

never buy the wrong thing again

FILL IN THE BLANKS TO HELP YOU PINPOINT YOUR SHOPPING LIKES, DISLIKES, AND NEEDS.

STEP 1

Identify what's working.

Take out five items from your closet that you love and answer the following questions.

What words would you use to describe the items? Crisp and tailored? Soft and ruffy?

What image do they project? Smart and professional? Edgy and fashionable?

What colors are they? Do the shades brighten your complexion?

What fabrics are they made of?

What are the silhouettes like? Nipped at the waist? Flowy and hip-grazing?

Which parts of your body do they accentuate?

Which parts of your body do they de-emphasize?

Are they comfortable? If so, why? (For example, stretch fabric, relaxed fit, or an elastic waist.)

YOUR ANSWERS REVEAL: Your style barometer. Use these notes to help you narrow down what you like when you're shopping.

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STEP 2

Analyze your mistakes.

Now take out five things you wish you had never bought and answer these questions.

What words would you use to describe these items?

What image do they project?

What are the silhouettes like?

Which parts of your body do they accentuate?

Which parts of your body do they de-emphasize?

What fabrics are they made of? Are they comfortable?

Do you have anywhere to wear these items?

Are any of them high-maintenance?

Do they make you feel old and frumpy?
Young and silly?

Are any of them poor quality?

Did you buy any of them for the thrill of the bargain?

Did you buy anything just because it was trendy?

Were any panic purchases for a big event?

Do any of the colors make you look pale?
Yellow? Ruddy?

YOUR ANSWERS REVEAL: Your shopping blind spots. Avoid these styles at all costs.

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STEP 3

I.D. the missing pieces in your wardrobe.

To refine what you need, write down your responses to these questions. Then compare your closet to the Wardrobe-Essentials Checklist and mark off what's lacking.

What items would make the pieces you own more versatile? (For instance, a polka-dot blouse to perk up a pencil skirt or pointy-toe flats to make your cropped pants look less casual.)

What pieces would make getting dressed in the morning easier? (Maybe a new suit if you work in a corporate environment or comfortable flats if you're a stay-at-home mom.)

Have there been occasions (a dressy dinner, a job interview, a funeral) when you were at a loss as to what to wear?

Do you need to update any go-to items that you've reached for one too many times? (Say, a pair of overly dry-cleaned black pants, a wool suit with shine marks, or a ring-around-the-collar white blouse.)

YOUR ANSWERS REVEAL: The only things you should be buying.

wardrobe-essentials CHECKLIST

pants

- Dark bootcut jeans
- Menswear-inspired trousers
- Black flared pants
- Casual chinos
- Slim, ankle-length pants

skirts

- Dark tailored skirt
- Fun printed skirt

dresses

- Work-worthy sheath
- Flirty sundress
- Little black cocktail dress
- Casual cotton shift

tops

- White button-down shirts (one cotton, one silky)
- Fitted tees (white, black, and gray)
- Fitted tanks (white, black, and gray)
- Long-sleeve striped tee
- Cardigans (one neutral, one colored)
- Flowy floral blouse
- Thin V-neck sweater for layering
- Tunic-length top or sweater

outerwear

- Wool winter coat
- Lightweight jacket (like a trench)
- Menswear-inspired blazer
- Cropped jacket

shoes

- Ballet flats (in a neutral or a versatile red)
- Flat leather sandals
- Basic black pumps
- Flat boots (black or brown)
- Black heeled boots or booties
- Metallic evening shoes