



# The Wardrobe Simplifier

THE 5 ESSENTIAL  
PIECES FOR EVERY  
WOMAN'S CLOSET

Reboot *your* Style

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# Wardrobe Simplifier

## The Five Essential Pieces for Every Woman's Closet

It's not always easy to build a wardrobe. Sure, if you're a stylist or a fashionista, it generally comes naturally (in the first scenario) or is a lot of fun – a favorite pastime, even (in the second scenario). Most women I work with, though, don't fit into either category. So I make it my business to drill down to the basics so that you'll find that, even if not innate, it truly can be easy.

If you're not a lover of shopping for clothes, you're in good company. Despite the stereotypical reference to women in general choosing shopping as their favorite entertainment, in surveys, half of women confess to not enjoying shopping at all. But like your favorite hobby, when you feel confident that you can do it well, the process of shopping has the potential to become enjoyable. (Yes, I dared use the “e” word!)

The really important piece of the puzzle is making the process **S-I-M-P-L-E**. Once you've got the foundation principles down, the stress is relieved and you've got the power to create a wardrobe that makes you feel and look AMAZING in your clothes. Oh, and to also love your wardrobe, by the way.

To get you started, this report is here to offer a list of the no-brainers. It's probably useful to get one thing straight up front: This is not one of those fashion magazine or style blogger's gotta-get-it-now sort of lists. It's not about getting the “hot” item of the season.

You won't find a “crisp white shirt” or an LBD (Little Black Dress) on this list. If your complexion doesn't respond positively to black, why would you want to own a black dress? Same with the white shirt, incidentally. And let's be honest, “little” doesn't suit most real women's bodies anyway. You will, in fact, find a dress on this list, but “little” and “black” are optional. You'll see what I mean in just a bit.

So while you'll build your own core wardrobe around your personal color, cut, and composition to guide your choices respectively in hue, shape, and fabric, there are certain basics that are universal.

Let's look at the suggestions that do suit nearly all women:



## Essential #1: Pareo (Shawl)

This one goes by many names. It's sometimes a garment; sometimes an accessory -- always of value.

The pareo (aka: shawl, wrap, large scarf, sarong, etc.) serves multiple purposes and occasions. It comes in varying fabrics, and never needs a size label. Dimensions, maybe, but numbered size tags are not a part of the mix.

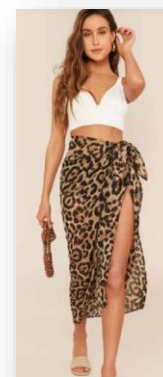
A versatile option is a 26" x 78" oblong shape. Among many uses:

- Wear it around your waist in place of a belt with a slim, simple dress or tank and leggings. (The pareo works less well if the other garments are full and flowy, so "clean" and "lean" are the words. With a pareo as a waist wrap, you won't need any additional drapery-ness.)



- Use it as a color accessory, draped around your neck. A version in a weighty fabric adds interest when worn over a neutral-hued coat.
- Don it over your shoulders as a wrap on cool summer nights.
- Tie it on as a swim cover-up to

move from pool or beach to air-conditioned environments, or simply for modesty in general.



As an alternative, a wider version (e.g. 44" x 66") can be wrapped, tied, or even worn as a dress. Though this size variation is too large to wear as a neck scarf, the dress option may be a beneficial trade-off if it suits your lifestyle.

### Fabric:

These wraps come in winter woolens, summer-weight linens, and pretty much anything in between. Some tips:

- If you plan to wear this as a wrap for warmth during cool or cold-weather months, opt for one made of wool or wool blend fibers in a lofty weave that will keep you warm.
- If you're wearing this as an accessory for color or to complete an outfit, you'll aim for a light to medium-weight, fluid fabric that can be easily draped, tied, and wrapped. Rayon and other synthetic blends tend to lend more fluidity to a fabric.
- If you've got summer on your mind, natural fibers like silk and linen are more breathable than synthetic fibers. To stay cool, choose weaves that are open and gauze-like for daytime casual. An evening shoulder wrap will be finer in texture, so a smooth weave serves this occasion well.

## Essential #2: Day-to-Night Dress

This is your own take on the LBD (Little Black Dress). It could be a sheath, a shift, an A-line, or a fit-and-flare cut. Choose the one that suits your body's shape for a vibe of confident, flattering style.

If your personal coloring is such that burgundy is more flattering than black, that's your color. It could be ivory, green, red, or any other hue, depending on your skin tone, hair, and eyes. (Don't know your best? Contact me for a color analysis to learn your most personally-harmonizing hues.)

The key to this dress transitioning from work to dinner, date, or girls-night-out, is that it's **basic**. It's a blank canvas for you to adorn in whichever way suits the occasion. For work, paired with a blazer and smart shoes translates to "credibility."



For evening, swap the practical shoes for some strappy heels and ditch the jacket. (Here's where Essential #1 comes in.)



Your favorite p.m. jewelry, plus a wrap in an elegant fabric over your shoulders, and you've just transformed that focused business look to one of fun and leisure.

## Essential #2: Basic Cardigan

V-neck or crew-neck, they both serve the purpose. Choose your fave. This is another one of those versatile wardrobe pieces that can do some serious switch hitting. In a color that acts as a neutral within your own wardrobe's color palette, you've got an item that contributes to countless outfit combinations.

Just a few of your options:

- Wear with a silk blouse and pencil skirt to work for a professional and pulled-together look. The cardigan is less formal than a jacket, but as an outfit's third piece, it lends an air of completion to your outfit. The non-verbal suggestion: someone who is thorough in their outfit selection likely crosses all the t's and dots all the i's in their work, as well.
- Toss the cardigan over your favorite shirt with jeans for a casual, yet "connected" outfit. While a third piece at work demonstrates your thorough work habits, a 3-piece casual





outfit shows you've got style – and have the confidence to build a full ensemble. It's the and-then-some factor, beyond simply throwing on a pair of pants and a shirt.

- Layer your cardigan over your best dress shape (see Essential #2). If it's a slim sheath, you might wear the cardi buttoned up and belted. With a fit-and-flare dress, a shorter cardi worn open may be your chosen look.

- Substitute the cardigan for a shirt when you wear your favorite trousers or skirt. You can add a blazer for a

complete, layered look, or wear the cardi as a single layer, belted or unbelted.



## Essential #4 & #5:

These two are grouped together because they're actually garment styles. But not just any styles, these are universally-flattering clothing items. What that means is they are complimentary on just about any body type, making for simple, no-brainer choices in shopping and outfit creation.

### #4: Peplum Top

A peplum top (or dress, for that matter) is one that's designed with a "skirted" effect on the lower portion of the top. That skirted bit is the "peplum."

The details that make this item adaptable to a multitude of body shapes is the positioning of the horizontal seam that attaches the peplum to the upper portion of the top, and/or the length and fullness of the peplum.

Here are the best choices by body type:

**Pentagon.** Your best peplum look will be one with a horizontal seam at your natural waistline. To accentuate the waist affect, you might opt for a fuller peplum and features at the shoulder that visually widen the shoulder.



**Baguette.** To maintain your natural rectangular shape, choose a non-fitted shape with a shallower peplum that is similar to a ruffle. Alternatively, if you wish to create the illusion of



a waistline, select a style that has more fullness at both the hem and the shoulders.

**Trilliant.** Look for tunic style tops that have a drapery and longer lower skirt portion. The “skirt” will flow over your hips, and bring the eye to the narrow of your waistline zone. A handkerchief hem effect adds more flow and a wispy feel.



**Heart.** Keep the seam of your peplum top at your natural waistline and choose the fullness of the peplum based on how much balance you wish to achieve in relation to your shoulders. A slight peplum will mirror your natural shape. A wider/fuller peplum will create the illusion of a Pentagon shape. Let your heart lead the choice. (Yes, quite the hokey pun.)



**Oval.** Look for a version with the horizontal seam landing above the full part of your tummy. The peplum’s fullness will drape over your mid section, while bringing emphasis to the narrower landing point of that horizontal seam.



Not sure your Gem Body™ type? [Contact me](#) to learn yours.

\*Note: Regardless the type of peplum you select, it’s going to provide all the fullness you need, so keep other garments worn below or beneath it lean and streamlined. For example, if it’s a short peplum top, it’ll work well with a lean skirt or jeans. If it’s a longer, tunic style, pair it with leggings or skinny jeans.

## #5: Sarong Skirt (or Dress)

What we’re talking about here is not an *actual* sarong (see #1), but a faux sarong -- a skirt or dress that is made with a sarong effect. It’s constructed to look like a sarong, without *being* a sarong, which means you won’t need to learn how to wrap it.



What makes this style a winner for most body types is the gathered fabric below the waist. It drapes over a tummy, adds shape to an otherwise straight body, and gives space to fuller hip/thigh areas. In general, a figure-friendly cut that lends comfort along with style.



In some cases, a dress with sarong styling may be a true wrap dress; in others, you'll find faux-wrap styling. In either case, it will be without the complication of creating a dress out of a flat piece of fabric as you might with a true sarong.

With these 5 style essentials, you've got key solutions for multiple dressing occasions. It's a simple start to a wardrobe that

## Want more help with your personal style & wardrobe?

Let's chat! I'll help you chart the steps to your own style reboot.

[Sign up for a complimentary style-strategy call.](#)

We'll identify where your style traps are, brainstorm the wardrobe edits to support your lifestyle, and plan an overall strategy to achieve a wardrobe & style you can LOVE!

[click here](#)



Patty is an internationally-recognized image & style coach, and founder of Refined Images.

She helps women who are struggling to create a wardrobe that is flattering to their body *and* their confidence.

Patty is expert at bringing her clients out of the closet with a personal style that suits their body, psyche, and circumstances, and she finds special joy in helping women project their hard-earned power and competence in the workplace.