

Editorial Ten

Shoes: a necessity, indulgence or love affair?

Ladies, whether you consider shoes to be a necessity, indulgence or a love affair, they are an essential part of any outfit. Their shapes, designs, colours and styles vary widely depending on the season, occasion, practicality and fashion trends. They make casual outfits dressy, dressy outfits casual, provide a few centimetres of extra height and can be a work of art. Who knew that one object could be so versatile and adaptable? Shoes are a great accessory, fashion statement and a way of personalising your outfit. Shoes and the state of your shoes tell a lot about you. They tell stories about you and reflect your personality 'by showing how the individual reacts to fashion.' (McDonald 1994, page 9)

'Like clothes, shoes affect our self esteem.' (McDonald 1994, page 10) They offer comfort and practicality, add glamour and make us feel stylish and sexy. Once you fall in love with a pair of shoes they become your next best friend and it is hard to be seen without them. When you buy a new pair of shoes, you feel like a whole new person. Shoes set the mood for outings and like clothes they should compliment you and the occasion you are wearing them for. Leisure outings and casual environments call for more casual shoes such as sandals, flats, sneakers and open toed shoes. For a work environment, closed in leather shoes are often more appropriate. They give the message that you mean business. Evening wear calls for the more glitzy and glamorous shoes often with open toes, high heels and sparkles showing your more feminine and fun side and lets face it, we feel fabulous when wearing them!

There tend to be two kinds of people when it comes to wearing shoes. Those who choose their shoes to compliment their outfit and those who choose their outfit to compliment their shoes. Regardless of which category you fit into, remember to also consider the season when selecting and wearing shoes. Open toed shoes, sandals and lighter weight fabric shoes are great for summer where as boots are perfect for winter. It is important to get this right as winter shoes are often too heavy for summer outfits and summer shoes too light for winter outfits. The idea is to avoid sending out the message that you could not make up your mind or that you are careless with the way you look.

Good quality shoes that are looked after will last the distance. It is wise to invest in the best quality shoes you can afford in a colour that will match most of your wardrobe and will not date. The money spent on them is worthwhile because they will last many years. You should spend less money on bright coloured, print shoes as they date a lot faster and you don't get a much wear out of them. Try to avoid buying shoes on impulse and take some time to

ensure that the shoes you are about to buy can be worn with clothes that you already have in your wardrobe. It is better to buy one or two pairs of shoes each season and update your shoe collection slowly.

Gentlemen while you probably do not consider your shoes a love affair, they still say a lot about you and should be appropriate for the occasion they are being worn for. It is a good idea to invest in a good quality dark pair of shoes because they normally team well with jeans but are also appropriate for more formal occasions. Just remember to keep your socks a dark colour too! White socks with black shoes stand out a mile. Whether it be leisure, work or play, men's shoes can be just as fashionable as women's shoes and deserved to be looked after.

As Diana Vreeland, Editor-in-Chief Vogue Magazine and a twentieth century visionary on fashion and style (Canadian Interior Design 2007), once said "Unpolished shoes are the end of civilization" so next time you put on a pair of shoes spare a thought for them. To lengthen the life of your shoes 'most experts recommend that you use a water-based repellent to seal the leather.' (Dyce, B 2008) It is also ideal to get them resoled before wearing them as this helps keep their shape and then remember to polish them on a regular basis. Polish keeps them soft, comfortable and waterproof, not to mention it makes your shoes look like new! Unpolished shoes look unkept, unloved and lose their overall look and fit. You can extend the lifespan of your shoe by replacing the outer soles and heels when they wear out and this is often a cheaper option than replacing the entire shoe. Suede shoes should also be water protected before wearing them and scotch guard normally does the job.

It is funny how attached we become to our shoes, often holding onto them long after they have passed their used by date and are no longer wearable. From sneakers to boots, to court shoes, high heels, sandals and stilettos, shoes remain close to our hearts. If you are one of those people who select your outfit to match your shoes then they definitely remain a love affair.

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Reference material:

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