

FRESH START

How to love your clothes again.

BY LIZ GUBER



WARDROBE DETOX SPECIAL • WARDROBE DETOX SPECIAL

FINDING THAT SATISFYING BALANCE BETWEEN

functional and inspiring when it comes to your wardrobe is easier said than done. We've all stumbled along the way—from excitedly buying a sweater that turned out to be as itchy as it was ill-fitting to holding on to an old dress printed with small brown kittens and faux-promising to wear it again. And we've all dreamed, at one point or another, of removing every last item from our racks and starting over, adding back only what truly speaks to us. Enter the three-step detox. Here's how to (finally!) pare down your closet, shop mindfully and make your clothes last. ▷



STEP 1: EDIT

A CURATED WARDROBE MADE UP OF PIECES YOU CAN'T WAIT TO WEAR IS POSSIBLE. BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO LET GO OF A FEW THINGS FIRST. HERE'S HOW TO KNOW WHEN TO SAY "IT'S NOT ME; IT'S YOU."

IF YOU HAVEN'T WORN IT IN...

3 MONTHS

HANG ON! Create a "maybe" section in your closet for the pieces you're considering giving up. We suggest turning the hangers the other way to track how frequently (or infrequently) you wear something. Set a calendar reminder to reassess the situation in another 90 days so you can be ruthless without the regret.

6 MONTHS

THINK ABOUT IT. Try it on and seriously consider the practicality (Are the arms too snug? Has it stretched?) and condition (Is it ripped—not in a chic way?). "You should love everything in your closet," says Rati Levesque, chief merchant at online consignment site TheRealReal. "If a season goes by and I didn't wear a dress, I will be even less likely to wear it the following season."

1 YEAR

SET IT FREE. "My rule of thumb is: If I've forgotten that I own it, it's time to let it go," says Coco Chan, head of womenswear at online shopping destination Stylebop. Waiting a full year ensures that you're not editing your summer wardrobe in the middle of winter, when it can be harder to gauge frequency of wear.

TRY THIS: CONSIGNING

SELLING YOUR CLOTHES IS A GREAT WAY TO REFRESH YOUR WARDROBE: YOU CAN USE THE MONEY YOU MAKE FOR NEW INVESTMENT PIECES. HERE ARE THREE WAYS TO GO ABOUT IT.



GO LOCAL

Where VSP and I Miss You in Toronto, Mine & Yours in Vancouver. **Best for** Mid-market and higher-end pieces like Theory suits, DVF party dresses and that LV Speedy you haven't taken out of its dust bag in years. **Inside tip** Consigning locally means that you can often negotiate the price of your items and speak to shop owners to find out what's selling.



GET APPY

What Depop, a mobile app with an Instagram-like interface and 400,000 daily users globally. **Best for** Trendy pieces like Adidas Gazelles and that Zara-sale score. Think of it this way: If it got tons of likes on Insta, it will sell. **Inside tip** Unlike consignment stores, which can take up to 60 percent, the app's fee is 10 percent for each item sold (including the shipping fee).



SURF THE WEB

What TheRealReal, an online luxury resale destination that sees millions of visitors each month. **Best for** Heritage brands and iconic pieces. Gucci belts, D&G cocktail dresses and Cartier watches are consistently in high demand. **Inside tip** You'll have to mail in your goods to get appraised, so consult the website first for the brands that make the cut.

LOVE IT OR LEAVE IT? CLUTTER EXPERTS WEIGH IN.

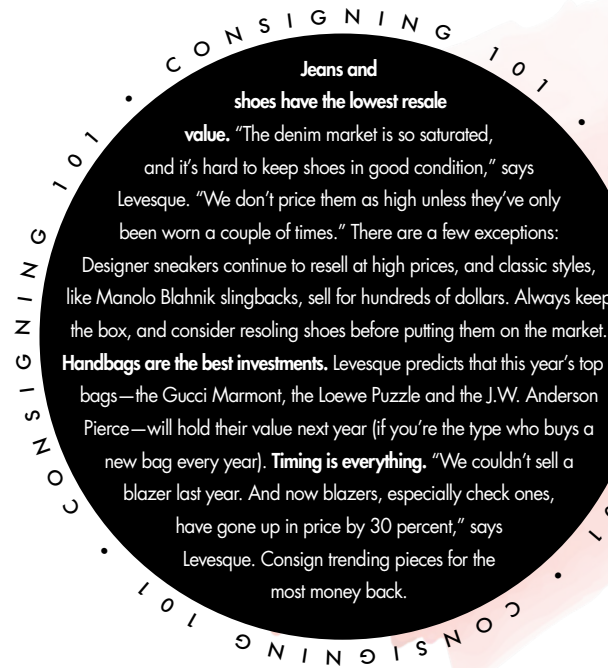
IF IT NO LONGER FITS

It doesn't have to be all or nothing, says organizational designer Laura Cattano. "If your weight fluctuates, treat the clothes like they do fit—as long as they suit your lifestyle." However, if you get that "ugh" feeling when you look at your too-small clothes, it's time to move on, says professional organizer Kim Diamond. "Keeping them around won't motivate you," she says. And when you're in doubt, she suggests, ask yourself "If I were shopping right now, would I buy this?"

IF YOU'RE HOLDING ON FOR SENTIMENTAL REASONS

"Sentimental value tends to change over time," says Cattano. "Keep only the things that speak to you in a positive way. It's okay to let go; you don't need permission." Remember: You don't have to hold on to an item to keep the memory. Cattano recommends taking a photo instead. For special pieces (like your grandmother's wedding gown), Diamond suggests framing a small swatch of the fabric.

PHOTOGRAPHY: IMAXTREE (STREET STYLE & RUNWAY)



STEP 2: SHOP (THIS IS THE FUN PART.)

FOLLOW THESE PROMPTS—FROM THE FITTING ROOM TO YOUR BEDROOM MIRROR—AND NEVER FEEL THAT BUYER'S REMORSE AGAIN.

AT THE STORE

ASK Will this fill a gap in my closet or create one? **THINK** of four outfits around the piece. "If you can only come up with one outfit for an item of clothing, it will most likely collect dust in the back of your closet," warns fashion designer Misha Nonoo. **REMEMBER** "Classic" is in the eye of the beholder," says Chan. "Look for what works for you and your body." **SLOW DOWN** "Be systematic about it," she says. "Why have two just-okay blouses when you can have one really great one? It's as simple as that."

WHEN YOU GET HOME

Don't leave that new blouse in the shopping bag for a week. It's time to test out those outfits you imagined in the fitting room. You can even snap some mirror selfies of your looks—they'll save you on those "I have nothing to wear" mornings.

IF ALL ELSE FAILS

Shop for "suitcase pieces"—the kind of easy-to-wear yet exciting finds (a tea-length dress, a suede moto jacket) that are the first things you pack no matter where you're going.

WISH LIST

NATALIE KINGHAM, BUYING DIRECTOR AT MATCHES FASHION, ON THREE TRENDS TO TRY NOW AND WEAR FOR YEARS.



"I love the use of archive logos on accessories by Balenciaga, Gucci and Fendi."



"Halpern has incredible sequined party dresses this season that I love to style with a classic black oversized Saint Laurent blazer."



"One of the surprising trends we saw at the spring/summer 2018 shows was summer boots—Margiela and Chloé had some Western styles that would be a great investment for pairing with dresses." >

IN THE MARKET

The new classics on the ELLE Canada editors' shopping lists.

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"There isn't a situation that an intriguingly printed midi-dress can't, well, address. Fancy-ish dinner? Dress. Late for drinks? Dress. Speaking to a room of 50 strangers? You get the idea."
— **Liz Guber, associate fashion editor** Cotton midi-dress, Acne Studios (\$2,126, at NET-A-PORTER.com)

"I'm more inclined to take risks with my outerwear than my day-to-day clothing, and this mixed-check coat is a just-big-enough step out of my comfort zone."
— **Victoria DiPlacido, associate beauty editor** Wool-blend tweed coat, Golden Goose Deluxe Brand (\$1,926, at NET-A-PORTER.com)

"Bees are essential to the future of our planet, and they do a heck of a lot for this sweater too. Plus, cashmere is essential for surviving Canadian winters."
— **Ciara Rickard, production editor** Cashmere sweater, N.Peal (\$850, at farfetch.com)

"This signet ring ticks two essential boxes for me: the opportunity to monogram and the ability to make me feel like a member of an obscure royal family."
— **Sarah Laing, culture editor** 22-karat-gold-vermeil pinky ring, Dinny Hall (\$290, dinnyhall.com)

"Sometimes I yearn for a dollop of colour in my mostly-black-navy-grey wardrobe, which is why this clutch will be my new going-out staple. It's a timeless shade of pink—not too millennial (over it) or '80s neon."
— **Carli Whitwell, special projects editor** Leather clutch, Loewe (\$964, at farfetch.com)

"I practically live in white sneakers, and I'm strangely attracted to the juvenile vibe (courtesy of the Velcro and terry-cloth badge) these guys have."
— **Jed Tallo, art director** Leather sneakers, Raf Simons (\$465, at ssense.com)

PHOTOGRAPHY: IMAXTREE (STREET STYLE)

STEP 3: TAKE CARE

YOU FOUND YOUR WARDROBE HERO PIECES: A CRISP BALLOON-SLEEVED TOP, VINTAGE-WASH JEANS AND A PRINCE OF WALES-CHECK BLAZER THAT MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE TESS MCGILL AFTER SHE LANDS A CORNER OFFICE. NOW TAKE CARE OF YOUR CLOTHES SO YOU DON'T END UP ALL THE WAY BACK AT STEP 1 OF THIS GUIDE.

LINDSEY BOYD, CO-FOUNDER OF LUXE GARMENT-CARE BRAND THE LAUNDRESS, ON HOW TO...

Not overdo it. "You don't need to wash your jeans and sweaters after just one wear (or even two)." **Try:** Spot-treat stains, and spray with an antibacterial fabric refresher.

Take care of that fancy Equipment blouse. "Silk items will say 'Dry clean only' when they can, in fact, be washed at home." Dry cleaning natural fibres can set in odours and stains. **Try:** Wash in a gentle cycle, and skip the dryer. When it comes to heat, it's the dryer, not the water temperature, that's most damaging to clothes.

Deal with pilling on knits—yes, it happens to expensive sweaters too. "Pilling doesn't mean the sweater wasn't manufactured properly; it's just a natural quality of the yarn and happens from wear." **Try:** Brush knits with a pumice stone, and use a scented wool-and-cashmere spray to refresh between washes.

Make your blazers meeting-ready again. "You have to get suit jackets cleaned professionally because of the shoulder pads and interfacing in the garment, but the fabric itself is washable." **Try:** Treat the inside lining with antibacterial spray, and spot-treat stains—they might not come out on the first try, but that's okay. "Don't get defeated. If a stain sits for a while, you may have to do it twice." Finally, steam—never iron—a blazer. (It can break down the structure.)



Extreme Steam 1,550-watt iron, Conair (\$40, conaircanada.ca)

Sweater stone, The Laundress (\$28, thelaundress.com)

Wool and cashmere spray, The Laundress (\$15, thelaundress.com)

My Little Steamer Go Mini, Joy Mangano (\$27, at bedbathandbeyond.ca)

JONAH CREED, OF CREEDS DRY CLEANING IN TORONTO, ON HOW TO IRON LIKE YOUR GRANDMA

1. Hang dry the item as soon as it's out of the wash to get some of the wrinkles out. 2. Use a spray bottle to mist fabric as you iron. 3. Tackle the collar, cuffs and plackets (the layered fabric near the buttons) first. The fabric on these parts of a shirt is usually reinforced and won't wrinkle as much, so if you get them over with, you likely won't have to go over them again. 4. Iron around the buttons and hooks so they don't weaken or melt. 5. Resist the urge to overiron; it can make clothes look shiny (a.k.a. cheap). □