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WORDS SARAH DONGES



10 top wardrobe makeover tips

Now that you've settled in at home with bub it may be time to revamp your wardrobe. Make it easy by following these handy tips from personal stylist Sarah Donges of The Beauty Tutor

Whether you're dealing with weight gain or scarring, or your body has altered shape after the birth of your baby, it's easy to be unsure of what to wear. Plus, by the time you're out of your maternity clothes – which can be months after giving birth – fashions have often changed, leaving you feeling lost about what to wear. Well, read on to discover some tips that will transform your style.

1 CLEAR THEM OUT The first step is to clear out your wardrobe and sort through what you have. Start by popping out to purchase wooden hangers or good quality plastic hangers as well as skirt hangers. Next, you will need to schedule in a good three hours for your wardrobe detox. So, get rid of the kids and your hubby, turn off the phone and get started. Also, get yourself into the right frame of mind... you need to be ruthless and relaxed. This is for you, after all!

2 DIVIDE & CONQUER Take everything out of your wardrobe and throw it into one pile. Do a quick sort and divide up your clothes into categories: "yes", "no", "maybe" and "keepsake". Throw definite "no" items into a bin bag. "Yes" items can be kept, and along with the "maybes", need to be culled further. Ask yourself: does it fit? Do you like it? Do you feel good in it? Do you have other items to go with it? Is it too worn? Are you only keeping it because of the label or because you bought it overseas? Keepsakes are fine to store, but not in your wardrobe. Instead, keep them in plastic boxes or in a spare wardrobe.

3 QUICK FIX If you have a few items that are great but need modifying, then take them to the tailor or fix them yourself. Get your pants taken up or down, change the buttons to update the look, have them repaired or soak them if the colour needs brightening.

4 GET THE HANG OF IT Hang up all of the "yes" items and make sure they are hanging correctly; no wire hangers! Trousers hang best from the cuff on skirt hangers, so you don't get them creased. The more you can see the more you remember you have, so hang as much as possible in sections; skirts together, summer tops together, short jackets together and so forth.

5 GET SET TO SHOP From what is left, analyse each item and start to think about the gaps. Do you need trousers for work now? Are your jeans too stretched? Are you still wearing maternity skirts when you are no longer pregnant? It's like writing a grocery list; write yourself a personal shopping list of wardrobe items you need.

6 BUDGET BEHAVIOUR How much do you want to spend on personal shopping? Write down a budget and finalise a list before you go. If it is only a small budget but you need a lot of items then consider the most important; think about what you need for the short term and then think about what you wear the majority of the time. If you have a wedding coming up then that's a short-term priority. If you are in casual clothes most of the time, then a wardrobe full of evening wear and heels is not your top priority.

To buy all the items on your list you'll need to set aside some time – and don't get sidetracked! Three hours is a great amount of time.

7 BE EFFICIENT When I am shopping for a client, I follow these key steps: I shop for colour, style, fabric, price and then try it on. Go into shops you don't normally venture in and follow these steps. Quickly skim the store and if you don't see the colour you like, you can be out in one minute. Mark each purchase off your list and keep going until you find the next item.

8 MIX & MATCH Now that you have bought everything you need, you can start to create outfits and enjoying your new clothes. If you struggle with mixing and matching, then spend some time trying on what you have to work out a few outfits. If you need a visual reference, then photograph your outfits and stick the photos up in your wardrobe.

9 TAKE CARE Enjoy and cherish what you own. Look after your clothes; soak them when they need it, repair them, remove pills from knitwear, clean your shoes and get clothes dry-cleaned if they need it.

10 MAINTAIN STANDARDS Remember, if you don't feel great in it, don't wear it! ●
For more information, visit thebeautytutor.com.

RESOURCES FURTHER READING

- *Rock Star Momma: The Hip Guide to Looking Gorgeous Through All Nine Months and Beyond* by Skype Hoppus (Aria Books) available from amazon.com.
- *Liz Lange's Maternity Style: How to Look Fabulous During the Most Fashion-Challenged Time* by Liz Lange (Clarkson Potter Publishers) available from amazon.com.
- *Pregnancy Chic: The Fashion Survival Guide* by Cherie Serota & Jody Kozlow Gardner (Villard Books) available from amazon.com.

USEFUL CONTACTS

- bubhub.com.au You can join an online forum to share your wardrobe concerns with other mothers.