

White Out

There are a lot of misconceptions concerning the color (or lack of) white. In this column we are going to address many of these questions, and give you practical tips to help you incorporate white style into your wardrobe. Can I wear white after Labor Day? Isn't white hard to take care of? What is the best way for most people to wear white? We'll also look at the key pieces that every style maven should have in her closets!



First off, white is traditionally worn in the spring and summer. However, it may be worn in the winter if it is a heavier weight fabric like wool or acrylic (a sweater, hat or scarf). White accessories may be worn year round. But to me, patent leather feels very summery. I would choose regular white suede, or tanned leather shoes, boots, or handbags in the winter.



White can be worn with virtually any color! So combining a white piece with one of the bright jewel tones that are everywhere this season should be a no brainer for just about anyone! White is a great background and literally is a stable neutral, like tan, beige, black and brown. White is also the cool choice in hot weather and is always seen as a summer staple. Remember to let the color be the focal point with white playing a supporting role here.



Key piece: white jeans. I bought a pair of white jeans a few years back and I wear them every summer. I prefer to wear them with bright-layered polo shirts, or with a black t-shirt and sandals for an "L.A." feel. Guaranteed, you will wear them over and over all summer, so look at Goodwill Stores for slacks, skirts, shorts and any other piece that can function in the same way as my jeans.



The most classic look of all is of course, black and white. This is an unbeatable combination that just never goes wrong. Mix and match patterns and textures to give yourself a sophisticated take on the look that every designer paraded down the runway for the past few seasons. White and black stripes, polka dots and floral prints definitely look fresh with one of the white pieces we mentioned above.



Key piece: great white cotton blouses or shirts. Everyone has got to have a few. They feel cool on a hot and humid day or evening, and look cool with jeans. Nothing looks as nice as a great pair of jeans with a nicely tailored white shirt or blouse!



Wearing white has never been just for brides. Some of the most sophisticated men and women pull off this look with ease, like David and Victoria Beckham, but so can you! This is definitely a statement look, but if you are a bit larger this is not a slimming look. Make sure to wear tailored separates, or dresses, straight legged pants or jeans.



If you are wearing all white you need white shoes, but since they make feet look larger, ladies stick to strappy sandals, or pointy toed styles, and gentlemen, stick to white leather loafers, or white athletic shoes or canvas deck shoes.



If you want your outfit to shine, try metallic accessories. Think gold when going for a warmer sunny look, or silver for a sleek and chic look.

Key piece: White handbag. There is something so fresh about a white handbag in the summertime. Whether a patent purse or canvas tote bag, it makes a great foil for any bright colored breezy dress!



Finally, let's take about caring for your white items. I found a great recipe online for a gentle and effective way to keep your whites looking bright without bleach!

Just follow these simple directions:

1. Mix 1 gallon of warm water in a large bucket (5 gallons would be great).
2. 2 tbsp. of ammonia
3. 4 tbsp. of dishwasher detergent and regular dish soap.
4. Place clothing in the bucket and soak for about 30 minutes.
5. Remove and wash as you would normally for the type of fabric.

You may also make an overnight soak from 1 cup of baking soda added to a bucket of warm water. Wash the following day for a bright and sunny white!

Now that you know the rules for white wearing, you better head to your Goodwill Store and Donation Center nearby to see what you can do to create your own white-hot looks!

