

10 new rules of dressing for work

Comfort and style in your 9 to 5 look? Believe. Here's how to master office fashion now.

BY AVA BACCARI

There's never been a better time for getting dressed for the office. Whether you work in a corporate culture or more relaxed creative environment, the standards for **office fashion** have shifted to a more broadly defined view of workwear—one that embraces skirtsuits *and* the top runway trends of the season. So, shrug off your standard work blazer and read on for expert tips on dressing for the office, from Erin Nadler, a Toronto stylist and image consultant for **Better Styled**.

1. Embrace a more relaxed look

The days of boxy three-piece suits as the scope of office fashion are behind us—unless you're going for that menswear-inspired **vintage Annie Hall look**. Either way, “there's room to be fashionable in a law firm,” assures Nadler, who says that the standards for corporate fashion have loosened. “It's more relaxed—it doesn't have to be a full suit everyday.” Think feminine detailing with a tailored pant paired with a boyfriend-style blazer and a silk ruffled blouse.

2. Invest in classic pieces

You can never go wrong with a classic tailored jacket, says Nadler. Add personality through nuanced details: zippers, funky buttons, ruffles at the back. Look for fashion items that you can mix in with pieces you already own, and that can easily transition to your post-work ensemble. Swap in a basic knit sweater for a suit jacket and pair with a pencil skirt, textured legging and a statement necklace.

3. Add in fast fashion on-trend items

If you're going for the classic skirtsuit or want to mix in a few playful pieces to pair with a tailored pant, add in key looks from the **season's hottest runway trends**—think a floral print or sheer blouse and a cami underneath. “It's feminine and a little sexy—a modern take on pieces to wear underneath the suit,” says Nadler.

4. Add personality through colour

Don't be afraid to **embrace colour and bold patterns**—especially as your wardrobe basics. Pair a skirt or denim in a solid plum with a neutral top. Or look for colourful detailing in the shoes: “Add in colour and texture with a suede pump in red or cobalt,” says Nadler. Pair your basic grey, black or beige blazer with a satin blouse in a more dramatic shade.

5. Mix up your fabrics

Play with **different textures** and cuts for a sleek silhouette: “Go for a really tailored jacket and streamline on the bottom with boxy or boyfriend jeans,” says Nadler (this works best in creative offices—or casual Fridays). Of course, when it comes to timeless suiting, Chanel tweed is king.

6. Have a go-to blazer

The perfect blazer is a happy statement of both style and function. “Classic suiting has changed the way we dress,” says Nadler, highlighting that a fitted black blazer can be paired with denim or a sleek skirt for a modern twist.

7. Don a little black dress (because why not?)

Friends, it's happening: “The dress has taken the place of what the skirtsuit used to be,” says Nadler. **The perfect LBD** can be dressed up or down, and worn with a blazer or leather jacket (depending on your mood and office environment). “You can easily throw it on and it looks great.” Just be aware of hemlines—and how high they creep up—when sitting down (though opaque tights are usually the universal solution to this).

8. Shop for multi-purpose pieces

The beauty of a **curating a stylish office wardrobe** is having pieces that are both on trend and functional on hand at all times. “You can look feminine and fashion forward at the office, and still be seen and heard for all the right reasons,” says Nadler.

9. Try a heel

There's something impossibly chic (and totally effortless) about pairing a black dress with black tights and a chunky black heel—and it works for the office, too. Bonus? A thicker heel is more forgiving and comfortable when running from the subway to the office in the morning. And if it works with your look and office environment, “finish off your outfit with a patent pump or colourful flat,” suggests Nadler.

10. Friends, don't forget about comfort

As office attire shifts from rigid, structured suiting to more relaxed standards, there's room in inject personality throughout your style. And embracing a **high-low mix** of basics and pieces from the top runway trends makes for easy outfit pairings during rushed mornings. More good news, whether you're sitting at a desk or rushing between boardroom meetings? “Comfort is key,” says Nadler. It's worth repeating.