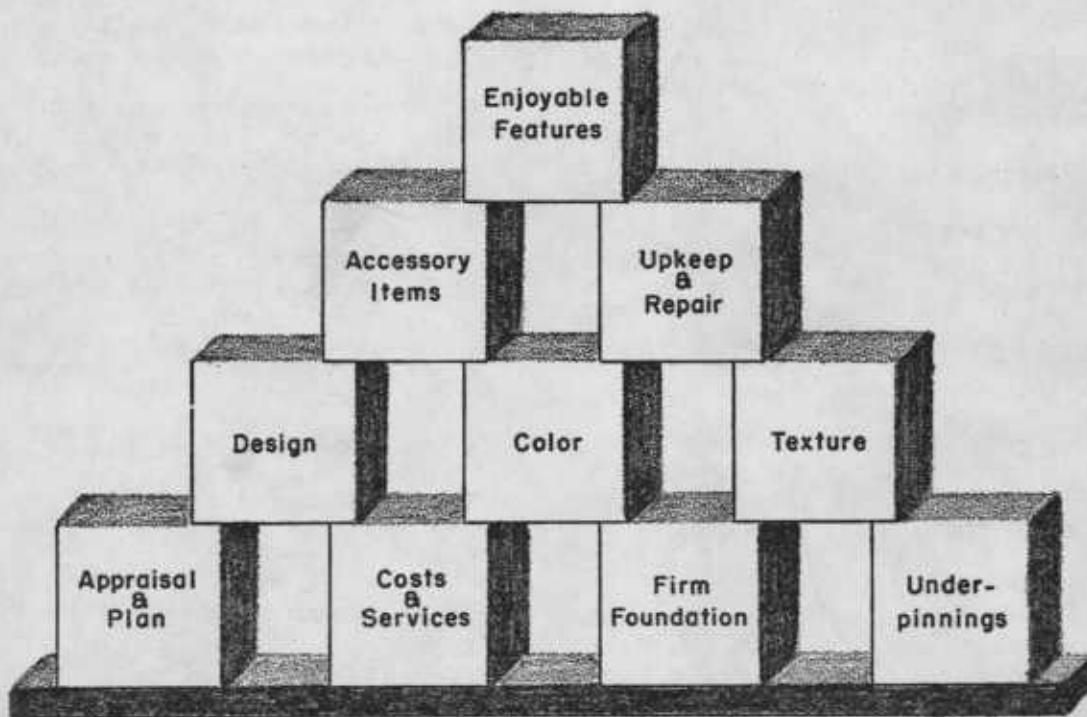


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Wardrobe Building



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

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Wardrobe Building

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One joy of living is that of feeling at ease in your clothes. For about 16 hours every day you are on exhibit for others to see. You are helped to meet each day with confidence when your clothes are attractive and adequate.

A wardrobe that is ready to serve your needs on any occasion must be built. The building may be continuous, but each part of it will be planned in relation to the whole.

You must be realistic about what you can and cannot wear. You must know what to avoid and what to choose to make you look your best.

As an individual you must :

- Discover how to get maximum satisfaction from your clothing choices.
- Take stock of your resources of money, time, energy, skill, and ingenuity.
- Widen your opportunities for using these resources in building your wardrobe.
- Recognize your limitations and evaluate your satisfactions in terms of your own goals and temperament.

You may build a wardrobe around basic garments—coats, costumes, suits, dresses, or even separates—which become ensembles when combined with accessories. Or, you may build it to basic accessory families—accessories that go together in design, color, and texture—by choosing harmonizing and becoming garments to complete the ensemble.

With a closet full of clothes how do you start to build a wardrobe? Use what you can of the old and add what you need of the new. Your wardrobe for any season divides into the clothes in your closet and the new that you buy. In building you make both groups pull together. The building blocks on the cover page are essential guides.

Appraisal and Plan

First of all take careful appraisal of your present wardrobe. Sort all apparel into three groups :

- The garments and accessory items you enjoy and that are in wearable condition.
- Those needing repairs, restyling, refitting, or re-making. Decide what you will do with each item to make it wearable and fashionable.
- Those items you have not used for some time. Determine why. Are they too worn for further service, or disliked? Discard or give away this group.

Next plan your wardrobe needs to fit your way of living. This includes the activities that fill your days and evenings, weeks, months, and years.

- The things you do at home and in your community groups.
- The places you go frequently and infrequently.
- Local customs and climate where you live.
- Special social activities.

Think of yourself as a personality and be individually distinctive. Study your figure and frankly note its size, any irregularities, and your posture. Recognize your age and suitable clothing for your own generation. Plan for the type of clothing that will provide comfort and satisfaction for all you do.

Make a careful clothing plan for one season. Make a chart of the clothes you have and leave blanks for those you need. All planning should be done to achieve complete ensembles in your wardrobe. Many articles will mix and match to serve your needs in a variety of ways. Plan ahead for seasons to come to make your plan build your wardrobe.

Costs and Services

Take account of your clothing budget and plan how much you can spend each season. Being well dressed is not influenced as much by money as by your own good taste and shopping ability. If you have little money to spend, shop for basic clothing with lasting quality and versatile uses. One complete ensemble a season, or a year, may serve your needs for all dress occasions.

If you can sew with average or better skill, make some of your own clothing and save the cost of services. Do-it-yourself is popular in house building and decorating; it can be just as satisfying for some women in wardrobe building. By using time instead of money, often you can afford an extra in your wardrobe by sewing it yourself.

Whether you buy or make your clothing, have the fortitude to resist attractive but unsuitable bargains on all future shopping tours. If the bargain fits into your plan, then and only then is it a bargain. End-of-season buying may provide real savings if the items fit your plan. Your long range plan will help you determine such values.

Firm Foundation

At the start of building a house a firm foundation is laid. Likewise a well-groomed look starts with a good foundation. Your bone structure will not be changed, but flesh can be molded and firmed by the right foundation garments.

Dresses and suits are designed to fit over foundation garments. The style of these garments changes with each season's fashion changes in outer garments. Plan your foundation wardrobe to suit your activities and outer clothing.

When shopping for dresses, suits, or ensembles wear the foundation garments you plan to wear consistently with that garment. Then the fit and appearance of any garment on you can be skillfully and correctly judged at the store.

Underpinnings

These are fashion changeable, too. Slips and petticoats are designed for the slim or bouffant silhouette and for softness or crispness in effect.

They are proportioned in sizes for the short, regular, or tall figure. Shop for the style and proportion to suit your size and to serve your wardrobe needs.

Design

A basic garment does not have to be dull or uninteresting. Nor does basic style mean the same design in all garments, or for everyone.

A design with simple lines, yet interesting for you is the keynote of a satisfactory basic style. It is a design which is not quickly outmoded nor tiresome to wear. It expresses your type of personality and has the right lines for your figure proportions.

A basic design is flexible so it may be adapted to many uses with changes of accessories. It should be functional for whatever activity it is used.

Color

This is one of the most important wardrobe building blocks. Even with unlimited money to spend, a haphazard collection of clothes without color harmony will fill your closets and leave you with nothing to wear—nothing that will present a thoughtful and attractive appearance.

You may want one basic color scheme. Many women who wear brown have no other color in basic accessory items but add coordinated colors for accent in completing family groups.

You may build your wardrobe on two basic colors—one for fall and winter, another for spring and summer.

Your plan for living, your needs, and your budget will help you decide how many color schemes you can build. Your own coloring, personality, figure, and age will guide you in choice of color. It should be one that you like and like to wear. It should contribute to your appearance and be suitable for your activities. Bright gay colors may be added for home and outdoor living if suitable for you. Grayed colors for street, travel, and church wear are appropriate.

Texture

Texture is a very interesting building block in the wardrobe. Fabrics today offer great variety in smoothness, nubbinness, high sheen, dull surfaces, crispness, or softness.

Accessories in leather, velvet, or suede add texture to an ensemble. Jewelry, scarves, or blouses used in a complete ensemble need to harmonize, blend, or contrast in a pleasing texture combination.

Texture can increase or diminish bulk. Study it in relation to your figure. It can enhance or dull your personality. Try it for effect. Texture must be considered in regard to the use of a garment or ensemble for suitability. These are individual choices to make in wardrobe building.

Accessory Items

It's the little things that count! The extras you add to your wardrobe lend variety, accent, color. Accessories are the spice of a complete ensemble. You can make a becoming basic dress look interesting season after season if you change the way you wear it.

Quality shoes and a bag to match may serve you several seasons and should be the best investment you can make. Other accessory items can be had for less money. A good shopper may find costume jewelry, scarves, flowers, belts, and other items at a variety of stores for small amounts.

Accessory families may be built just as your entire wardrobe is built—over a period of time. Harmony of design, color, and texture is the keynote while your own personality and figure govern the choices you make.

Upkeep and Repair

The well-groomed wardrobe is one which has proper care. The secret is to have what you need fresh and ready to wear when you need it.

When you shop, judge the service a garment may give and determine before you buy how it will need to be cleaned.

- Recognize the wearing qualities of different fabrics and their cleanability.

- Judge adequacy of construction of a garment to avoid constant repair.
- Check relation of fit to serviceability and use of garment.
- Judge comfort in relation to style and use.
- Weigh all of these points against initial cost and cost of upkeep.

Upkeep and repair consume time, energy, and money, but they are necessary to any wardrobe. Crisp blouses, clean gloves, freshly cleaned (or laundered) dresses, suits, and other items mark the well-groomed woman.

Enjoyable Features

The wardrobe that is built, not all at once but thoughtfully and consistently, gives enjoyment in the knowledge that you have the right clothes for your activities.

A ready wardrobe for any occasion allows freedom for participating on unexpected occasions. It allows time for hobbies and full enjoyment of your family as well.

Your wardrobe building requires attention and additions each season to keep it fashionable. It becomes a habit and your well-groomed appearance becomes a constant joy.