

12 STEPS TO CREATING YOUR OWN STYLE

ELYSE TAGER

AGING
WITH
Attitude

12 Steps to Creating Your Own Style

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1. What is Your Style?

Are you somewhere between frumpy and fabulous, but not exactly sure where?

WHAT IS STYLE and how do you get it, (or regain it)? The style that you had in your 20s and 30s may not be serving you well now. Hopefully these tips will help you moving gracefully into your next chapter.

"Style" is an expression of individualism mixed with charisma. Fashion is something that comes after style." John Fairchild

"Style is an effortless confidence in being yourself, it is a way of putting yourself together according to your mood and what you want to project. Personal style appears to come naturally for some, but for others it can take a while to find it!"
Diane van Furstenberg

"Style is a magic wand, and turns everything to gold that it touches." Logan Pearsall Smith

"Style is the perfection of a point of view." Richard Eberhart

"Fashion you can buy, but style you possess" Iris Apfel

Style is the ultimate expression of who you are. It's when who you are on the inside matches who you appear to be on the outside. It's knowing yourself. It's understanding what looks good on you and sticking to it. It's allowing your personality to show in every aspect of what you wear or do.

How do you discover who you are and what works for you at this season of your life?

The best way to establish your style for now is by doing a little research.

a) People Watch

Get out of your fashion rut by really looking at women around you. Go to the city, to a mall, to a busy business area. Sit down and study what

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women are wearing. What styles and colors do they wear? What do their shoes and purses look like? What about their hair and makeup? What image do they project? Do this and you'll very quickly learn what you like and don't like, what works and doesn't work for you.

b) Vision Board

If you've lost your way or want to re-evaluate your personal style, start by creating a *Vision Board*. You can use Pinterest, or a corkboard on your wall or even a folder to collect images in. Start pulling pictures you love from catalogues, and fashion magazines. Don't stop to think about why you like the pictures, just tear them out. A pattern will emerge and the answer will become clearer later. The process of researching and gathering this inspiration is almost more important than the end result. You will learn a lot about your own preferences and start to narrow down your definition of your own style.

Start taking photos with your cell phone or carry a notepad in your purse. Add to your board your notes from your style notepad and any other inspirational bits you find, like pieces of material, color chips, whatever inspires you. Look at your *Vision Board* often; you will continue to build your own style sense.

c) Explore New Stores

Retail therapy is a great tool as you start to evolve your own style. But you are using this as research – not shopping, so ignore prices for now and go exploring with your *Vision Board* in mind.

To shake things up visit stores where you would **not** normally shop.

Don't be afraid to check out some of those fancy high-end boutiques or designer department in the large stores. You are just looking, remember?

d) Play Dress Up and Experiment

Once you are in the stores, try some things on. Lots of things! Step outside of your comfort zone and pick things you would not ordinarily reach for. Again, NO buying just looking and trying on all kinds of things on that you may never have considered. What outfits make you feel confident, energetic, silly or embarrassed?

Which flatter your figure and which make you look like you are trying too hard? There's no quicker way to know what like and what looks good for sure than to try it on! You may want to ask salespeople to suggest things – but if your are truly not there to purchase, please respect their time. Get a variety of opinions but don't take any of them too seriously. You are the one who counts.

After a few shopping expeditions you will have a clearer idea of what you like, what suits you and what to buy. At this point TAKE ACTION and start by buying a few pieces.

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As your confidence increases, your style grows and evolves. Please don't think you can't ever be stylish because you are on a budget. Style is not a price tag, it is an attitude. You can find fantastic clothes with just your style from Goodwill to consignment stores, or department stores like Target. Your eye will start to pick out just the items which will work for you.

2. ORGANIZE YOUR CLOSET

Many women are embarrassed to admit their closets are a mess. They're stuffed full of clothes that they've forgotten they even have. Getting dressed every morning is stressful. How do you create order out of the chaos?

What should you do with all that STUFF? How do you know what to keep?

It's time to take the bull by the horns! I suggest that you take everything out of your closet. If you have a portable hanging rack use that. If not put it all on the bed!

Take a good look at each item; place each item in one of 3 piles

- Keep
- Donate (or discard)
- Repair/alter

If it is in good condition, fits you and in a color and style both current and flattering to you, then put it in the "Keep" pile.

Specifically, keep:

- High quality items like cashmere
- Classic styles. For example, a classic trench is always in style or great looking basic pants.
- Any item you love because it makes you feel wonderful

Get rid of:

- Clothing with stains or rips
- White shirts after one or two seasons because they yellow
- Anything with shoulder pads or shoes with a pointy toe.
- Clothes you bought because they were 'practical' yet you never really loved
- Odd pieces that don't match anything
- Also, if you haven't worn in in the past year or so, you probably want to donate it. You probably won't wear it in another 12 months either. So make room in your closet and donate it to someone who will get good

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- use out of it.
- Never hold onto clothes thinking they will come back in style again. A fashion trend may come back ten years later, but you can be sure it will be ever so slightly different and you will look dated if you recycle the old version. Just move these pieces out.

For those items with which you just can't part, store them – but not in your closet. Get them out of sight. See if you even remember that you own these items in another year, then revisit your decision. These items might be classic clothes that don't fit you anymore or don't fit your current lifestyle or anything that was very expensive or has sentimental value.

If you need a way to test yourself, put every item of clothing on a hanger with the hooks all facing the same way. Each time you wear a garment, turn the hanger so the hook faces the opposite direction. At the end of a month, see how many items you actually wear versus how many simply taking up space. You will be surprised!

The objective is a much leaner, simplified wardrobe; a wardrobe you can build upon with a smart strategy.

3. Be Careful of the Sale Racks

If you have a closet bursting full of clothes, this closet purge has probably made you realize that you only really wear a few of your favorite things over and over and over.

In fact most women only wear 20% of the clothes in their closet. Why? There are several reasons that we don't wear all that is in our closet. For example, sometimes we buy things that don't suit our lifestyle. You buy a silk cocktail dress because its beautiful but you only have need of a cocktail dress once every 5 years, if at all. Other times, we make the mistake of buying a piece here and a piece there and end up with all these pieces and nothing coordinates with anything else in your wardrobe.

Also, we get stuck wearing the same thing because it's too much work to sort through our jammed packed closet. But the main reason most women don't wear everything they've bought is that often times many of these clothes have been bought on sale.

Now it's not your fault you've bought too much stuff on sale. You have been brainwashed. Yes, that's right, all these years you thought you thought you were doing the right thing. You have been frugal. You have been diligent. You have

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been thrifty. You have ONLY Shopped sales. Too bad no one told you that shopping sales could be a dangerous thing. Why? Because you end up buying things that are a great deal, but not necessarily the things that you really love. You end up buying on impulse. Often, we're so caught up with a great price that we ignore the fact that the piece of clothing is:

- Not really the right color for us.
- Doesn't really fit.
- Isn't really our style.
- Isn't something we would normally buy if it was full price

So, ask yourself, "If the item wasn't on sale would I still buy it?" There is a place for sale items in your wardrobe. You just have to be very disciplined when you shop for things on sale.

So, try this: Stay clear of the sale rack. Instead, go straight to the new arrivals and if you find something you love and adore. Then, treat yourself.

Remember, you don't really a closet packed full of clothes. It's better to just buy a few really beautiful, good quality pieces that you adore, instead of buying tons of boring ones.

4. LEARN TO SHOP LIKE A PROFESSIONAL SHOPPER

a) Shop with a Plan

Before going out shopping decide what you want to update, or add to your wardrobe. If you don't plan ahead, you will end up with bits and pieces, and come home from shopping with that empty feeling that you never have anything to wear. Do your homework.

Before you shop, make a list. For example, write down the elements you need to put together a look. Are you missing a pair of chic brown flats that will pull together several outfits? Do you need a summer tote? Add those items to your list and ignore the burgundy strappy suede heels that are calling to you.

b) Explore New Trends without Breaking the Bank

You don't have to be wearing designer or expensive clothes head toe to look great. And you certainly don't want to invest in trendy items that may not work for you at this stage in your life. But don't be afraid to explore a single item at a lower price to test out a trend and expand your own personal style. If you feel you can't pull it off, or don't want to wear that trend after all, you have not lost much.

Style comes in many price points. Choose what matters most to you and spend on one item, not all. Follow these steps, start adding new things into your wardrobe and you will feel updated, chic and most importantly you will really wear what you buy.

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5. Think of your wardrobe in capsules or outfits

If there is one shopping habit that is the hardest to break, it is the habit of impulsively buying pieces of clothing here and there with no clear idea of what you'll wear it with.

Typically it's what happens when you are shopping with a friend who may try to convince you that something looks great. You get lured into the sale area and just can't resist.

Build our wardrobe around color "capsules"; Navy and maroon in colder months, or ivory and khaki and coral in the summer. If you have basics in those colors, then any new purchase should fit into one of those capsules.

The real danger of buying bits and pieces is that they tend to collect into that "never been worn" category in your closet. The goal should be to fill your closet with only wonderful clothes that work together and that you love.

If you see piece to buy, make sure you have something to go with it, so that you can create a complete outfit.

If you really love it, and it doesn't go with anything, keep shopping until you have found the entire outfit (The pants, top, shoes, belt and the accessories it needs to make it work for you.), knowing this will be much more of an investment. So you had better love that item! Resist that urge to buy just to buy. Your closet and your wallet will thank you.

6. Understand what flatters your figure NOW

Our bodies change shape as we age. Be sure you are shopping for your current shape, not what it was in your 30s and not what you hope it will be when you lose 10 pounds.

Make sure you know your body type. If you are still unclear try this exercise. Step behind a white sheet and see your silhouette, what shape would you be?

- Triangle (pear)
- Inverted Triangle
- Rectangle
- Hourglass
- Round

Once you understand and are aware of your body type, your goal is to dress your

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body to accentuate your best assets and downplay your problem areas and create balance.

a) Triangle Shaped (Pear)

Narrow shoulders, defined waistline, and wide hips with a small upper body.

The Challenge:

Since your lower body is heavier than your upper body you want to balance your shape by drawing attention away from your hips, thighs and bottom.

What to wear:

Jackets with strong structured shoulder lines will do the trick. If you want to wear a sweater set be sure to tie the cardigan around your shoulders for extra width. Collared shirts and Boat neck tops are also good.

Dark-colored, straight or wide legged pants are best. Boot cut jeans balance the hips. Stay away from pants with pleats, side pockets, drawstrings that add bulk to hips and never wear a tapered leg, which will make your hips look even wider.

A-line skirts, or skirts that drape softly over the hips in a solid color or small patterned print, look best on a triangular shaped woman.

b) Inverted Triangle

Broad shoulders, narrow hips, undefined waist and larger bust.

The Challenge:

You need to balance your broad shoulders with your small waist and hips.

What to wear:

As most weight is carried in the top half, look for v-neck or scoop-neck tops, which draw attention away from your broad shoulders. Shorter jackets that flare out slightly at the hips will broaden your hips and balance your figure. Avoid double-breasted jackets.

Skirts that add volume to your hips, such as pleated or tulip skirts work best. Avoid pencil skirts, which can make you look top-heavy. Play up your great bottom half by wearing pleated and tiered skirts to add fullness

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The best pants for an inverted triangle are fitted with straight legs. Pocket flaps on the back will make your bottom look bigger.

c) Rectangle Shaped

Typically, your shoulders, waist and hips are all about the same width. You have no defined waist.

The Challenge:

Rectangles can wear most anything but look best with some volume added to your bottom.

What to wear:

Wrap tops and dresses create the illusion of a nipped in waistline. You can wear fun jackets, even double breasted since you are slender. Round collar jackets and crop jackets that skim the waist work well as do belted jackets and cardigans.

You likely have slender legs, so boot cut and straight leg pants are your best choice.

A-line skirts give your bottom half some shape. Trumpet skirts also add curves and you look great in pencil skirts too.

d) Hourglass Shaped

Curvy - you have equal measurement for bust and hips with a smaller waistline and shapely calves.

The Challenge:

This desirable and sexy figure type can be hard to fit. Clothes off the rack may need to be altered to accommodate your more curvaceous measurements. It can be a challenge to conceal your wide hips and thighs.

What to wear:

Find fitted, stretchy, but not tight clothing that shows off your curves.

Choose tops in soft stretchy materials, and jackets that are fitted and stop just above the hip line to emphasize your small waist. Belts look great on a curvy woman.

Typically, you need to buy pants in a size to fit your hips and then take them in at the waist. Solid color flat front pants are best. Choose boot-cut or wide legged trousers with some stretch to conceal wide hips and thighs.

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Pencil skirts that are slightly tapered will show off your curvy body and a great belt will highlight your enviable waistline. A-line skirts will conceal a round bottom and large hips.

e) Round O-Shaped (Apple)

Typically, you have a rounded figure with fuller bust and midsection, an undefined waist, narrow hips and shapely lower legs.

The Challenge:

To conceal your round abdomen.

What to wear:

You will look best in anything with a V-neck. Empire waist tops can provide good bust support and will disguise a bulging stomach. Keep your tops simple and classic lines. Single-breasted jackets also work for you.

Even if you are big on top, if your calves and ankles are shapely and on the thin side, you will look great in A-line skirts that hit just below the knee. This will conceal your round bottom and large hips.

Keep pants simple and clean. Stay away from pants with too much detail at the waist and choose plain flat front pants. Pants that are tapered will make you look top heavy, so go for boot cut and wide leg trouser jeans.

Fitted sheath dresses and wrap dresses work best for a round body.

7. Color is Your Friend

As we age, our skin becomes paler, our hair greyer and the dark shadows on our face more pronounced and we generally need more color to brighten up our faces. Color and the contrast it can create can also help you create an appealing silhouette.

I also find that after 40, too many women fall into a bad habit of wearing way too much black, probably with the thought that it will make them look thinner.

There are numerous reasons why this occurs. Women may not be feeling good about their 40+ bodies and want to disappear into the crowd. Black is everywhere - it's the most abundant color around in the stores when you go to shop, so why wouldn't you buy it? But here is the problem. At 40, 50 and beyond, black is very harsh and drains your fading skin and hair of life. Better to choose a different neutral like navy or chocolate which are softer, better choices.

Color is very personal. We are all drawn to specific colors we like and usually

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those instincts serve us well. The problem arises when we get seduced by trends or don't keep track of the changes in our own complexion.

I'm sure many of you will be familiar with color profiling. Perhaps you even visited a color consultant. Many times they will confirm what you already know instinctively: that certain colors look better on you than others.

In general the 'color rules' are as follows:

- If you have warm (more yellow) skin, you will look better in warmer colors.
- If you have cooler skin (more blue), you will look better in cooler colors.
- If you have high contrast features (lots of difference between your hair and skin), you will look better in colors with higher contrast.
- If you have a softer appearance, you will look better in softer colors with not so much contrast.

The color of our skin and hair changes as we age. Take another look at the colors you have been selecting and see if these are still good ones for you. You may want to have your colors done now to get yourself on the right track.

The best way to get a true Color Analysis reading is to leave it to an expert. We suggest you have a professional color analysis done by a qualified Image expert to determine your best colors for you NOW.

8. CHOOSE CLOTHES IN SYNC WITH YOUR PERSONALITY

You may get compliments by wearing the right styles or colors, but if you add in wearing clothes that truly reflect your personality, you'll really look and feel fantastic.

Can you imagine Betsy Johnson wearing a business suit, or Hillary Clinton in a ruffled floral dress? Both would be out of character for these women. These images just don't work. The clothing we've described is not authentic to who these women are.

When you wear clothing that doesn't match your personality you feel phony and uncomfortable which leads to sending out negative energy. If you wear clothes that express your authentic self, you'll stand straighter, be more confident, feel more relaxed and transmit those positive vibes. The result is a happier you and a woman who is truly comfortable in her own skin.

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There are many different personality types and dozens of ways to name and describe them but I want to share the 7 fashion personality types below. These are just guidelines and most of us are a combination of several of them.

Here are a few types that may help you refine your view.

a) Natural

Is your favorite item of clothing a pair of jeans? Are you most comfortable in sweaters and casual clothes in natural fabrics that allow a lot of movement? If you answer yes to these questions, you are a natural sporty. Naturals are friendly, informal, unpretentious and optimistic. Their clothing reflects this.

b) Classic

Do you have an organized, no nonsense personality? Do you like clothes that are beautifully tailored, tasteful, and appropriate in traditional colors and fabrics? Then, like Laura Bush you are a Classic. Classics have an attitude of authority and reliability. They are seen as trustworthy and loyal. They avoid extremes and their clothing reflects this.

c) Elegant

Do you love a clean, sleek look? Are you the epitome of refinement, formality and wealth? Elegants demand the finest fabrics, perfect cuts, and pay meticulous attention to detail when it comes to their clothing. In all things, only the best will do.

d) Feminine

Do you have a soft, feminine, personality? Do you love soft, flowing fabrics in gentle colors and ruffles? Feminine types are romantic, relaxed, caring and gentle. Their clothing reflects this quiet confidence and graceful style.

e) Creative

A creative dresser can pull together the most unrelated colors, patterns and accessories and somehow make them work. Creatives, like Sarah Jessica Parker, step out of the norm and wear things that are offbeat or vintage because they appreciate artistic flare. Creatives are imaginative, unconventional, extreme and unique like their clothes.

f) Dramatic

Dramatic women love to be the center of attention. They walk into a room and heads turn. They love black, strong colors and exaggerated shapes. Dramatics need energy and excitement- bold lives and bold

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clothes. Fashion forward actress Tilda Swinton, is a perfect example of this strong trendsetter type.

If you need some help in this area I recommend <https://www.stitchfix.com>. It's an online website that provides not only personal stylists, but items shipped direct to you. Don't let the young models fool you; they do an excellent job for older women!

9. UPDATE YOUR HAIR

Start here. Really. It's the one thing you wear every single day. If you are unsure whether your hair looks good or is dragging you down, then consider this: **nothing** will make you look old like an outdated hairstyle. Your hair is your most important fashion accessory and needs to be updated every few years. Make sure you are paying attention to the following:

a) Your Cut is Current

There really is no one style for women of a certain age. Nor does it have to be long or short or medium. There are stylish cuts for all of those lengths.

If you choose to wear your hair long be sure to have some layers to soften your face or else you will look like you've just stepped out of your high school yearbook 30+ years later! Also our faces probably have moved down a bit as our skin ages and muscle structure changes. Not a bad thing, but this needs to be taken in to consideration when you are thinking about a long-ish style.

Short styles are always popular, too and bobs that are long on top and short at the nape, pixies and flirty layered hair. Shorter hair may also free you of the need for much maintenance.

b) The Color Enhances Your Great Haircut

The color of our hair has changed for the majority of us. There is more gray or ash, and there may be less hair than before. Think about whether you want to keep the gray and enjoy the changing look, or do away with it with overall color.

If you do keep the gray, make sure you keep gray hair shiny and healthy. New hair glazes on the market keep your locks looking super healthy and shiny in between touch-ups.

If you decide to color or highlight your hair, have it done by a good stylist. This is one area the money is well spent.

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c) Your Hair is Styled in a Modern Way

My best advice is to find a hair stylist that is doing great work. Find women on the street of your own age and ask them who their stylist is, or consult Yelp for suggestions. This is one area where spending a bit of money will pay off every day.

Make sure you are using up to date styling techniques, which can really help you move into the now! Why not book an appointment with your stylist for a hair blow-drying lesson or to get their instruction on how to use gels, volumizers and other products that will really make that great cut fantastic. You might be surprised with a trick or two that will make a more youthful appearance!

10. GET NEW GLASSES

This is such fun. I may have shared that I carried my new eyeglass prescription around in my purse for 6 months before I finally had it filled. I was unable to face the fact that I finally needed glasses full time. I finally went on a shopping expedition and tried on lots of fun frames and completely changed my attitude.

If you've been putting off updating those tired old glasses you've had for years, now's the time to get something modern and chic and that expresses your personality. How do you know which are the latest styles and what will suit you best?

Glasses are one of your most important fashion accessory and they should really match your personality. This is an area to have fun, and break out of the tried and true frames you may have been wearing for years. Your glasses should be as special as you are - a true reflection of your personality.

It really is hard to find one frame that works with all aspects of your life, so if you can afford it, it's great to own a few pairs that you can change around to match the occasion, your outfits and your mood. Once again, the best solution is to try on LOTS of glasses until you find a pair that is just right for you.

When choosing glasses you also need to think about what suits your face. The rule used to be: match glasses to the shape of your face. For example, if you had a round face, buy round glasses, a rectangular face, buy rectangular glasses. But these days the only thing that really matters is that you match your frames to your bone structure. This means fine frames if you are fine boned, medium size frames if you are medium bones, and heavier, thicker frames if you are big boned. But try them on and YOU decide.

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For a really modern look, try contrasting your glasses with the shape of our face. Here are some more tips for buying glasses:

- Buy Progressive glasses with blended lenses that don't show the line that reveals you wear bifocals
- Try titanium frames and polycarbonate lenses which are extremely light to avoid pain from pressure points
- Skin tone, eye color and hair color are the main determinants in choosing color of glasses. The lighter your skin and hair the lighter your frames, the darker your skin and hair the darker your frames. Gold, beige and warm brown is great if you have warm skin, hair and eyes, while black, gray and silver will suit you more if your skin, hair and eyes are more on the cool side.

It is best to look around and try on lots of frames. But when it comes time to buy don't think it has to be from the optometrist. There are many eyeglass stores that have lots of variety and style.

11. Dress for your Current Lifestyle

One of the mistakes that many of us make is not planning our wardrobes and our looks for our **current** lifestyles. Do you have a closet full of beautiful business suits and silk blouses when you haven't stepped into an office in quite awhile? Is your life more casual these days and you just throw on any old thing. Yoga pants and running shoes may be comfortable but it is not a wardrobe. Plan for the lifestyle you are leading now.

Here's where to start:

Analyze your lifestyle. What percent of your day or week is spent in casual, workout, dressy and "nicer than every day"? Your wardrobe should have clothes in each of those areas, and more where you spend the most time, less where you spend the least.

Here are a few ways to up-level even your most casual style:

Instead of pulling on your denim jeans, find a white or colored pair that you love. Match it with a graphic tee shirt and a great pair of short boots or gladiator sandals and a moto jacket in denim or some other casual fabric. I've got a great one in a coral knit that I wear constantly. This can be your new go-to outfit for running a few errands.

A great jersey dress in a fit-and-flare style is perfect for summer as the flattering shape allows you to keep cool. With those same

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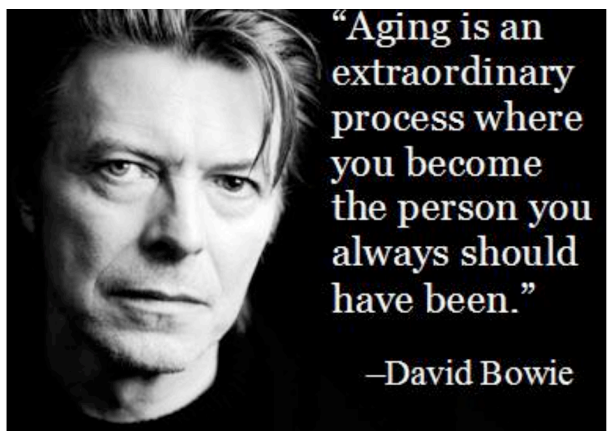
sandals and some chunky earrings, you have an outfit that can be casual for errands or a bit dressier for a lunch out with friends.

If it's not too hot in your area try leggings or capris with a long top and a statement necklace. That necklace can be your own signature piece that you wear again and again.

Even when you are thinking about a casual wardrobe, think outside the box for your basics. A “grab and go” method of dressing is great. Just think through each of the pieces so that each has some special personality and makes you feel special.

12. Mindset – it All Starts in Your Head

How you look and how you feel about yourself is closely connected. Before you run to purge your closet, or buy one new item of clothing **stop** and do an attitude check.



Aging is not the problem. Your attitude about that fact is the problem. You may have 20, 30 or 1 year left of your life. You don't know! Make every minute count. No one tells us how to age; we need to define our own vision. Celebrate every stage of your life. Celebrate NOW. As Mr. Bowie says, this may be the most freeing period of our lives. Enjoy!

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About Elyse Tager



A long-time marketer and passionate entrepreneur, Elyse has helped hundreds of small businesses, associations, and nonprofits develop and implement effective social media and email marketing strategies to grow their business or organization.

Elyse is a popular motivational speaker, and educator known for providing her audiences with the practical tools, techniques and strategies they need to grow their business or improve their lives. She is herself a “woman of a certain age” and is bringing her excitement and energy to help other woman create their own next

chapters filled with vitality and fulfillment.

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