

WARDROBE DETOX AND SHOPPING DIET

THE REAL SUMMER FEEL-GOOD PLAN

Summer holidays: the pressure to look thin and flawless in your bikini is HUGE! And while we women can demonstrate exceptional strength and willpower to achieve this goal by adjusting our diet accordingly, it might prove a bit of a challenge to do so with another area of our life. Yet, the summer might also be a suitable time to do a wardrobe overhaul. Marie Fourmeaux has a few ingredients for a sartorial cleansing. And yes, strong will is also the key, well, as it is for a regular diet anyway...

Are you repeatedly violently hit by this relentless and universal "I-don't-know-what-to-wear syndrome"? Every morning, you find yourself in the same situation. Like the legend of Sisyphus, over and over again, dishevelled and in a hurry, you take a look at your wardrobe, end up picking the usual same clothes and can't think of new combinations. However, it is full, packed, its doors are threatening to burst open!

Or, you might either feel that your closet does not reflect who you are any more, your tastes and lifestyle may have evolved. How many times have I heard those comments, from myself, of course, but also when discussing with friends? Well, this is a cry for help from both your closet and the bottom of your heart.

Imagination and creativity need a favourable context to be set in motion and this is when a wardrobe audit might help. So, detox or diet? The Cambridge dictionary defines the former as "a period when you stop taking unhealthy or harmful foods, drinks (...) for a period of

time, in order to improve your health (...)" and the latter as "an eating plan in which someone eats less food, or only particular types of food, because they want to become thinner (...)". Well, one is about quantity, the other, about quality... so, let's go for both!

Let's start with detox, the prerequisite to a diet (i.e. the healthier shopping phase). Detox means assessing what is in your closet and sorting your clothing out. It's probably the most important step, as it helps define what works for you or not.

The aim is to have a curated sartorial selection, reflecting who you are, your lifestyle and your tastes. Plus, less is more. It is easier to create different looks and combinations when you can actually SEE what you have. Too much choice kills choice. A refreshed wardrobe guarantees that it will be simpler to make new outfits.

The scope of the task might feel a bit daunting. Your living room might look like a shop floor battlefield at the end of a summer sale day. But you can definitely carry it out in a nice environment. Why not turn some music on? Or ask a friend to join you to give you advice and encourage you not to waver along the way? You can also break it into chunks of work, starting with the current season.

My first tip would be to only keep the clothes in which you feel comfortable and beautiful. It sounds like an obvious statement, though it's amazing how we – well, I – struggle to part with garments we never or rarely wear. There is always the temptation – my favourite one – of thinking

"yeah...I'll keep it for when I've lost a few pounds!" However, we all know the hope of slipping into that lovely dress again is not necessarily a highway to the gym class!

There is no rule but to enjoy! Try your clothes on in front of a full-size mirror, have fun pairing the same skirt with different tops. Add on shoes and accessories. Take a few pictures of the styles and looks you love to remember them.

My second advice would be to ask yourself, when it comes to apparel you wear the most, why is it so? What is it you like so much about these recurrent styles? On the reverse, analyse why some clothes have stayed like sleeping beauties in your wardrobe for months, or even, years, sometimes with an immaculate price tag on them? Answering those two questions will provide you with precious clues on how you work style wise and optimise upcoming shopping sessions. Rediscover those sleeping beauties. If you come to the conclusion that they're not the right fit, donate or sell them if they're still in good condition. If not, you can give them away for recycling.

Oh, and in the mist of all this cleansing, there is this precious thing you might



via Pexels



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want to keep, for old times' sake: the old pair of jeans, the yardstick of your silhouette, the benchmark of your figure! Yeah! That, I definitely cling on to!

Having assessed your needs and style preferences with the detox phase, you may want to go shopping. But healthily, right? Now that you've "detoxed" your wardrobe, it would be a pity to overindulge.

Buying clothes is a GREAT feeling. First, there is the oh-so-flattering part of it when discovering your reflection in a mirror and, wow, it suits you perfectly. Then, you experience this slight yet sheer sense of power when entering your pin code. But, in all honesty, haven't you sometimes felt a bit "indisposed" when coming home with so many full bags? I sure have! Several times! I had purchased too much, a little shopping indigestion.

How many of the clothes we purchase will end up not being worn? Why do we buy so many? Fear of missing out? Pressure to carry the last fashion trends? In my opinion, there are two matters to consider when shopping: their fit and if they are worth their price tag.

On your next shopping trip, I suggest you try to pinpoint your buying pattern, asking yourself "How do I buy?", "What reasons make me buy?". Countless times have I fallen into the trap of "well, the fabric itches, but it's well cut and it's 50% off! It's an absolute bargain! I can't miss it, can I?"

Bottom line is, anything that doesn't feel or look perfect, if you have the slightest hesitation, don't take it. You'll regret it. When it comes to clothes, don't go for second best either! Even if it's a

"bargain". In fact, it is not, when you realise the object of such a bargain may never see the light of day.

If a particular dress or top really made an impression on you and you didn't buy it, if it's a big miss, you'll feel a small twinge in the following days and won't stop thinking about it. A bit like when you fall in love. Come back to the store, try it again and make your decision. Trust your guts, more than your wallet, especially if the latter is plentiful!

Do not be shy to return things either. I may be providing advice here, but I'm still working on my shopping habits! The other day, I gave back an adorable skirt I'd bought on sale. It fitted well, was very summery and feminine. However, after a few days, it dawned on me I didn't need it, and wouldn't wear it at all! This particular episode is springing to my mind now, because it's writing material, but I haven't thought of that skirt since then.

When it comes to ethos, I recommend assessing if the price tag is good value for money. Various personal parameters may be involved here – hence the importance of knowing what you want – but asking yourself whether it is a fair cost, considering fit and quality, is a good way to discern.

I went shopping the other day. I pushed the door and started browsing. I found the items were excruciatingly overpriced for the quality and left within a few seconds. The salesperson tried to hold me back saying "it's all on sale". I replied that they were far above my budget, and by that, I meant, bank account-wise but personal ethics-wise as well.

Yes, it's hard and frustrating to

come home empty-handed after hours queuing at the fitting rooms and trying on hundreds of things. The frustration will fade away, though, unlike the unworn clothes in your wardrobe.

On the other hand, when buying better, when you find a little gem that REALLY fits you, the satisfaction is much deeper. Not only do you feel beautiful, you also know it's consistent with who you are. And this is when you realise that getting dressed and having your own style is a subtle art, and that working on it may not be as easy as it seems.

A curated wardrobe implies heightening your standards because it means getting closer to yourself. Your closet is the reflection of your life, goes through the bumps and joys. It adjusts to any event that comes across your path: career changes, relationships, babies, or simply getting wiser or perceiving who you are better. And that is why a wardrobe diet is actually a useful tool to reconnect with yourself.

I would highly recommend carrying out this little exercise twice a year. Well, this is what I am doing, as my closet is not that big and my shoebox of a flat has limited storage. It allows more room for new and fresh things every once in a while, and to include a few of those super trendy clothes. Also, improving your shopping strategy, as in buying less but in a manner that really targets your needs, is a gesture of responsible consuming, in a way that only you can control. Well, on that note, I'm off to a well-deserved proper apéritif!

You can see more of Marie Fourmeaux on Instagram: [instagram.com/marie.fourmeaux](https://www.instagram.com/marie.fourmeaux)



The next day, I was looking for a \$7 dress to go with my \$300 shoes, when...

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