

Build a work wardrobe from scratch without going broke



Tips on how to create a brand new wardrobe on a shoestring budget.

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Published Monday, May 11, 2015 6:30AM EDT

Score! You graduated university, completed a year-long post-grad diploma program, two summer internships and finally landed a contract replacing someone who went on mat-leave.

All of a sudden your trusty legging and hoodie combo won't cut it — not if you want your co-workers to take you seriously.

It's time to build a work wardrobe, and you need to do it while still being able to pay off your student loans and buy beers during happy hour (for networking purposes, obviously).

Don't be afraid of incorporating fast fashion from places such as Zara, H&M, Joe Fresh and Express, and discounted fashion from Winners, says celebrity stylist Alexis Honce.

"Before all this, work-wear was really expensive...fast fashion is catching on, making work-appropriate clothes at good prices."



Men should prioritize cash for their shoes to ensure they're real leather. Otherwise, they can get away with two suits, in navy blue and grey. "Men don't need to spend a ton of money. Zara men's suits are fabulous," Honce says. Fit is everything, so spend an extra \$50 getting a cheaper suit tailored.

Meanwhile, women can start off by buying a pencil skirt and a slim-cut dress pant that's cropped at the ankle. Then you can "focus on buying different blouses and then really think about looking current. Buy the colour of the season, or a great print to switch it up," says Honce.



By mixing and matching, you can get around 20 outfits incorporating several punchy blouses and only "two great pants, two skirts and two dresses."

If you're going to splurge, do it on a blazer in navy blue or black. Keep it timeless by searching for one with a "longer hemline to your hips, minimal details and 2 buttons max," Honce says.

You don't have to donate your student clothes or relegate them to Sunday brunch just yet — consider tucking a T-shirt into a pencil skirt, for example. Even the oft-criticized leggings may have a place during casual Fridays.

"My friends wear them," Honce says. It could work "if you get a really nice pair of leggings [and wear them] as hosiery in the winter with boots"

Accessorizing is an easy way to prevent colleagues from noticing how small your wardrobe really is, and can also provide a conversation starter.

"Don't go too safe. There's a lot of great costume jewellery at Forever 21 and H&M so switch it up daily if you can," Honce says. "It's better to stand out at the office.

Must haves for women

- Two pencil skirts: neutral colours such as navy blue or grey
- Two pairs of slim-cut dress pants to the ankles: neutral colours such as navy blue or grey
- Two shift dresses
- Three cheap and cheerful tops
- A large handful of accessories

Must haves for men

- Two suits: navy and grey
- Leather shoes

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