

As we look forward to the April showers and May flowers, it's time to revamp and rejuvenate our tired old wardrobes. Good-bye heavy wools, boots, and drab colors.

Hello sunshine, bright colors, and pedicures!

Even under a tight budget during a shaky economy, there are many ways that we can all affordably freshen up our duds.

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Step One – get down to basics.

Step Two – accessorize.

Step Three – forget the trends, go with the classics and bank on their staying power.

FRESHEN UP YOUR WARDROBE

Wardrobe Musts For Spring

1. Crisp tailored white oxford shirt: Fit and quality matter. Try the new wrinkle-free fabrics that are worth their weight in gold, and are wash and wear. What you'll save in dry cleaning bills will buy you a second blouse! You will wear this basic with everything, so don't skimp. This basic button-up can be layered under a pastel fine gauge sweater, worn with a pair of jeans, over a satin camisole, or as the building block for your basic suit. I repeat, do not underestimate the power of a crisp white tailored shirt!

2. Dark colored wide leg dressy jeans: High-waisted dark jeans can be dressed up or down, so they are the most versatile fit out there. A bit of sheen can up the ante. A wide leg or flare that starts at the knee is the most flattering to balance out the curves of the thighs. These are not your average sneaker jeans, so make sure the jeans are workable with your favorite heels. Length should hit the middle of the foot, so try them on with your basic pumps and kitten heels. Besides the major department stores, Anne Taylor Loft, Express, Banana Republic, and Gap all offer great dark washes. Just be sure to follow laundry instructions and either dry clean them, or wash them inside out with cold water to prevent bleeding.

3. White trench coat: This spring must-have will be your new BFF. The white trench is the season's go-to jacket. Try double breasted and belted, and either waist length or a hem that hits mid-thigh. Check out White House Black Market and Target.

continued on next page

4. Cropped Cardigan: To wear over a tee, dress, camisole or button down, the cardigan will get lots of play. Try a three quarter length sleeve and a delicate feminine touch with ruffles or lady-like covered buttons. Stock up with white and black, then add a colorful hue such as hot pink.

5. Cotton sun dress: Spring's version of the LBD (little black dress). Washable, light weight, and easy. Makes getting dressed in the morning a snap. Try solids or florals, you can't go wrong with a soft cotton dress with an empire waist and gathering under the bust. Try v-neck, sweetheart or scoop necklines. Flowy a-lines that skim over curves are universally flattering for all body types. Victoria's Secret, Old Navy, Gap and all major department stores offer uber feminine dresses this spring, most for under \$30. Pair with sandals and a wrap or a cropped cardigan for a more polished look. Wear casually with flip flops and shades for a day of errands or a weekend luncheon.

6. Shirt Dress: A knee-length shirt dress is appropriate for work with its crisp collar and button-up appeal. For evening, unbutton a little, roll up the sleeves, and add a chunky necklace with a pair of stilettos and you're ready to hit the town. Check out Old Navy, Gap and Target.

7. Boat Neck Tee: A few wide neck tees that bare your delicate collar bone area are perfect for layering or alone. Mix and match in bright spring shades like fuchsia, teal, sea foam and lilac.

8. Pants: For the basic wardrobe, you'll need a pair of long flare dress pants, and a pair of cropped capris in a dressy fabric that is versatile. Buy these fits in both black and white and you can mix and match virtually all outfits with these basics.

Accessories, Accessories, Accessories

1. Large silver hoop earrings: if you don't own them yet, buy them now.

2. Wrap: Think bright pink, sky blue, and Kelly green. A smart wrap can be worn over your shoulders on a cool spring day, or tied around your waste as a bathing suit cover-up come summer time. Buy the pashminas that are sold on the city street or airport shops for \$10, stock up in fun colors.

3. Bright scarf: A long satin scarf is an accessory must. Try patterns of fun colors, but be sure to get a black, white and red. Use the scarf as a belt, draped over your shoulders or under the lapel of a blazer. Tie it around your neck for a Parisian sophistication, or knot it in a bow to add a splash of color to your basic handbag. Tie up your hair in a fun swifty pony tail, or use as a retro style head band with the ends hanging loose ala Jackie O.

4. Sunglasses: Speaking of Jackie, don't forget your peeps. Large oval frames are appealing for most facial structures. Try tortoise shell – it's flattering for a variety of skin tones and won't clash with the rest of your jewelry.

5. Silver bangles: stack up a row of shiny, jingly, silver bangles. For \$15, these bracelets will take your outfits from day to night.

6. White Handbag: Whether it's Coach or Kohl's, a white leather handbag is all you need for the spring/summer season. Pick a purse that is solid white - not cream, not striped, not floral, just white. Try a fun shape such as a tote, hobo, domed satchel, or a bowling bag. It will go with everything and will stay fresh-looking and clean if you pre-treat with a waterproof spray to keep the dirt at bay.

7. Small clutch: A rectangular clutch is perfect for evening. Try a faux croc, metallic (the new neutral), white satin or patent leather. Check out Nine West.com.

8. Peep toe pumps: a pair of black and a pair of metallic. Enough said.