



Looking your best or being a smart dresser takes more than wearing the latest fashions. It takes self-knowledge, the right details, and desire to create a polished look. **By SHEILA Dicks**

Isn't it funny, that when we see someone who performs a task or job well it appears effortless? So it is with the person who dresses smart. At first glance it may seem that dressing well and looking great comes easily. However, when a person takes the time, interest and effort to learn how to dress well, looking great does not only appear effortless, it actually becomes easy.

How do you become a smart dresser? You begin by wanting to look your best. You, thereafter, learn more about yourself — your body type and your fashion personality. You take that information and blend it with your lifestyle and the rules of fashion, and you become a smart dresser.

1 The right fit

Clothes that are too big or are ill-fitting will not only make you look larger, they will hide your assets and accentuate figure flaws. Jackets, pants and skirts should be tailored to fit a person's body measurements. For example, a jacket should fit in the shoulder area and have sleeves that are the correct length — ending just below the wrist bone. Blouses that are too tight around the bust line, too long or droop off the shoulders are just some examples of how the wrong fit can ruin your look.

2 The right colour

The best looking outfit will lose all its pizzazz if the colour does not complement the wearer. Colour is one of the most important aspects of looking great. The wrong colour will make your skin look dull, lines and wrinkles more apparent, and dark circles darker. The right colours will make skin look radiant, eyes will sparkle and lines, wrinkles and dark circles, less noticeable.

Colour is divided into warm and cool categories. For those whose skin has yellow undertones, warm colours look best on them. Those whose skin has blue undertones look best in cool colours. Usually, we are drawn to colours



Smart Ways to Look Best

that look best on us and if you pay attention to how different colours blend with your skin tone you will make better colour choices. To learn more about which colours look best on you, seek the advice of a colour professional.

3 Mane mantra

Your hair can make or break your look. To be sure that your hair is not ruining your look, get your hair cut by a hairstylist on a regular basis and keep your hairstyle up-to-date [nothing is more aging or will ruin your look faster than a hairstyle that is from another decade]. If you colour your hair, do it on a regular basis; don't let the roots show. For the best look, get a hairstyle that suits the look you want to achieve and a colour that suits your skin tone.

4 Make your wardrobe work

To make dressing a pleasurable experience and always look great you must have a wardrobe that works. A great wardrobe comes through planning. First



decide if your wardrobe will be mainly casual or business, thereafter decide on your best colours. Choose three of your best colours and build a wardrobe capsule. A wardrobe capsule consists of jackets, pants, skirts and tops that mix and match. When you stop buying separate pieces and choose pieces that match what you previously own, your wardrobe becomes more manageable.

5 Perfect shoes

Nothing ruins a look faster than shoes that are run down scuffed or do not match the outfit. Shoes are a very important aspect of any wardrobe and should be taken care of with regular maintenance. Your shoes should also suit your outfit. If you are wearing an expensive suit, don't ruin the look by wearing cheap shoes. Before you leave home, look in a full-length mirror and decide if your shoes complement your outfit. Your shoes should match your outfit in colour, weight and occasion.

6 Access well

When you have a workable wardrobe and clothes that fit perfectly, you will need to spice up your wardrobe with accessories. An outfit without accessories is like a painting without a frame. Accessories make your outfit come alive. Choose accessories that suit your outfit. For example, a business suit calls for conservative jewellery. Choose accessories that suit your body frame. A small woman looks better in small jewellery and a larger person can carry off larger jewellery pieces well.

Cultivate Your Style

A personal fashion style can easily differentiate you from others.

Speak to friends, family or colleagues and solicit their honest opinion or engage an image consultant to determine what colours and styles that suit you best, and are in harmony with your natural features like your skin tone, eye and hair colour.

Colours One way to test if your colours match with your looks is to look into a mirror in natural daylight while holding a piece of clothing/fabric next to your eyes, or directly underneath your chin. Notice which stands out more — the colour or your features.

Prints should be in proportion to your feature size, based on your body's natural geometry. For example, if you have small-to-medium size features, you should wear small- to-medium size patterns and jewellery.

Shapes The shape of your face and features should determine the shapes of your accessories and print designs. If you have an oval face, you can wear oval earrings, necklines, belt buckles and eyeglasses.

Layering can make you more prepared for social situations. For example, you will rarely be disrespected for being slightly overdressed. When you wear layers, you can always take off a jacket, tie, scarf or jewellery to look less formal.

Culturally appropriate. In today's global environment we always need to be aware of what is ethnically suitable. More so, if you are travelling to a new region. It is wise to do an Internet search, ask your travel agent or someone living in the location you will be visiting for advice on local etiquette and proper attire.

— Team CW

7 Look your best

A great attitude — don't leave home without it. The best-dressed person in the world will not be looked on favourably if they have a bad attitude. Knowing how to look your best will create more opportunities but a great attitude — being able to get along with others, a pleasant personality and charm — is the driving force that will make you shine.

Stay Well

Sheila Dicks is an image and wardrobe consultant. Her motto: help people reach their full potential and perk up their self-confidence with improved dress sense. She lives in Nova Scotia, Canada.