



Wardrobe Basics Checklist

Use this checklist to build a strong foundation of timeless pieces that can be paired with almost anything in your closet.

Always in Season

- ☐ **Black tank**
A white tank has its place—at the gym or on casual outings—but a black one is more universal. Dress it up with dark jeans or a skirt.
 - ☐ **Short-sleeved white T-shirt**
White tees become unwearable quickly, so skip the costly designer versions and buy a bunch of good-looking inexpensive ones. Then replace as needed.
 - ☐ **Short-sleeved black T-shirt**
The best short-sleeve length is about 1/2 to 1 inch longer than a typical cap sleeve—it shows just the right amount of arm.
 - ☐ **Long-sleeved white T-shirt**
For a trim silhouette in white, choose a slim-fit T-shirt that skims your body but doesn't cling.
 - ☐ **Long-sleeved black T-shirt**
A surprisingly sophisticated layering piece, this works well under a dress shirt—or even a dress.
 - ☐ **Black turtleneck**
Consider investing in cashmere: You get more warmth with less bulk.
 - ☐ **White button-down shirt (one cotton, one silky)**
Fitted ones will get the most wear: They're easier to tuck in and look neat when left out.
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**Crisp white blouse**

Softer looking than a button-down, a white blouse is a timeless addition to any wardrobe.

**Crewneck sweater**

Thin knits, in cotton or wool, layer easily for versatility and comfort.

**Cardigan**

A neutral shade goes with everything, and a longer style that hits at the hip flatters most figures.

**A black dress**

The "little black dress" is a cliché for a reason: It's a wardrobe necessity.

**Pencil skirt**

This classic piece should be tailored so it grazes the tops of the knees.

**Jeans**

It's worth paying extra for jeans that fit and flatter. Your best bet? A dark, bootcut pair made from stretch denim with no more than 2 percent Lycra. (The fabric will follow your curves while keeping its shape.)

**Black pants**

To get the most from this wardrobe staple, select a style made of an all-season fabric, like tropical wool or viscose.

**Skinny jeans**

Once considered a trend, they are now a denim staple. Skinny jeans look best when they don't fit too snugly at the waist.

**Khaki pants**

For a casual, comfortable look, forget the pleats (a flat front is more flattering) and forgo the front crease.

**Denim jacket**

A dark wash and a slim fit look the most polished.

**Cropped jacket**

Made famous by Coco Chanel, this item has become a fashion mainstay. You'll have more opportunities for pairing with one in a solid color or traditional tweed.

**Black cashmere wrap**

A fabric that was once seen only in fall and winter has become a year-round regular.

**Ballet flats (in a neutral or a versatile red)**

Equal parts sophisticated and practical, ballet flats, especially those with rubber soles, are easy on the feet but more polished than sneakers.

**Basic black pumps**

The workhorse of shoes, a good black pump can take you from day into evening without losing a step.



Metallic evening shoes

No shoes make you more party-ready than strappy sandals or pumps in a metallic tone. The surprise? Gold and silver are remarkably versatile.

Fall Basics



Cotton waffle robe

Perfect over pajamas or after a shower, this robe is far less bulky than its terry cloth cousin.



The tuxedo shirt

The ultimate day-to-night top, it has a crisp quality that makes it a great multitasker.



Fleece vest

Terrific over a turtleneck or peeking out from under a coat, a vest offers versatility in unpredictable autumn weather.



Athletic sweatshirt

As comfortable as a flannel pajama top—but appropriate for wearing in public.



Lightweight waterproof coat

Ideal for traveling, this practical item looks as right with a skirt as it does with a pair of jeans.



Khaki trench coat

Structured and stylish, it's a true classic.



Leather blazer

A trim leather blazer brings a little sophisticated edge to any piece. Add a scarf and you're ready to go anywhere.



Peacoat

No longer just navy blue, peacoats come in a range of colors and a variety of lengths.



Flat boots (black or brown)

Knee-high styles work well with anything from full skirts and A-line dresses to narrow silhouettes.



Black heeled boots or booties

High-heeled boots are a fall-to-winter essential. Ankle-grazing booties fall somewhere on the daintiness scale between pumps and boots and make a stylish alternative to both.

Winter Basics

**Heavy sweater**

Look for a big, chunky knit that's both comfortable and stylish.

**Cashmere hoodie**

More luxurious than the cotton variety, this layering piece is a sportier version of the cardigan.

**Dark-wash jeans**

A wardrobe standby in the cold winter months that's available in a variety of cuts. Keep in mind that boot-cut and wide-leg styles work well over boots.

**Pantsuit**

Wear the jacket and pants together to show you mean business—or treat them like separates to maximize their use.

**Gray flannel pants**

These stylish standards look great with brown, navy, and black—and also with brights.

**Wool trousers**

Look for a lined pair in fine gabardine wool, made with a twill weave, which won't feel too heavy.

**Down vest**

Works best in a neutral color like brown, black, or navy, so you can wear it with anything.

**Black cashmere wrap coat**

Whether calf or fingertip length, this elegant item will work for day or evening.

**Winter coat**

Fur-trimmed, down, or wool, a winter coat should offer enough room to accommodate a sweater or jacket.

Spring Basics

**Cotton polo**

More tailored than a T-shirt, it offers cool comfort on even the stickiest days.

**Cotton blouse**

An airy and attractive springtime fundamental.

**Printed tops**

A few boldly patterned pieces add life and color to spring basics.

**Lightweight cashmere sweater**

Single-ply cashmere offers comfort in over-air-conditioned offices and movie theaters.



Cotton button-up cardigan

Combines the softness of a sweatshirt with the elegance of a cashmere sweater.



Lightweight waterproof raincoat

Easy to carry as a guard against spring's fickle skies, it blocks wind and rain without weighing you down.



One-button blazer

A cotton or lightweight-wool jacket is a pulled-together layer that can be removed when the temperature rises.



Inverted pleat skirt

As good looking with a tailored button-down shirt as it is with a tank top, it can be paired with a jacket for a more professional look.



Capri pants

These ankle-baring bottoms look great with ballet flats or strappy sandals.



Chinos

Comfortable cotton pants that are durable enough for a day in the park but still look proper in the office.

Summer Basics



Bathing suit

A well-fitting one- or two-piece in a go-anywhere color like black, white, or navy never goes out of style.



Convertible strapless bra

This adjustable undergarment looks smooth and natural under a strapless dress, tank top, or halter.



Cotton pajamas

A pretty patterned pair works as both loungewear and sleepwear.



Built-in bra tank

Offering coverage and support (and an end to visible bra straps), this tank can be worn to workouts or cookouts—and even to the office, under a jacket or sweater.



Ribbed cotton tank

Originally made for men, these shirts are now available in female-friendly shapes. Pick one that fits your figure—it works well alone or under a suit jacket.



Cotton blouse

Choose a lightweight top from a range of colors and a variety of prints.



Cotton printed dress

Stay comfortable even in heavy-duty humidity.



Strapless dress

A white one will show off a great tan, but black, navy, and camel also work beautifully.



Khaki shorts

The summer-wardrobe equivalent of air-conditioning, khaki shorts keep you cool, comfortable, and looking crisp.



Cotton drawstring pants

A good-quality pair will take you straight from yoga class to lunch with a friend.



White jeans

Available in a wide range of styles, white jeans look chic with almost any warm-weather top.



Flat leather sandals

A good pair of flat sandals will pair up with virtually anything from shorts to jeans to flowing skirts to bathing suits—and can even sub in for slippers, for minimal vacation packing.
