

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Chic Not Cheap: How to Look Stylish on a Budget

Our Friends · Tuesday, March 3rd, 2020

Some people are just in-tune with fashion, capable of throwing together a cute ensemble that looks like a million bucks. And at first glance, it seems like they're fluid enough to have that income level, too, dressed to the nines in style.

But looks can be deceiving when it comes to fashion. And it's actually quite easy to look chic without shelling out (or selling out).

So if you want to turn heads at the next party or get compliments from all your friends, it's time to learn how to be fashion savvy with the budget you have. If you want to look chic without breaking the bank, it's possible!

Here are a few smart ways you can transform your wardrobe and learn how to look stylish on a budget.

Be Trend Savvy

When it comes to looking stylish, it pays to follow the trends. However, if you're not super savvy when it comes to keeping up with the latest trends, that's okay! You don't have to spend your cash on multiple fashion magazine subscriptions to know what's in vogue or hire a professional stylist to shop for you. Instead, as you're doing chores or hitting the gym, stream a fashion TV show in the background to pass the time. You can also browse Pinterest or [follow fashion blogs](#), which are all free.

Through these outlets, you'll be able to understand how to blend styles, coordinate colors and mix prints and pieces together to create amazingly chic ensembles. You'll be able to follow underlying themes of the upcoming seasons, such as prints, skirt silhouettes and even hair and makeup styles.

Choose Simple Solids

While it's fun to be trendy, you have to do so smartly to stay chic. Color trends are constantly changing with each year and even season; however, it's wise to incorporate these more trendy colors into your wardrobe through accessories such as scarves, jewelry or more inexpensive items. This way, when the trend passes, you haven't spent lots of money on clothes that soon appear out-of-style.

For your essential wardrobe, stick to timeless colors such as blacks and neutrals. Solid colors are

also acceptably chic, especially a dark navy or poppy red. Avoid prints, which can appear dated fairly quickly. Some fabrics also use low-quality print production and fabrication, which can end up in misaligned patterns that make a piece look obviously cheap.

Say No to Knockoffs

In case you're not aware, knockoffs and counterfeits are made to look like a high-end brand. Coach or Gucci handbags, for example, are copied and built with inferior materials, sold at barely reduced prices to unsuspecting buyers. This knockoff look is not chic, in any form or fashion, so best to avoid this at all costs. There are many [ways to spot a knockoff](#), so learn them and be vigilant.

The only exception here is when a brand is not copying, per se, but only lifting the style. They're not audaciously claiming to be the high-end brand. Instead, they're offering a more cost-affordable option to buyers. As Oscar Wilde once said, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery that mediocrity can pay to greatness." Not that you're mediocre, by any means.

Find the Right Fit

One excellent way to look stylish is to make sure your clothes fit properly. A shirt that's too tight or too large can appear sloppy, not chic. While it's tempting to be a lazy shopper, always be sure to try on apparel before you make a purchase. The only exception to this is if you make an online purchase, but even those clothes should be easily returnable.

Also be aware of certain stores that use [vanity sizing](#), which can cause complete confusion when it comes to shopping. It may be that a brand's size guidelines are not what you'd expect, so never assume the size will fit and still try it on.

And don't forget about tailoring! Let's say you find a shirt you love, but you're somewhere between sizes. You can always purchase the larger size and have it tailored to your exact fit. It'll make you appear polished and super chic!

Lastly, when it comes to fit, you can also [invest in affordable yet quality shapewear](#) to trim down unwanted bulges, as well as help you feel more confident and secure.

Be Mindful of Fabric Quality

When shopping frugally for a chic wardrobe, it's important to know which fabrics are worth spending a little extra for. Avoid buying cashmere blend sweaters from low-price retailers, instead opting for a more reputable brand. Cashmere blends and even pure cashmere can often be thin and even develop pilling even after one day's wear. The same concept goes for cotton apparel, as low-quality cotton is rougher and more prone to wrinkles.

Cheap fabrics can be avoided if you understand how to spot them and where to buy them. However, some materials are just fine purchased at discount stores and off-price department stores. Jersey knits, merino wool, ponte knit, polyesters and most blends are perfectly suitable and look just as chic no matter the price.

Quality Over Quantity

As you make purchases, choose quality over quantity. Yes, it's tempting to walk away with more

for your money but, ultimately, you might end up disappointed when that boot heel comes loose or that jean pocket tears. Instead of buying cheaply made apparel on a whim just because it's trendy, choose your wardrobe additions thoughtfully.

Essentially, you want to shop for necessity. Avoid that rush of a "retail therapy," snatching every garment that gives you instant gratification. Instead, fill in gaps in your wardrobe that will offer a longer investment that you'll still be able to wear a year or more from now.

And while we're on the subject, also avoid fast fashion stores. In 2017 alone, the [EPA estimated](#) landfills received 11.2 million tons of textiles, most of which are our discarded and unwanted clothes. And if you think donating will solve this, think again. Even [Goodwill is having difficulty](#) keeping up.

Reach for more [socially and environmentally conscious brands](#). Just remember there's nothing chicer than being an advocate for the Earth, too.

Image credit: Shutterstock

This entry was posted on Tuesday, March 3rd, 2020 at 4:05 pm and is filed under [Lifestyle](#), [Sponsored](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [Comments \(RSS\)](#) feed. Both comments and pings are currently closed.