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The New "Power Suit"

By Sandra Mahoney

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There's something to be said for the 'power suit'. The name alone speaks volumes. Think confidence, strength, attention getting. Now apply the same principle to workout apparel. What personality does a ratty t-shirt and baggy sweatpants convey? What about track pants and a sporty top? Which says coach potato or power walker? It's a fact, attractive and right-sized clothing make you feel good as you continue to workout.

Gone are the days of the 70's sport shorts and knee-high tube socks and the 80's super tight and flaw-finding spandex leggings (which today most women run from not in). There is a fashionable middle ground between too tight and too baggy. You don't have to be model-perfect to wear attractive, stylish and practical fitness clothes. But, the right workout apparel like stylish tracksuits can motivate and build confidence by making you feel sexy and strong. They can also transform into sensible pieces you can just as easily wear in your 'spare time'. For the latter, mix actual sportswear pieces with stylish casual items. A nice pair of sweat pants or track pants that are not excessively baggy or form fitting either - try a pair of bootcut low rise yoga pants with a fitted t-shirt or trendy vest. Finish off the look with the perfect cross-trainers, running or walking shoes.

When it's cold outside, you want to keep warm between workouts. Make sure your choices include thicker materials, such as fleece and cotton lycra mixes that wick sweat away from your body, and layers that you can peel off as you heat up while exercising. The reason, cotton absorbs moisture easily and holds heat in. It's a natural fabric so it is good for sensitive skins or those allergic to synthetic fabrics. But, remember, cotton won't keep you warm once it gets wet. Lycra gives the fabric stretch, enabling more freedom of movement. It also helps garments maintain their shape after washing.

That said, what workout clothes fit your active lifestyle? After all, now that your body is toning and tightening, you'd like your exercise apparel to show off the results of those tough workouts. Whatever your fitness activity -- from hiking to spinning - reward yourself with practical clothes that you're

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comfortable in and motivates you to get the job done.

What's a girl to wear this season?

Yoga–Mama: Choose loose, comfy, no binding clothing that allows you to bend and twist in a variety of positions. Avoid buttons and zippers which may be uncomfortable when lying down. Bring an additional layer with you since you will often remain motionless and your body will quickly cool down.

Gym–Mama: If you're quick to heat up, start off with a long sleeve t–shirt over a tank top that you can quickly remove while in action. The more skin you expose the faster you cool down, so tank tops and shorts are perfect. Choose fitted clothes instead of loose, flapping clothing that can cause chafing and discomfort or worse get caught in equipment. Choose a comfortable fitness bra with no clasps or straps to provide support and help wick sweat away. The right fitness bra is an essential layer for even small–busted women.

Pavement Pounding–Mama: Dress for the weather. Your first layer should be comfortable and sweat wicking, so you stay nice and dry. Start with the right sports bra and athletic top. A secondary layer for insulation. Long sleeve athletic shirts with a cotton lycra mix for warmer days or a thin microfleece for colder days. Your outerwear should be water proof and wind proof. Look for Goretex windbreakers or similar breathable jackets with an integrated hood, pockets for accessories and vents for cooling off. Mittens (no gloves, mittens are warmer), hat, socks and glasses. Remember you lose 25% of your body heat through your head. SUNSCREEN!

Sandy is mother of 3 and co–founder of

a website devoted to

helping mothers rediscover their favorite hobbies like travel, fitness and girls night out.

Caring For Your Suit

By Gray Rollins

Suits are one of the most expensive clothing purchases people make. With all the money you invest in a good suit, it is important to be sure that you care for it properly. However, exactly what is involved in caring for your suit?

The first thing you should do to keep your suit looking great is to hang it properly. Over the years, cheap hangers will create permanent puckers in the shoulders of the suit coat. Look for a good quality wooden or padded hanger that is designed to hang a suit.

If you have a wool suit, you should also be concerned about preventing moth damage. Ideally, you should hang your suit in a cedar lined closet. However, few people have a closet that is lined with cedar. One alternative is to use mothballs, but they have a strong, distinctive smell that lingers after the

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suit leaves the closet. A more pleasant alternative is to keep your suit in a special storage bag, which is airtight and keeps moths out.

Of course, one of the reasons that moths and carpet bugs eat suits in the first place is because they are put away before they are cleaned. If you have a suit that is used only for one season, such as a lightweight summer suit, you should never put it away without having it cleaned even if it doesn't look dirty. This is because a suit may look clean to you, but actually has sweat stains and skin flakes on it that simply are not visible to the human eye. They act like bug magnets.

Most dirty suits need to be dry cleaned, but sometimes people just don't have time to run to the dry cleaners. Luckily, there are some products that enable people to clean their suits at home.

1. Home dry cleaning kits are a great way to freshen a suit that doesn't need to have any deep cleaning done. However, you will need to be sure that you don't end up shrinking a wool suit when you use these kits.

2. To spot clean a wool suit, you should always be sure to test any spot removers on a spot that isn't noticeable before you use them. Don't ever rub at a stain, since you could damage the fabric. Instead, blot the stain and then rinse it in cold water.

3. If your wool suit has picked up an unpleasant odor, but you need to wear it the next morning, try hanging it in the bathroom, turning on the shower for a few minutes, and then leaving it to air out overnight.

Finally, don't be afraid to press your suit yourself. Just make sure that you use the steam setting and press the suit on the wrong side so that you don't make the wool shiny.

Gray Rollins is a featured writer for MenswearPro. To learn more about menswear, visit us at

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