

A SIMPLE CAPSULE

a guide to building a collection of clothes you feel confident in for all seasons and all occasions while reducing wasted space with unused and unloved clothing.



Wait, why a capsule?

I'M SO GLAD YOU ASKED.

The first time "capsule wardrobe" appeared in print was in the 1940s but it has been revitalized and perhaps made more approachable by the everyday consumer in the last few years. A capsule wardrobe is a collection of staple clothing items that fit well and can be interchangeably worn by mixing and matching pieces. They tell the story of each person's unique, individual style while harmonizing together because of similar colors and looks.

A capsule wardrobe is about practicing contentment. Once it is created, we sit back and let it be. We don't impulse buy when our favorite store is having a sale or we're having a bad day. We don't purchase a pair of jeans because our favorite influencer just swears by them. We remind ourselves over and over, "I have everything I need". We are thankful that the Lord has provided for us. We only purchase a new item when necessary.

We also learn to embrace the mindset of spending more money on fewer clothes instead of less money on more clothes. The clothes we are purchasing are high quality and they're ethically sourced and made, so our money is helping to pay the living wages of other human beings instead of paying a company hiring children and paying women an income they can't even live off of. This mindset shift has a global impact because we are helping fight against human slavery, child laborers, and the exploitation of impoverished people across the world. We aren't giving our money to companies who are gleaning off of our first-world desire for instant gratification in the fast-fashion industry. And we're helping reduce waste. In the last 20 years, the volume of clothing Americans throw away has more than doubled. In 2018, we threw away 17 million tons of textiles in the United States alone. By purposefully purchasing, we're less likely to have buyer's remorse and less likely to purchase clothes that will ruin quickly.

"Don't be into trend. Don't make fashion own you, but you decide what you are, what you want to express by the way you dress and the way you live.

Gianni Versace

This sounds expensive...

BUT BUYING NEW AND BUYING EXPENSIVE AREN'T OUR ONLY OPTIONS.

Buying new clothes from companies who are working hard to ethically produce their clothing is a fantastic way to support incredible businesses while purchasing high-quality items. For a list of stores that I've found that are ethically made and sustainably sourced, check out this page on my website. Most of these companies have frequent sales and aren't incredibly expensive, either. We're shifting our entire mindset, so instead of buying three pairs of sneakers for \$30 each that will only last one or two years, we're buying one high-quality pair of sneakers for \$100 (like Allbirds), and they will last us 2-3 years or longer! (Your feet will thank you, too, because these shoes are usually much better for your feet). We don't need a different color of sneakers for each gym outfit or day - we just need one solid-colored pair that matches our capsule wardrobe.

However, buying from these companies is not our only option. Buying secondhand has never been easier than it is right now! From thrift stores to Facebook Marketplace, apps designed to resell high-end clothes to Instagram pages selling vintage clothing...the options for secondhand buying are almost endless.

This doesn't give us an excuse to overbuy, though! We're still looking for high-quality pieces that go with our capsule and only purchasing what we need.

Have a favorite name-brand you don't want to give up wearing even though you know their clothing-making process is less than ideal? Purchase secondhand so they aren't receiving profits.



CREATING A CAPSULE

A capsule wardrobe begins by knowing exactly what we're looking for. I'm going to give some rough suggestions, but, like all things simplified, shift and change whatever you find necessary to make this list compatible for you. Your capsule will look different depending on what region you live in - how cold it gets in the winter, or hot in the summer. It will depend on what your daily activities include - if you work in an office, stay home, or work somewhere else. It will also depend on what type of clothing you prefer. Would you rather wear dresses? Jeans? Skirts? Fantastic! Keep all of that in mind as you're creating your list for your capsule wardrobe.

I want you to think about the colors that you absolutely love - the ones you love to wear, and the ones that just make you feel good inside when you look at it (try not to choose a neutral. We'll have plenty of room for those in your wardrobe). Choose 3-5 of your favorite colors. Mine are light pink, mustard yellow, burgundy, army green, and burnt orange. Search those colors online just by typing the name of the color in and really just staring at those colors and think about how they make you feel. What about those colors is so appealing to you? As you shop and put together your capsule wardrobe list, keep your eyes out for things in those colors that you love so much. Anytime you see me using one of my five colors, know that it can be used interchangeably with yours. Take a look at the following capsule suggestion first, then we'll create your capsule and go through what you already have on hand. Lastly we'll write your "to purchase" list.

Tops

TEES, TANKS, SWEATERS, AND BLOUSES

Plan to have some solid t-shirts that will go with anything. Black and white are classic options that won't go out of style and choose another neutral color or two and a shirt in one of your capsule colors (the 3-5 additional colors you chose. If you're into graphic tees, then add a couple to your wardrobe as well. Keep in mind that every one of these shirts can be dressed up with a blazer and slacks.



Let's add in a few tanks - they're great for layering and essentials in hot-climate areas.



Now, let's add in a couple of basic button-downs that can turn anything into a little dressier, and three sweaters for cooler months.



Lastly, we need some outerwear some sweatshirts and jackets.



Bottoms

DRESSES, SKIRTS, SHORTS, AND PANTS

While I prefer for my tops to be in the colors I love, I prefer my bottoms to be more neutral, so they can mix and match easily - excluding dresses, because they can be more of a statement piece. The main goal with your bottoms is that they fit well and you feel comfortable and confident in them. Let's begin with dresses. Have 3-5 dresses that can easily be dressed up for an event, like a wedding, or can be dressed down to wear to the park.



Add some shorts and skirts into the mix.



Lastly, let's add some denim and some slacks. I like to have one light wash pair of jeans with holes, one medium- dark wash pair of jeans for dressing up and one pair of black jeans as a pair of slacks and breezy linen trousers.

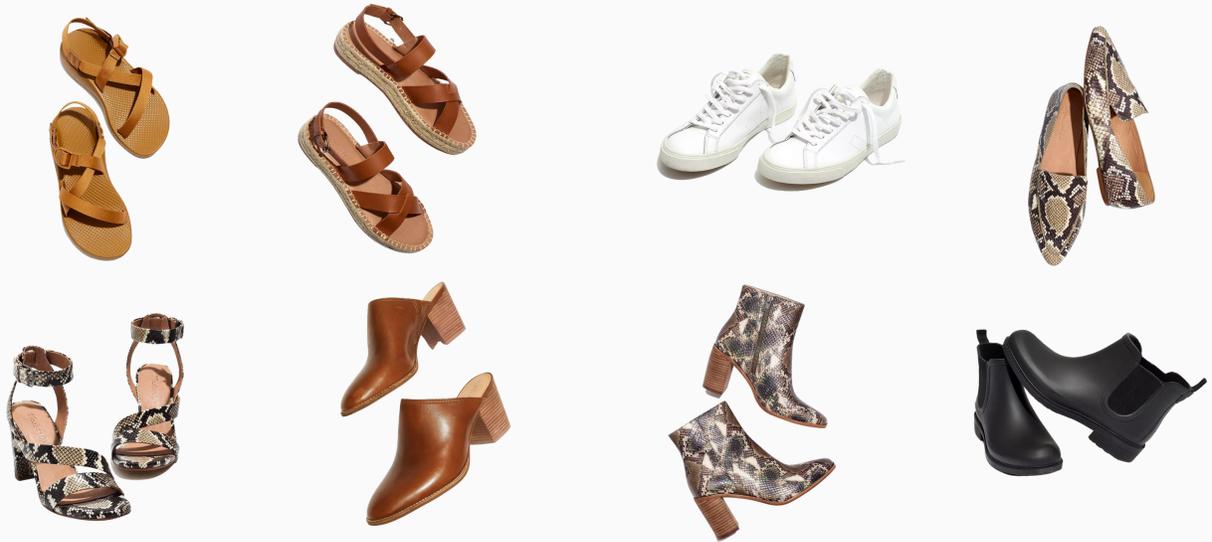


In this list, I have not included lounge wear or workout clothes - but I do have three pairs of leggings and quite a few running shorts because I work out daily. Have an amount that fits your lifestyle without being excessive. The main idea is still, be content with what you have and only purchase what you absolutely need. If we do laundry once a week, we won't need more than five pairs of running shorts unless you run every single day. Also plan to wear clothes more than once unless they are truly dirty. This not only is better for your clothes but it is better for the environment - and your budget!

Shoes

SANDALS, HEELS, FLATS, BOOTS AND SNEAKERS

I tend to have more shoes than anything else because they really can change an entire outfit instantly. However, we don't need more than just a few pairs in each style. Instead of purchasing many pairs of shoes that are low-quality and terrible for your feet, purchase a few more expensive and higher-quality shoes. Your back, your feet, your budget, and your future self who isn't stressed over which shoes to wear or how to store all of your shoes, will thank you. (PS: I consider animal print a neutral and snakeskin is my current favorite. Remember, these are just examples. Do what you love!)



Accessories

HATS, JEWELRY, AND BAGS

With accessories, our goal is the same as it has been - keep it simple. We don't need multiples of all kinds of things. So instead of a box full of handbags, let's just choose one or two - a smaller and a larger - that is a neutral color and that you absolutely love. With jewelry, less is more. Wear pieces that are meaningful to you, whether someone purchased it for you or you purchased it for yourself.



With a capsule like this...

YOUR OPTIONS ARE NEARLY ENDLESS

It would take pages and pages to demonstrate the countless outfit options we could create with the examples above. To give you an idea of how forty six clothing articles can make for a limitless wardrobe, I'll give twenty four examples below.



Creating Your Capsule

NOW THAT WE HAVE AN IDEA OF WHAT WE'RE LOOKING AT, LET'S GET TO WORK!

We're going to begin creating your capsule list. Do not think about the clothes you already have in your closet. This isn't a shopping list, yet, just the list of what you'll have in your capsule. Grab a sheet of paper and began evaluating your everyday lifestyle. Think about the activities you participate in, your job, or how often you go out. With that in mind, write down how many basic t-shirts you'll need. Plan on getting at least two neutral colors, but decide if you'll need more than that. Do the same for graphic tees, tanks, sweaters, blouses, and sweatshirts. Write down how many lightweight jackets you'd like, if you need a rain jacket, and if you need a winter coat.

Repeat the same process with dresses and bottoms, being specific about color and style. Be realistic here. Don't write down what you'd like to do or wear, but realistically what you *will* wear every single day.

Lastly repeat the process with shoes, hats, and bags.

As humans, we tend to overcomplicate things by placing rules where they just aren't necessary. Some might say that a capsule only needs to have 40 items or less, but with simplicity in mind, we won't keep track of numbers. So if you have 60 items on your list or if you have 30, do what works for you and don't worry about anything else.

You should have in front of you a specific list with how many of each item and in what color you'll need for your capsule. Here's an example of what your list might look like:

Basic T-shirts: 1 black, 1 white, 1 favorite color, 1 pattern

Tanks: 1 black, 1 striped, 1 favorite color

Sweaters: 2 favorite colors, 1 black

Jeans: 1 mom jean, 1 black skinny, 1 blue straight

LET'S LOOK AT WHAT YOU HAVE

It is finally, *finally*, time to go through your own wardrobe. Begin with the closet. Piece by piece pull out each item and evaluate a few things: Do you absolutely *love* this article of clothing? If you know you don't, put it in a giveaway pile. If you're not sure, put it in a try-on pile. If you *know* beyond a shadow of a doubt that you love this article, put it in the "keep" pile.

Once you've gone through and sorted everything in your closet in those three piles, do the same for the clothes in your dresser, the clothes you may have packed away for a different season, and your shoes and hats.

You may feel a little overwhelmed right now - that's OK!

Pause and eat a snack, go drink some coffee or run an errand to take a little break.

Then let's reduce the stuff in your space by packing up your giveaway pile and putting it in your car so its ready to go. I have found that my space stays more stressful if I try to resell clothes online. If you want to resell clothes, try taking them to a consignment store or a store that will give you cash or store credit for the clothes they decide to buy off of you. If you decide to donate your clothes, try giving them to a local thrift store that supports local ministries.

You should now have two piles: Your clothes you absolutely love and your clothes you think you may love. Let's look at the clothes you think you love or you're not sure about. Go through and try on every single article of clothing. Yep! Every one! See how it makes you feel. Do you feel confident? Is it comfortable? Are there any holes or any wear and tear? Do you love it because of sentimental attachment or because you really love the way you feel when you wear it?

If you feel confident and if you love how you feel in that article of clothing, and if you've discovered you really do love it, then put it in your keep pile.

If you're realizing that you have a sentimental attachment to that piece of clothing, then we're going to practice a concept from "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up". In the book, Marie Kondo suggests thanking items you plan on tossing for doing what they were made to do or for teaching you something you needed to know. I love the idea, but since clothes are inanimate objects, we're going to actually practice thanking the Creator. If it is a shirt you purchased with someone you love but you just don't love the shirt - take a moment to thank the Lord for that person and the memories you share, for their impact in your life, and thank Him for creating you with a unique body and distinct taste. Know that shirt served a purpose, you created a memory, and you learned that you don't actually care for that style of shirt. You learned something about yourself! You don't need an item to keep a memory. If you find you're still struggling to put it in a giveaway pile, then take a picture first. I say all of this knowing that I have one of my Papa's shirts and several of my sister's shirts in my drawer. We don't need to hold on to everything, but we most certainly can hold on to some things. We're simplifying and there is plenty of space and grace for the journey.



We're now going to divide your "keep" pile into categories.

T-shirts
Graphic Tees
Tanks
Blouses
Sweaters
Sweatshirts
Jackets
Coats
Dresses
Skirts
Shorts
Jeans
Slacks
Athletic Wear

You'll have piles all over your room, but this is an important step to making sure we are actually simplifying. Remember, part of simplifying is reducing waste? It might be tempting to just throw everything out and buy all new clothes for your capsule. Not only is that unrealistic, it's wasteful. And we certainly wouldn't be practicing thankfulness if we just tossed out what we already have.

The following steps you'll repeat for each pile until you've gone through them all.

Compare your "Capsule List" to the items you already have. If you have multiple shirts of the same colors and style, pick your absolute favorite one or two and put the others in your growing give away pile.

If you don't have an item that you have written down on your "Capsule List" then write it down on a new list - your "To Buy List".

Your "To Buy List" may look like this:

To Buy:
1 white shirt
2 graphic tees
1 jean skirt
2 dresses - 1 favorite color, 1 neutral
white sneakers
black baseball cap

Put this list in your phone or tuck it in your purse so you have it with you at all times. Because you have a specific list, you won't aimlessly shop online. When ads pop up, you can breeze past them because you know exactly what you're looking for and those Old Navy jeans are not it. When you go to thrift stores or garage sales, keep an eye out for what you need off of this list. I had a pair of Adidas sneakers with black stripes on my list for months and finally found a pair at a garage sale for \$5! It was worth the wait. You can also take time to research stores that carry styles you love, create their clothing ethically, and have reasonable sales, then you can watch for their sales. Check out my list of ethically sourced and produced clothes for a start! All of the clothing pictured in this guide are from Madewell and are ethically made and sustainably sourced. Their clothes are high quality and have a great resell value but they also have incredible sales. If you have a Madewell store nearby, you can bring in a pair of jeans - any brand - and get \$20 off a pair of Madewell jeans!

You're doing it, friend

AND I AM SO PROUD

Anytime we intentionally change our habits or anything we're used to, it can be hard. You're facing the hard and actively working to simplify your life and to live more intentionally with every decision you make. If we look at everything through a lens with eternity in mind, we don't just see a shirt or jeans, but the people behind each article of clothing. We recognize that all people are image-bearers, including the ones making our clothes. We recognize that God is the Creator of this beautiful earth and one of the things we can do to show Him our deepest gratitude is to be good stewards of this planet He's given us.

As you venture into this journey, be careful not to become legalistic. This isn't about a bunch of rules and dos or don'ts. This is about freedom - freedom from the overwhelm of trying to find the right outfit, digging through your clothes to find a pair of pants you feel confident in, and constantly questioning if you're in style or not. This is about being released from the feeling of needing to keep up with the Joneses. If life were a competition, you'd always be losing because someone will always be better than you and that's just plain exhausting. This isn't a competition. It isn't about who is the most stylish, the most fashionable, has the most name brands, or whose body looks the best. You are being released from holding on to all of those expectations.

This is about you getting to show the unique and individual person God created you to be. This is a celebration of God's precious masterpiece - You! So, while we recognize that all humans are image-bearers, that means you are, as well and God intentionally created you exactly how you are - your body, your favorite colors, your favorite styles, your favorite types of clothes. Confidently be you.

In that confidence, you'll find simplicity. You'll find that you can make decisions easier because all you have to think about is: "Do I genuinely love this? Do I feel confident in this? Do I feel like me in this?" And if the answer is no to any of those, then you won't purchase the item. Simple. Just listen to your gut when trying something on. You've got this!

This journey isn't over when you've finished reading this PDF, or when you've finished putting together your capsule because this journey is the rest of your life. It's the beautiful pursuit of The Simple Life.

Kendra LeeAnne

*"For you formed
my inward
parts; you
knitted me
together in my
mother's womb.
I praise you for
I am fearfully
and
wonderfully
made.
Wonderful are
your works, I
know that full
well."*

Psalm 139: 13-14