

TOOLKIT 1.0

SIMPLE TOOLS TO DEFINE YOUR STYLE & STREAMLINE YOUR CLOSET

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GO ON A SHOPPING FAST

Going on a shopping fast is the first step in our journey towards closet contentment and consists of a 30 day period during which we refrain from buying any clothes, beauty products or non-essentials. During this time we will reflect on our shopping habits, identify impulse buying triggers and take stock of our closets as there are. A shopping fast is essentially a breathing period for your personal style and wallet.

The goal for this whole exercise is as much about getting to know ourselves as it is about building a dream wardrobe. I'm also a firm believer that the better we know ourselves the better our choices will be. **So let's dig in!**

FAST OBJECTIVES

1. **Go 30 days without buying any clothes, makeup or non-essentials.**
2. **Save money.**
3. **Take a brief stock of closet pros and cons.** What items do you always reach for? Which ones haven't seen daylight in months? Years? This wardrobe analysis need not be too in depth, we'll get to that later.
4. **Take notes.** Jot down a few thoughts on how you're feeling each day. This might sound a bit tedious but it will give you lots of insight. On a good day you might not even think about shopping. On a bad day you might feel frustrated, anxious and annoyed or you might even cave and that's OK. It's all part of the process but it's not in vain if we can learn from these moments.
5. **Clear our minds and let the things that matter come to the surface.** Often shopping is a distraction or a method of procrastination that blocks us from thinking about or doing things we've been avoiding. It's time to let those thoughts surface.

A FEW TIPS TO HELP YOU STAY ON TRACK

1. Small Steps

Start easy with just three days of no shopping and see how it goes.

2. Repeat.

If you go three days without shopping, awesome! Let's try that again.

3. One resolution at a time.

Focus on one resolution at a time to better ensure your success. Hold off on starting a new gym membership or overhauling your eating habits if you don't want to get overwhelmed.

4. Write your 30 day no shopping goal down.

Put it somewhere you will see it often like your planner or desktop. Heck, plaster it on your bathroom mirror if that helps!

5. Fast with friends.

Moral support is key to making any lifestyle changes and it could be really fun to do your shopping fast with a friend or coworker. Plus you've got me! Feel free to reach out at any time and I'll be happy to hear what you're thinking (@leevosburgh or lee@stylebee.ca).

6. Eliminate temptations.

Unsubscribe from newsletters and unfollow brands and influences that leave you feeling insufficient or wanting. Don't take a leisurely stroll down the street your favourite boutique is on. *You get my drift.*

7. Pick an alternate activity.

You've got some free time for the next 30 days so why not take a course or work on a project you've been meaning to start?

8. Visualize.

Just picture that savings account balance growing or the weekend trip you'll be able to go on each morning and evening before bed.

9. Keep a journal.

Keeping a little journal makes a big difference and will prove a valuable resource when it comes time to make any wardrobe decisions.

10. Reward yourself.

This one is a slippery slope so watch out. Consider rewarding yourself with something other than shopping, like a great dinner with your fella or a spa day with a girl friend. But be weary of the material reward, it might just lead to a relapse. If you're confident you can keep it under control then go for it!

CONSIDER YOUR STYLE STORY

Every time we put together an outfit we're telling the world a bit about who we are. We're suggesting that we belong to a certain demographic or socioeconomic group. We're indicating our values, whether it's as simple as saying 'I care how I look.' or 'I don't care how I look.' Of course this is a very surface level understanding of your story but people are reading it whenever they see you. How they're influenced by it is a whole other discussion. The point we're trying to get to is being able to tell a story that represents who we are.

During your shopping fast try to spend an hour or so (maybe with a glass of wine and a cozy corner) to consider the following influences on your style story to get started. There are no wrong answers and the more honest you are the better your insights will be. You can simply think about them or write them down in your journal.

1. PERSONAL HISTORY

- How have your past experiences influenced the way you dress?
- How important was fashion in your household growing up?
- Did you wear a uniform to school?
- When did your sense of style and taste start to emerge?
- What was your style in high school? College? Now?
- How has it changed and why?

2. VALUES

- Does your philosophy, spirituality or religion influence how you dress? If it does, how so?
- Would you like your values to be more reflected in your style?
- Do you prefer small shops or big brands? How come?
- Does it matter to you where a garment is made?
- Quality, quantity or everything in moderation?

3. CULTURE

- How did your upbringing affect your taste?
- Did you grow up in a city, small town or the country?
- Were aesthetics highly valued in your home?
- Was individuality and self expression encouraged?

4. COMMUNITY

- Do the people and messages around you inspire your style?
- How do your friends and co-workers impact the way you dress?
- How are you influenced by social media and other communities you're part of?
- Do you feel pressure from these sources?
- Do you consider yourself an introvert or an extrovert?
- How do you think this might influence how you dress?

5. FINANCES

- How do your finances impact your style choices?
- Does your shopping budget have a large impact on your style?
- Do you find it limiting?
- Do you have trouble justifying the cost of higher quality goods?
- Is fashion a priority for your disposable income?

6. LIFESTYLE

- How does your day to day life influence your outfit decisions?
- What is the dress code at work?
- What are the main activities you dress for?
- Do your kids influence your outfit choices?
- Are you active and outdoors a lot?
- Do you walk a lot or drive?
- Do you go out often to parties or social events?
- Are you travelling often?

7. LOCATION

- How does where you live impact your wardrobe?
- Are there wide variations in weather where you live?
- Does the climate limit you from wearing the clothes you'd like to?

8. BODY

- How does your body image affect your style?
- What type of clothes make you feel good about your body?
- What clothes make you feel uncomfortable or unhappy about your body?
- Does your body make you feel limited in what you can wear?
- If yes, how so?
- What parts of your body do you like to emphasize?
- What parts of your body do you like to downplay?
- What was the last outfit you felt great in?

SHOPPING TRIGGERS

Now let's take a look at some shopping triggers because identifying why we're inclined to impulse shop and overspend is the best way to avoid repeating our mistakes!

1. BEING HUMAN

So it turns out that just being human is reason enough to be inclined to over spend and impulse shop. Our brains have figured out that shopping is a fabulous way to trigger the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that helps control the brain's reward and pleasure centres. Shopping connects the association between buying something new and feeling good. That emotional reward becomes ingrained and suddenly it's a habit that won't let up. Understanding this chemical response can help us give it less power over our impulses.

2. DISCOUNT DANGLE

We all know this one, yet it's probably the most common reason we end up with an overstuffed closet and nothing to wear. Recently, I saw a sweater and at \$75 it was a little too long and just a little 'meh' but at 30% off I was suddenly telling myself it's a pretty great sweater. Retailers are counting on this internal change of heart to help us make the leap but if you wouldn't buy it at full price do you really want it at all? Of course there are exceptions but for the most part it's best not to succumb to marketing trickery.

WAYS TO AVOID THE DISCOUNT DANGLE:

- Create a Wish List and ask yourself 5 critical questions [See worksheet]
- It's not a deal if you don't need it. Try to keep this in mind when tempted by sales.

3. BROWSING BADLANDS

Maybe you're on your lunch break or you're waiting on feedback from a client or maybe it's a cold night and you're curled up in with a corgi and the Zara app. Wherever you really are, you're browsing and you're coming across some pretty tasty morsels that are ever so easily hopping into your virtual cart. I've been there so many times and just when I think I'm safe, I find myself hitting the checkout button instead of closing the app. GAH!

WAYS TO AVOID THE BROWSING BADLANDS:

- Unsubscribe from newsletters. This is by far my most trusted technique to avoid online shopping trouble. What I don't know about sales and new arrivals can't hurt me.
- Get away from your desk at lunch or try to take a quick walk once an hour to get the blood flowing and put your mind on something else.
- Can't get away? Try hiding your bookmarks bar and fully closing your browser application after each use, don't just minimize the window.
- Get a good book. At night when I'm inclined to give in to the hypnosis that is Pinterest, a good read will often save me from myself.
- Refer back to your well defined wish list to help stop your brain from getting attached to things you don't need.

4. CREDIT CARD BLISS

Loss aversion is a basic economic principle and refers to our general tendency to prefer avoiding losses over acquiring gains. In theory, if I lost \$100 I'd have lost more emotional satisfaction than I would gain if I won \$100. In reality, I see that gorgeous leather bag but I'm not ready to part with the cash it costs to get it. Credit cards however, make us feel like we're not really paying for things. At least not yet. So we're much more inclined to cough up the credit than we are the cash. Not to mention the added incentives to buy with credit and earn points or reward miles etc.

USE THE THEORY OF LOSS AVERSION TO YOUR ADVANTAGE:

- Try setting up your PayPal to draw directly from your bank account. I know I'm not so nonchalant about a new pair of jeans when that hard earned cash is coming right out of my savings.
- When you go shopping only bring your budget with you. If it's \$300 take that out in cash and leave the credit card at home or pick up a pre-paid one. It's hard to over spend with empty pockets.

SHOPPING TRIGGERS

5. HIGH/LOW REWARD

This is a trigger many can relate to I'm sure. You've had a great day at work and you're ready to treat yo self. Or maybe your day wasn't so great actually and you just need a little pick me up. Shopping is an emotional management technique. We shop to 'feel' better, ride the high, unwind or relax and take our minds off a crazy day but the fix is temporary. Plus, there's a good chance at these moments we're not thinking our clearest or most practically.

WAYS TO AVOID HIGH AND LOW IMPULSES:

- Plan alternate activities during the times you're most inclined to shop for a mood boost. Maybe it's an epic at home pamper session complete with wine, a show and a bubble bath. Maybe it's a delicious meal you can make from scratch.
- Do something that's good for you. Maybe it's taking the dog for a long walk or calling a friend you don't see often or maybe it's planning out and preparing awesome breakfasts for a whole week.

6. FOR FUN

Let's not get too much of a hate on for shopping here ok? It's a blast! It's a fun way to spend some time, invigorate your senses and get your creative juices flowing. There's a thrill in imagining new outfits and anticipating the first time you'll get to wear a new piece. But when it starts getting the better of your emotions, time or money, not so much.

WAYS TO HAVE FUN SHOPPING WITHOUT SPENDING:

- Shop your closet. Pull things out and play dress up.
- Try a clothing swap with friends.
- Check out the Into-Mind post on *50 Ways To Break Out of a Style Rut and Feel Inspired Again*.

7. TO FILL A VOID

I saved this one for last because I think it might be my worst trigger and it can disguise itself brilliantly. When we feel a lack of confidence or control in our lives we seek out ways to pacify those feelings. If there is something to do with our appearance that we don't feel good about we might buy new clothes or beauty products to hide or help it but it doesn't go away. If we lack a sense of self worth we might try to compensate by buying the latest bag or shoes. When we feel like we have no control over events in life we might buy things to feel like we have some say in what goes on.

I won't dive too deep into the more psychological issues at play here but if you feel like this is your main trigger I'd definitely take a little breather from shopping and try to identify the real reasons behind wanting to buy more things.

WAYS TO FILL THAT NEED WITHOUT SHOPPING:

- Try a shopping fast for a week or even a month. Keep a journal about how you're feeling and make notes about the times when you are particularly inclined to shop.
- Consider switching up your routine slightly. Get up a 1/2 hour earlier to meditate. Get active.
- Try boosting your confidence with a new skill. Skill-share is an amazing resource for creative outlets.
- Book some time with good friends or family that don't trigger your anxiety and, in turn, shopping habits.

DEFINE YOUR STYLE

1 | ASSESS | DESCRIBING THE GOOD AND THE NOT-SO-GOOD

Start by asking yourself the following:

A | HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU'RE WEARING A LOOK YOU REALLY LOVE?

Circle from the list below and add on the right.

CONFIDENT	UNIQUE	SOPHISTICATED	ORIGINAL	_____	_____
ELEGANT	POLISHED	CHIC	COMPETENT	_____	_____
PUT-TOGETHER	REFINED	CULTURED	RESPECTABLE	_____	_____
CAPABLE	PROFESSIONAL	POISED	AT EASE	_____	_____
EMPOWERED	STYLISH	CLASSIC	SHARP	_____	_____
COMFORTABLE	SAVVY	RELAXED	INTERESTING	_____	_____
STRONG	SULTRY	DISTINCTIVE	PRETTY	_____	_____
ATTRACTIVE	SMART	SPECIAL	STRIKING	_____	_____

B | HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU'VE WORN SOMETHING YOU DON'T LOVE?

Circle from the list below and add on the right.

FRUMPY	AVERAGE	AWKWARD	_____	_____
FUSSY	BORING	UNEASY	_____	_____
EXPOSED	UNSOPHISTICATED	TENSE	_____	_____
BLAH	FLASHY	CONFINED	_____	_____
UNCOMFORTABLE	DOWDY	ANTSY	_____	_____
SELF-CONSCIOUS	DULL	TOO TIGHT	_____	_____
TOO HOT	SHABBY	TOO LOOSE	_____	_____
TOO COLD	UNPOLISHED	PLAIN	_____	_____

DEFINE YOUR STYLE

2 | SORT | ISOLATE THE DOS AND DON'TS OF YOUR STYLE

A | WRITE DOWN ALL THE THINGS YOU **DO LIKE TO WEAR AND DO CONSIDER YOUR STYLE**

Jot down everything that comes to mind until you can't think of anything else. Circle your top 5 - 10.

B | WRITE DOWN ALL THE THINGS YOU **DON'T LIKE TO WEAR AND DON'T CONSIDER YOUR STYLE**

Jot down everything that comes to mind until you can't think of anything else. Circle your top 5 - 10.

3 | GET REAL | IDENTIFY YOUR LIFESTYLE AND WHAT YOU DRESS FOR

WHAT ACTIVITIES DO YOU DO MOST?
(Work, gym, dinners out, weekends trips etc.)

HOW DOES THE WEATHER IMPACT YOUR STYLE AND
WHAT IS YOUR TYPICAL MODE OF TRANSPORT?

DEFINE YOUR STYLE

4 | EXAMINE | RECOGNIZE THE SPECIFICS FROM LOOKS YOU LOVE

LIST YOUR TOP 10-20 MOST WORN ITEMS

LIST YOUR TOP 3 GO-TO OUTFITS/UNIFORMS

5 | DEFINE | PUT YOUR PERSONAL STYLE INTO WORDS

A | WRITE DOWN ALL THE KEY WORDS THAT ACCURATELY APPLY TO YOUR STYLE. *GET THAT THESAURUS OUT!*

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

B | PULL THE 3 (IDEAL) - 5 (MAX) WORDS THAT REALLY RESONATE WITH YOU THE MOST.

MY PERSONAL STYLE IS:

CONGRATS! YOU JUST DEFINED YOUR PERSONAL STYLE.

KEEP THESE WORDS IN MIND WHEN YOU'RE GETTING DRESSED OR GOING SHOPPING TO HELP MAKE SURE YOU'RE STAYING TRUE TO YOU!

COLOUR PALETTE

ESTABLISH YOUR CORE COLOUR PALETTE

Creating a seasonal colour palette is a great way to help you streamline your style, edit your wardrobe and avoid adding pieces that won't be versatile within your existing closet. Consider the following colour categories and fill in the chart below. I tend to create one palette for Spring/Summer and another for Fall/Winter.

FUNDAMENTAL COLOURS

These are the three colours you LOVE to wear and choose for your key pieces, like jackets, shoes, trousers, coats, sweaters, etc.

CORE COLOURS

These are most likely neutral tones that pair well with your fundamental tones. This might be denim, black, white, grey, tan, cream, etc.

ACCENT COLOURS

Accent colours are great for your accessories and one-off items like shoes, statement pieces that you would pair with your fundamentals and add interest.

F	F	F	A
			A
C	C	A	

EASY CLOSET EDIT

1 | PLAN | KEEP YOUR STYLE DEFINITION AND COLOUR PALETTE HANDY THEN SET A CLOSET EDIT GOAL

CLOSET GOAL

What is it that you'd like to achieve with this closet edit? Are you reducing to a certain number of items or just looking to weed out the excess? Write it down.

2 | EXPOSE |

It's time to make a mess! Pull everything out into the open, whether it's on clothes racks, on the floor or on your bed. It's important to be able to clearly see everything you have, ideally all at once. We so often over stuff our closet space to the point that we can't even see our clothes and forget what we have. This way it's so easy to spot duplicates, see overarching colour palettes, and rediscover pieces you'd totally forgotten. If you're tight on space, start with sections of your closet like sweaters and coats or dresses and work your way through the sections.

3 | SORT |

Now it's time to manage the chaos! To avoid turning your room into a total disaster use the labels [next page] to mark which piles are which and consider having bags or boxes at the ready so you can easily move piles around. Start by allocating space for the following categories: **KEEP** [what you love] | **SELL** [almost new or designer items] | **DONATE** [decent but not worth selling items] | **TOSS** [what cannot be repurposed or recycled].

Then it's time to sort every item into 1 of the 4 piles! With each piece ask: *Am I excited to wear this again? Does it fit well? Is it within my colour palette and style definition? Can it be mended or altered?* If the answers are mostly a 'yes', then it's a keeper. If not, well, you've got three options!

4 | ORGANIZE |

Now you're done sorting and ready to start putting things where they belong. The best way to **feel** like you have something to wear is to actually **see** that you have something to wear. Keeping your options visible is my #1 suggestion but of course, we can't all have epic walk-in closets. Here are my tips for organizing your closet for optimal visibility:

Colour coordinate. This makes it really easy to put looks together and keep tabs on what you actually have in each colour.

Keep categories separate. Keep all your t-shirts in one section, sweaters in another, pants in one section, shorts in another and so on. The clearer the picture of what your options are the easier it is to get ready and to avoid buying something you already have.

Stow away off season wares. A great way to give yourself more closet space is to store clothes that you won't wear for a few months like sweaters, boots and coats in the summer and light dresses, shorts and sandals during the winter.

5 | MAINTAIN |

Now you've got a beautifully edited closet, bags of clothes ready to sell or donate and maybe you've even got a better sense of your personal style. Awesome! Here are a few easy ways to maintain your new lean closet.

- Conduct regular closet edits every 3 to 4 months. This is my main tactic and so far it's been great!
 - Stick to a 1 in 1 out policy so you never add something without getting rid of something else.
 - Embrace a seasonal Shopping Fast where you don't shop for 30 days straight.
 - Make A Wish List and shop selectively.
 - Try a 10x10 Challenge and discover new combinations.
-

SELL

KEEP

DONATE

TOSS

CREATE A WISH LIST

ITEM	\$	
1	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
TOTAL		

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU BUY SOMETHING

1 | Does this fit my personal style definition? Do the 3-5 words you chose apply perfectly to this piece? If yes, that's a good sign. If not, then it's probably just an impulse and not something you'll wear a lot. I've found this the most effective, on-the-fly, way to assess whether or not something will work for me.

2 | Can I afford it? Like, really, is it within my budget or am I stretching my finances? This one can be a downer but it's so critical to feel good about a new purchase. Too many times I've gone over budget and felt pangs of buyer's remorse.

3 | Do I have anything else like this? If no, that's a good start. If yes, is it something you wear more than twice a week and could use an alternate of? I'm all for buying multiples of something you wear all the time, whether it's a different colour option or a new fabric for a warmer season, but make sure you're not drawn to

something just because it's like a piece you already have. Each item in your closet should play a relatively unique role.

4 | Can I think of three outfits I'd wear this with? If yes, great! As long as the outfits consist of things you currently own. If no, then it's probably a pass unless it's for a very special occasion.

5 | Can I take care of this? Too many times I've ignored the 'Dry Clean Only' care tags and figured, no big deal, only to find after a couple of wears (or less), it's in the bottom of a bag waiting to be dropped off to the dry cleaner, where it will likely remain for at least a week or two. With the exception of wool or cashmere sweaters I try to stick to things I can launder myself.

If you're 5 for 5 then I'd say go for it! If you're under 5 I'd say hold out for something better.

HAPPY SLOW SHOPPING!

10 x 10 CHALLENGE

1 | CHOOSE 10 ITEMS FROM YOUR CLOSET

CONSIDER:

- THE WEATHER FORECAST
- YOUR LIFESTYLE ACTIVITIES
- A LEAN COLOUR PALETTE FOR VERSATILITY

BASIC FORMULA:

- 4 TOPS
- 2 BOTTOMS
- 1 DRESS
- 2 SHOES
- 1 TOP LAYER

1

6

2

7

3

8

4

9

5

10

2 | OUTFIT NOTES + JOURNAL

JOT DOWN SOME DAILY THOUGHTS ON EACH OUTFIT. WHAT WORKS? WHAT DOESN'T WORK? GIVE YOUR LOOKS A SCORE FROM 1-10 ON HOW MUCH YOU LIKED THEM.

DAY 1	DAY 6
SCORE: /10	SCORE: /10
DAY 2	DAY 7
SCORE: /10	SCORE: /10
DAY 3	DAY 8
SCORE: /10	SCORE: /10
DAY 4	DAY 9
SCORE: /10	SCORE: /10
DAY 5	DAY 10
SCORE: /10	SCORE: /10

3 | WHAT WERE YOUR TOP INSIGHTS OR FAVOURITE OUTFITS?