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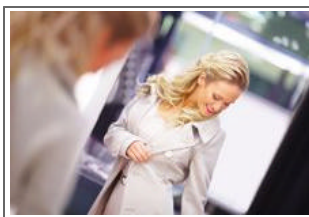
Using a Stylist to Update Your Wardrobe

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Spring is in the air and with it comes a feeling of newness and a fresh start. You've probably noticed it in yourself too: eating better, walking more, staying outside longer; eager to shed the bulky sweaters and drab colours from winter.

Sometimes as moms we're conditioned to take care of our family first. For the kids we buy new spring jackets or a pair of cute rain boots. But we are just as important. What you wear can impact on how you feel and how others interact with you. You know how well a great fitting undergarment can make you feel wonderful; well what you wear on the outside is just as important, if not more.



But what to wear?

Before you start ditching everything in your closet or maxing out your credit card on the first spring fashions to hit store shelves, why not talk to an expert, a stylist. **Erin Nadler** has been working in fashion all her life and started her company, **Better Styled**, as a way to help other woman like herself; 'I grew up in the fashion business so its kind of second nature to me. I've always had my own body issues and image issues. [It was] seeing other woman struggle with the same thing [and] my own frustration with certain parts of the fashion business...that really encouraged me to work with [real] woman who want to look and feel their best.'

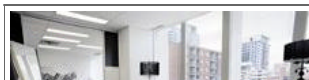
If you are like me, your first thought might be that stylists are for celebrities, TV personalities and executives. But Erin believes the busy woman in all of us can benefit from a stylist's services; 'I find that a lot of woman who have had kids are really the ones who can benefit from [a stylist] the most because they're looking at their wardrobe and it's post kids, so things maybe don't fit the way they use to. They're finding their style has changed and that they have less time [to shop] than before.'

A stylist works with you to determine the clothes that best suit your needs, body type, lifestyle, budget, body image issues as well as existing wardrobe. All this is determined during your initial consultation. At Better Styled, Erin recommends allowing 2-hours for this first meeting. Along with discussing your needs and determining what works best for you, she can also pull together some initial outfits from her extensive on-site warehouse. Then in the privacy of one of their private lounges you can try various pieces and get input on what works and what doesn't before you buy anything.

When I asked Erin if using a stylist was an expensive proposition she replied, 'It doesn't have to be expensive; it depends on what you're looking for. You could start with just a closet purge and hiring somebody to come in and go through your closet with you ... [or if you] want to try this [new] trend but don't know how to do it, they can help you there too.'

When you think about it, there are a number of benefits to using a stylist versus going it alone:

- **No loyalty to one designer or store.** A stylist is looking for clothing that fits you best, your budget, your lifestyle; it doesn't matter who makes the clothes or sells them.
- **Building and maximizing your wardrobe at one time.** Unlike shopping on your own, picking up a shirt here and a pair of pants there, a stylist will have all the elements for you to try together in their studio. You'll know what works and doesn't work together before you buy. A stylist will look for pieces that will work with



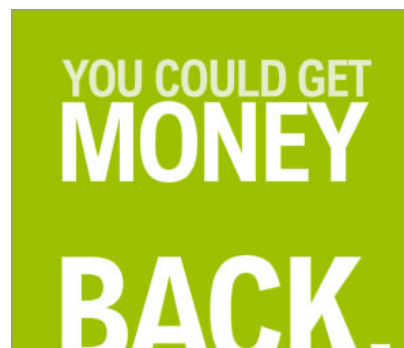
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what you already have in your collection, thereby maximizing the number of outfits you can make with a few select pieces.

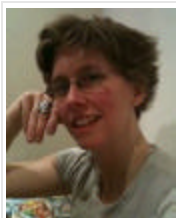
- **An honest relationship.** Unlike an inexperienced sales clerk, a stylist will tell you honestly if they feel something looks good on you or not. Ultimately the stylist wants you to leave looking good and feeling great in what you are wearing. In order for a stylist to find what works for you there has to be an open and honest flow of communication on both sides. Talking about clothes, style and body image are all personal issues to share with someone so you need to feel comfortable with that person and trust their judgment.
- **One stop shop.** Better Styled has a warehouse of fashions in a variety of sizes, styles and prices. This enables you to try on outfits at their studio and find out what works and what doesn't right away. Better Styled also has a tailor so adjustments to outfits can be made right on site. You can get all your wardrobe needs accomplished in one location.
- **Fashion knowledge.** Along with having a background in fashion, through education or other means, a stylist also knows what the fashion trends will be 6-months ahead so they can guide you toward items that will last for more than one season or transition into the next season.
- **Beyond just the clothing.** A stylist is looking at an outfit on a whole, which also encompasses accessories. According to Erin, accessories are one of the easiest ways to change the look of an outfit without a big price tag.
- **Unique style.** Instead of owning the same dress as your neighbour or the woman two cubicles down from you, a stylist will have access to brands not sold at the big chain stores; they'll present you with outfits you might not normally see thereby giving you a more unique look. Better Styled even makes it a mandate to focus on Canadian made and designed outfits. Almost 90% of the fashions they carry fall within this category.

If you're interested in trying the services of a stylist, Erin suggests getting a recommendation; 'The best way is to ask around. Ask other women. Even ask other women that you like the way they dress. Do they have somebody who helps them?' Remember you will be discussing very personal issues with this person, like your body and image issues, so a good rapport is also key.

Erin's Basic Five: No matter what your style is your wardrobe should start with a good foundation. Here are Erin's picks for your basic five:

1. black pants (classic style versus trendy)
2. white blouse
3. dark denim blue jeans
4. trench coat
5. basic black pump

For more information on **Better Styled**, visit their site at www.betterstyled.com.



About the Author

With a background in advertising, **Carrie Anne** left the agency life to spend more time with her three energetic and active kids under 8. She continues to work with marketing agencies testing online marketing programs and manages editorial content on EverythingMom.com as the Managing Editor.

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