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WORKING GIRL

Give your office attire a much-needed boost with these fashion tips

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Most working women have a closet split in two: business in the front, party in the back. The former consists mainly of no-nonsense blazers, straight-laced slacks and collared shirts. Only a [Las Vegas](#) weather forecast in July could rival its predictability. The latter is comprised of the clothes the owner actually enjoyed shopping for. This is where the graphic print trapeze dresses, cropped jackets, high-waist denim and "It" bags can be found.

If this describes your closet, forget what you've been told about mixing business with pleasure. It's time to take your office look off probation so it can have some long-awaited fun.

"This is the first time in a long time that a wardrobe can be all-encompassing," said [Jenna Doughton](#), local life stylist. "It's just about adding and subtracting to make it work."

In this case, you'll be adding fashion elements to office staples. Take a look at the pieces that will style up your work wear but still comply with dress codes.

CROSSING OVER

As you start desegregating your closet, understand that some pieces still won't be allowed on the work premises. If you wouldn't want your father to see you wearing it, your boss shouldn't either. Once you've eliminated the undeniable "dont's," scour the remainder for their character value. Is the texture, print or color going to infuse one of your work staples with life? Is your personality present?

"You have to take into consideration the message you're sending," said Sonya Borba, senior personal stylist for Global Image Group. "Remember, you are your brand and your clothes are your logo."

A graphic print that isn't too busy will make the cut, as will the neutral wrap dress you brunch in, the patent leather belt he loves you in and the shirt dress you go to family get togethers in.

The iffy items such as your trapeze dress and A-line cropped jacket, will all depend on their properties. A shapeless silhouette like a trapeze can work if it's a neutral color. If it's a print, throw a blazer atop it and ask yourself if you'd take someone seriously wearing the same look. As for the cropped jacket, consider the garment it will go over. Keep it simple because the jacket will do most of the talking.

BASICALLY UNBASIC

First, try to add office basics that aren't basic at all. A tailored two button blazer ideal for partnering with denim will bring far more energy to the table than that four-button jacket with round lapels. Need a skirt to pair with that blazer? Instead of reaching for the knee-grazing straight one, pluck the pencil skirt you usually reserve for off-the-clock drinks. She doesn't just work, she works it.

"A lot of people haven't discovered their personal style at work," Borba said. "They just go by what the office rules have told them to do."

A crisp white shirt works in any office but it doesn't have to be as simple as buttons and a collar. Look for buttons with character, oversized cuffs or interesting tailoring that exempts it from blah territory. Likewise, use recent trends to dictate the kind of pant you wear. Black slacks with a straight leg will do but a pair of high-waist pants with a wide leg will do it much better. The more you incorporate stylish details into your work basics, the more you can cross them over into the other half of your closet.

final touches

"You want to articulate that you're precise and responsible," Doughton said. This rule applies to your accessories, too. Pay special attention to your footwear. According to Doughton, you should keep your hemline in mind when selecting which shoes to wear. A skirt will call for a modest tone while a wide-leg pant creates room for a higher heel and a louder color.

Borba of Global Image Group likes to stick to two collections: Manolo Blahnik and Jimmy Choo. Both put a stylish, yet sleek, foot forward. Count on them for patent leather pumps, oxford heels and -- Borba's personal favorite -- Mary Janes.

For handbags, go with the modern working woman's briefcase: the oversize tote. You can fit files, folders, even a laptop in some cases, in these bags. Patent leather will polish up the look. Stay away from overembellished bags, small sizes, excessive hardware and logos. A clutch, a D-shaped bag or a satchel decorated in LV's just doesn't translate to the office.

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career clothes

Everyone has those days when they just don't know what to wear. For the office, these days usually have an important opportunity attached to them. With the help of Jenna Doughton, life stylist, we compiled head-to-toe looks for these days. **Sonya Borba, senior personal stylist for Global Image Group, selected the colors. Each communicates a different, significant message. Take a look.**

- **Job interview:** Keep it simple. Wear a pinstripe, wide-leg BCBG suit, diamond stud earrings and a solid patent handbag and shoes. Incorporate the color blue in either royal or navy. It sends a message of trustworthiness and credibility.
- **Raise negotiation:** Demonstrate power with an Edwardian ruffled white blouse from Anne Fontaine. Skip the jacket since the topic at hand could very well heat up. Wear a thin belt with pants, not a skirt as you want to ensure comfort. Don a strand of pearls and match them to your tortoise patent pumps. Do not wear pink. It will express openness. Instead, go for accents of red, which symbolizes aggression.
- **Power lunch:** A Diane von Furstenberg wrap dress or Tory Burch shirtdress will tell your lunchmate you're polished but not fussy. Small hoops and a Louis Vuitton Suhali bag finish the statement. Throw white into the picture as it portrays a no-nonsense attitude.
- **Public appearance:** All eyes are on you, so keep them there. Throw a light Burberry trench in a bright hue over wide-leg pinstripe pant. A complementary color Mary Jane and long gold chain brighten your spotlight. The pinstripe lends authority to your look.



basically unbasic

Elie Tahari Jen skirt, \$228, Robert Rodriguez blazer, \$540 and Gucci Mary Jane pumps, \$575, all available at Neiman Marcus; Magaschoni Collection silk blouse with bow, \$278, Badgley Mischka white and blue tote, \$438, John Hardy cobblestone bracelet, \$295 and John Hardy cobblestone earrings, \$195, all available at Saks Fifth Avenue

Photos by Duane Prokop/Review-Journal



basically unbasic

Alice & Olivia wide-leg pinstripe pants, \$275, Marc by Marc Jacobs oxford pumps, \$470 and Yves St. Laurent red patent tote, \$1,295, all available at Neiman Marcus; Elie Tahari white Mohana shirt, \$198, John Hardy silver and black chain necklace, \$1,795 and John Hardy intertwined earrings, \$250, all available at Saks Fifth Avenue



crossing over

Diane von Furstenberg wrap shirtdress, \$345, Dominique Cohen thin gold bracelet, \$900, Dominique Cohen thick gold bracelet, \$1,100; Gurhan flutter-leaf drop earrings, \$1,400, Gurhan flutter-leaf necklace, \$3,100 and Gurhan large flutter-leaf necklace, \$3,000, all available at Neiman Marcus; Jimmy Choo nude open-toe pump, \$680 and LAMB glazed chartreuse Lucca bag, \$700, both available at Saks Fifth Avenue



crossing over

Diane von Furstenberg graphic print dress, \$325, and Diane von Furstenberg black blazer, \$465, both available at Saks Fifth Avenue; Ippolita necklace with gold ring pendants, \$2,400; Ippolita gold disk necklace, \$1,900, and Marc Jacobs patent leather tote, \$1,095, all available at Neiman Marcus



final touches

BCBG woven double-breasted jacket, \$288, BCBG Tabatha wide-leg pants, \$188, John Hardy cable link bracelet, \$325, John Hardy cobblestone bracelet, \$295, and John Hardy intertwined earrings, \$250, all available at Saks Fifth Avenue; Manolo Blahnik Vernice open-toe pumps, \$585, Neiman Marcus.



Diane von Furstenberg Jilda short sleeve wrap dress, Diane von Furstenberg



Stuart Weitzman pumps in royal quasar, \$280, Stuart Weitzman



Prada skinny Vernice belt, \$285, Prada



Burberry trench coat, \$675, Burberry