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Thrift Store Shopping Tips

By Sintilia Miecevole

If you are tired of seeing the same old clothing styles at mall department stores and boutiques, it

may be time to add a little spice to your wardrobe. Rather than looking just like everyone else, thrift stores offer access to unique items not found anywhere else— at least not in the last twenty or so years! Not only are thrift store clothes relatively inexpensive, but they can also be ultra hip. If you approach it the right way, you may be able to create your very own personal style by mixing the old and the new.

When you first decide to embark on a thrift store shopping spree, there are a few things to remember. Firstly, a lot of thrift stores only take cash, so if you are used to grabbing Daddy's credit card and going to town, you'll have to make other arrangements. Some stores do take checks, so you might want to have your checkbook handy. Secondly, a lot of thrift stores do not have dressing rooms, so you'll probably want to wear a light t-shirt so you can try on your finds right where you find them. And most importantly, you are probably not going to find anything that fits you absolutely perfectly. You can't go in looking for "your size." You will have to try on what looks promising and see if you can alter it in any way if needed.

Believe it or not, thrift stores in the hippest parts of town generally have the least hip clothes. This is because there are hundreds of people just like you who are picking through their stock of wearable items every day. If you want to find authentic vintage clothing at inexpensive prices, you'll have to drive to the most uncool parts of town. This could mean the suburbs, and it could mean farmland, depending on where you are located. You will find, however, that it is well worth the drive, and that your treasure is definitely another woman's trash.

Shirts are typically the easiest items to find at thrift stores, because they allow more flexibility in the fitting department. You can find some excellent western shirts in rural areas, and there are always witty t-shirts on the little boy's racks. If you are looking for a good pair of jeans, however, you might want to check the men's section. Thrift stores typically stock a plethora of pleated-front tapered-leg acid-washed jeans in the ladies section, so you will rarely find anything cool on those racks. However, the men's section can be filled with surprisingly girlish slacks in interesting colors and textures. There have also been known to be great pairs of vintage Levi's hanging in the men's racks.

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If vintage dresses are your thing, you will have a field-day going through the strange fashions of yesteryear that you will find in any thrift store. Once you make your way past the obnoxious flowery Sunday dresses and the strange lime green pleated skirts, you may find one or two keepers. Don't give up until you looked at the last one, because chances are there will be a diamond in the rough there just waiting for a little nip and tuck from your sewing machine.

Thrift stores are also an excellent place to find work clothes for a job interview or a new office job. If you'd rather save your money for more fun items, you can always replenish your work wardrobe with some inexpensive black skirts and dress shirts from the local Salvation Army or Goodwill. Work people will never know that your new suit only cost you five bucks. They'll just be happy that you're not wearing your favorite club get-up to the important meeting again.

Sintilia Miecevole, host of

<http://www.formshopping.com>

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One Man's Trash... Could Be Your Treasure – 3 Rules Of `Thrifty' Product Sourcing

By By Chris Malta & Robin Cowie

Thrift Shops and Consignment stores can be an excellent source for your product inventory—they always have fresh items to pick thru and you can find some great deals!

- Consignment Stores, are commission-based. People bring in products for the store to sell on commission—what doesn't sell is returned to the owner.
- Thrift Stores are often `not for profit' and get most of their goods via donations.

In comparing the two, Thrift Stores are typically more willing (and able) to bargain with you simply because they have more room to do so.

Online retailers sometimes feel that these types of resale stores are not a good place to find inventory because there's not enough of a profit margin. But Kate Holmes, Founder of "Too Good to be Threw" (

<http://www.tgtbt.com>

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) and author of *Too Good to be Threw*, *The Complete Operations Manual*,

disagrees. Holmes asserts that these stores "have a very limited market. If there is nobody in their town that happens to want to buy a pair of Jodhpurs that week, those Jodhpurs will be sitting there waiting for an eBay seller...to snap them up." The end result can be amazing deals on quality items there is a demand for online!

In addition to a limited market, Holmes also cites limited space as a factor in resale stores' bargain pricing. She points out that "they only have so much space so they can only carry so many things. So if they can move it on and bring something else in they're pleased with that."

3 Rules of Sourcing Products in Thrift and Consignment Shops:

1. Shop the Edges—Even resale stores tend to carry certain types of products. What doesn't fit a shop's profile, they usually want to move out quickly. They tend to put these products around the store's edges, so start there.
2. Shop Often—They are constantly turning over product and bringing in new items, so don't let a dry trip or two discourage you. Your persistence can pay off in a big way.
3. Cultivate Relationships with the Shopkeepers—If they like you, they'll be much more willing to give you deals. They may also be more willing to set things aside for you if they know what you're looking for and guide you to items you might have otherwise missed.

If you're just starting out, a good place to find resale stores is in the Yellow Pages, under either "consignment" or "thrift." Don't be afraid to ask the shopkeepers if they know of other stores in the area—if they don't have what you're looking for, they'll usually be happy to refer you to someone they think might.

Chris Malta and Robin Cowie of WorldwideBrands.com are the Writers and Hosts of The Entrepreneur Magazine EBiz and Product Sourcing Radio Shows. [Click Here](#)

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