile, but still includes the basics. So, let's break it down.



BLACK

Black is a great staple. The color black is associated with power, elegance, and mystery and therefore it is believed to be sexy. Black is also a very slimming color for those not so slimming days. If your wardrobe consists of black pants, shorts, gauchos, a skirt or even a black slip dress, then you are well on your way to a versatile wardrobe. I know what you are thinking, if your closet is full of black how can it possibly be versatile? Well, the answer is in what you pair it with. For instance, black and baby pink look great together, so try a black mini with some great black boots and a pink baby tee.

SPORTY LOOK

If the sporty look is what you are into, remember casual doesn't mean sloppy. **DENIM IS A MUST.** Long jeans, shorts and skirts can be worn in a variety of ways! Try wearing layered coordinates such as a vest, blazer, or anorak style jacket to accent your casual outfit. Headgear like baseball caps are fun and can give many just casual outfits that sporty feel and are super on those days that you just can't get past the snooze alarm and lose the 30 minutes you were planning on spending on your hair. Just remember to check your dress code at school. Hats are taboo in some schools.

DAY TO NIGHT

Dressing up your jeans by embellishing them with a few stones or beads turn your denim into dazzle mode, just in time for that back to school mixer.

CLASSY, ELEGANT LOOK

If you are trying to achieve a classy, elegant look then the trick is to introduce clothes that enhance your curves such as fluid fabrics, deeper necklines, waist treatments, sensual materials like silk, cashmere, slinky knits and leather. Just remember, your choice of clothing is your best showcase. People will make a general assumption about who you are by the way you choose to present yourself to the world.

Some things you should know are...

1. Thinner fabrics are more slimming.
2. Tops and bottoms of one color will make you look thinner and taller.
3. Wear clothes that fit. Avoid trying to squeeze into a size that you think you should be. Try to remember that a size 7 in one designer line will not equal a 4 in another line.
4. Wearing oversized clothes doesn't necessarily hide imperfections.
5. Avoid belts unless you have a slim waist.
6. Use accessories carefully.
7. High collars shorten your neck.
8. Shoes with high heels will lengthen your legs and give the illusion of a leaner body.

REMEMBER...

Dig deep in your closet and resurface some of those oldie-but-goody pieces by mixing and matching colors, fabrics and accessories. The unusual combination of fabrics, the contrast of colors and the mix and match designs are what makes a fashion statement. Some of the best outfits are created by pieces you already own. Use your creativity to create your own unique style. Although there is nothing quite like the feeling of something new, adding a new piece of jewelry can bring an old outfit to life again without spending a tremendous amount of money.





“Your wardrobe should be a reflection of who you are.”

Here are 5 examples of some of my favorite outfits:

1 Trendy Look

My crinkled cotton skirt with a cotton colored shirt and understated ruffled sleeves. I love it. It is perfect for a comfortable but trendy look. I always top it off with a big belt and tall colored boots. I usually throw on a long necklace, and I'm ready for the day.

2 Hot Date Look

When it is a hot date and I want to dazzle the guy, (Mom, don't read this) I wear a flirty and fun cocktail dress which shows a little bit of leg with any one of my 3-4" heels. Long necklaces are the big fashion trend this year, and I have several in my wardrobe, so I will add one with some big earrings that will keep his eyes at face level and away from any other girls that may be trying to move in. Be yourself and have fun; practice your conversation skills because if this look works as well for you as it does for me, your guy will be speechless!

3 Lunch with the Girls Look

When I'm heading out for lunch with my best girl friends, my look is entirely different. I opt for hip-huger jeans that are nicely fitted with a big flashy belt. I have lots of fun shirts so I just go where my mood takes me. Chandelier earrings with a simple necklace will spark up the outfit. Since my friends are an active bunch, I throw on some flats and I always grab my jean jacket on the way out the door.

4 Going to the Movies Look

When going to a movie and looking for that night of pure comfort... I like to wear a comfortable but trendy velour hoodie pant set, small earrings and little white sneakers. Fun and comfort, how can you beat it?

5 On the Town Look

When it's time to hit the town and party with my girls, I want heads to be turning. So I'll surprise them with a frilly jean skirt and high heels. A bright colored top with a low back will draw some attention, and it is the one time that I enjoy people talking about me behind my back. As for accessories, I'll add big silver hoops. Big headband sashes of solids and prints are definitely in for that more dramatic look.

ORGANIZING YOUR CLOSET...

Those are my favorite looks. There are a lot of hidden treasures lurking deep in our closets. When you have some time on your hands, pull out everything that still fits and see what you want to keep and what you are ready to part with. Once that decision is made, try pairing what is left with pieces that you have never tried before. If the look works for you, jot it down and keep a log right down to the accessories. Number them and try to get at least 30 different looks.

If you are really organized, have a friend take pictures of you with a digital camera in each of your new looks and upload them to your PC. Drop each little picture into a blank 30 day calendar and move them around so that you don't have two similar looks back to back. Once you have done that, finding an outfit for school on a Monday morning will be a walk in the park. Remember that looking good doesn't always require a lot of money, just creativity... so be sure to dig deep in your closet and not your pocket for your new style.

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