**It's that time of year again; after a long, and rather chilly winter, spring is finally in the air. Away go the thick, bulky winter coats that have been shielding us from the elements, and the dark colours that have adorned our skin for the last 6 months, and from the depths of our wardrobes our spring apparel appears. 'Hurrah', I hear you cry...or maybe not? *Ladies tailor and personal stylist Nooshin Bakhshi* helps LINK readers through the minefield…**

# MARCH INTO SPRING

It would be fair to say the winter-spring transition is a tricky one. Warmer days – one hopes – mean lighter-weight fabrics, brighter colours and an expanding social calendar demanding more from both our day and 'out of hours' wardrobe.

The winter-spring transition is a leap of faith. Experimenting with new colours, styles and seasonal fashions that appear on the cover of every glossy magazine can be confusing, often leaving us questioning what really works for us as individuals and what suits our everyday lifestyle needs.

Combining styling techniques, along with tailoring knowledge, I have formulated a fail-safe plan to guide you seamlessly through this tricky wardrobe evolution.

## Back to basics: apples and pears

First and foremost, get to know your body-shape and what really works for and flatters you as an individual. Seek expert guidance or ask a trusted friend who can offer you sound and honest advice. I've listed five typical body shapes with tailoring advice on stylish cuts and how to dress for your frame.

### PEAR

Slim shoulders with an upper body often smaller than hips. **Choose empire lines that flatter and skim with a cap sleeve to create upper body balance**

### APPLE

Torso and upper body wider than your hips, with little waist definition. **A raised waistline (Empire lines) is most flattering. Jackets to finish at your hip.**

### INVERTED TRIANGLE

Torso and upper body wider than hips, small waist. **Detailed panelling or open darts on the waistband to create shape.**

### RECTANGLE

Torso and upper body the same width as your hips, small waist. **Detailed shoulders, cinched waistbands and added darts to create shape.**

### HOURGLASS

Torso and hips are the same width with waist definition. **Strong shoulders to balance hips and a well positioned waistband to create the ultimate hour glass shape.**

At this stage re-visit your wardrobe and separate the items that work for your shape from those that don't. If you are unhappy about throwing items away, consider having favourites altered to fit you properly - alterations can shave off pounds and totally refresh your look. Then look at the pieces that work for you and start building a capsule wardrobe around them, investing in classic, well-fitting garments and a few key statement pieces that will see you through the warmer months. To save yourself precious time in the morning, keep your work and evening garments separate. It may sound neurotic, but you'll find yourself dressing in record time, maybe even earning a guilt-free press of the snooze button!

## A dash of colour

Choosing the right colour is paramount to looking good. A professional appearance is vital - particularly if you are meeting clients – when first impressions help build trust, respect and a professional relationship. A tailored wardrobe means you always look the part.

Wearing darker colours in the spring can be tricky, so choosing the right quality and weight of fabric to guarantee all-day comfort is important. A favourite fabric for this time of year is crepe wool for its 'bounce-back' qualities; perfect for ladies on the move or those in and out of meetings. If you are required to wear black, consult your tailor on the best lightweight fabric choices (there are hundreds) and you can personalise your attire by choosing coloured button-holes, stitching or shot lining - the latter should always be silk, ideal for keeping you cool in the summer months and warm into the evenings. Consider introducing a patterned fabric into your wardrobe to individualise your look, adopt the 'three colour rule' and work complimenting shirts, scarves or shoes to create your own sense of spring style.

## Out of hours

Entertaining clients, summer drinks, socialising with colleagues - the list of evening functions is endless, and as our social calendar expands into summer evenings so our wardrobes must also 'step up'. Taking your spring look from day to evening can be tricky so here is a round- up of some of my spring-summer favourites this year.

Invest in your image and choose a well-tailored, beautifully fitting suit, which should last you a lifetime. Be selective with fabric choices; plain, medium-weight navy or grey wool are both super conservative but are easily transformed from desk to dinner with a few simple touches.

Kick off your flats and slip into a pair of elegant, well-soled heels designed by Aruna Seth. My favourite are 'Rafaella', a perfect accompaniment to your evening-do, and with built-in comfort technology, these really are shoes to work in and out of the office.

If you are looking to spruce your hair and make-up, there is a beautiful salon in the City called Butterfly, which is your one-stop-shop to looking beautiful. Simply book your appointment and their team of stylists will transform your day look to evening-time glamour - hair, nails and make-up in under 30 minutes - bliss! They also have a pretty collection of accessories on display, which is the perfect way to polish off your chic evening look.

**Nooshin is a ladies tailor and has incorporated her experience as a personal stylist to create a beautiful, elegant, made-to-measure collection of tailored shift dresses and jackets. Her site is www.nooshin.co.uk, nooshin@nooshin.co.uk, 07773009536**.

Nooshin's favourites:
Aruna Seth
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and Butterfly
www.butterfly.com