



The new season is always good time to detox your wardrobe. Before you head for the charity shop, Gay Richardson investigates some options for renewing your collection.



It's Autumn, and getting chillier? Warmer? Windy? Wetter? What is with this weather and what on earth do we keep out or put away for the next few months? Whatever the weather, and let's face it we can never really tell, it would do us all good to clear out the clutter in our wardrobes and get set for the new season.

So set aside a few evenings or a whole day, grab a few bin liners and an aim to get an uncluttered organised mix and matched wardrobe. Get ready get set go!

As you get each item out ask yourself a few questions to help with the process.

Does it fit now? Not too big or too small i.e. jackets should be able to be done up even if you wear them undone.

Does it need fixing? Could you mend a zip, re-sew a button etc so that the item is wearable again.

Does it make me feel fabulous? Look in the mirror, walk away and look again...yes or no?

Have I worn it in the last year? If no then usually it's a throw away.

#### Alter

It is often the little things that can make a big difference, so look at

your skirts and dresses and see whether shortening them will make a difference. The 'style rule' is a hem should end on the curve on the inside of your leg, ie a narrower part not a wide part. This will give the illusion that you look taller and slimmer.

Tunic tops are back in for Autumn so you could shorten a dress and wear it over trousers to give it a new lease of life.

Also check your jacket sleeve length, again the style rule is that the hem should end on your wrist bone, not half way down your hand. Try rolling the cuff up to see what a difference it can make.

Look where details are on your garments and if they are emphasising an area that you would rather hide e.g. bottom or boobs, then remove the buttons or tuck in pocket flaps to de-emphasise that area.

#### Mix and Match

If you are like most people you will be wearing about 20% of your wardrobe 80% of the time, so when you have cleared and made some more space, why not see what 'loved' items you could mix and match to create 'new' outfits. For example if you have a skirt or trouser suit, break the pieces up and wear the jackets with different trousers, jeans or skirts. And the trousers with different tops or jackets



to create a co-ordinated but not totally matched look. Wear a dress (as a tunic top – see above) with trousers and a short jacket or fur gilet for that layered look.

Try mixing colours that you would never have thought would look good e.g. navy and orange/ mustard/ green or even black! Yes navy is 'new' for Autumn and can be teamed with black accessories. Try mixing 2 colours together rather than a neutral and a colour e.g. green and blue, orange and cerise pink, turquoise and red.



Gay with (right) and without (above) accessories

**Add accessories**

Look through all your old jewellery, belt and scarf drawers – fur is back in, so is paisley and fringing, lace and the colour tomato red so anything like that can be used to instantly propel you into Autumn 08 style without having to trawl the shops or spend any extra money. Try a belt over a light weight jacket or even a jumper to accentuate your waist (silhouettes are very 08 too!) or add a long loose

cardigan over the belted shirt/jumper to cover any bits you want to disguise but still show that you



have a waist. Add a scarf tied either like a neckerchief, or a long skinny one or a necklace or bangles to 'finish off' your outfit.

**Swap**

Before you take your cast offs to the charity shop or try to sell them on eBay, why not try a Girls Night In and swap items with friends. I organise Style Me Confident Girls Nights In (see my website for full details which are informative and a great deal of fun. You will learn style facts that will help you know why an item is right or wrong for you and we then swap unwanted items using my expert advice so everyone can look and feel fabulous ready for the new season – whatever that great British weather decides to do.

*Gay Richardson is a personal stylist and shopper. To contact Gay call 01903 538774 or visit [www.stylemeconfident.co.uk](http://www.stylemeconfident.co.uk)*

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