




# GOING BUSINESS CASUAL ON A BUDGET

A CHEAT-SHEET FOR CHEAPLY MAKING A BIG WARDROBE CHANGE

## WHAT'S ALREADY IN MY CLOSET THAT I CAN WEAR?

Write down at least three tops, bottoms, and pairs of shoes you already own (and that fit you well) that will work for a business casual environment. Take pics of each item to use as reference when you shop, and don't forget to bring this printout with you!

 <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	 <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	 <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
--	--	--

**3** MOST DOMINANT WARDROBE COLORS:

ENTIRE BUDGET:



BUDGET FOR SHOES:



BUDGET FOR BOTTOMS:



BUDGET FOR TOPS:



**REMEMBER:** Leave the plastic at home and shop with cash only! You'll find it easier to stick to your budget and not impulse buy.



## SHOPPING DOS

- **DO** shop for a basic pair of loafer-style shoes, ballet flats, or lower-heeled pumps.
- **DO** keep in mind your most dominant wardrobe colors as listed above.
- **DO** try shoes on in-store and walk around in them. Make sure they're comfortable and fit well.
- **DO** shop for a pair of pants that comes in multiple colors. That way, if one fits, you can snag the same pair in different colors, and things will be so much easier.
- **DO** go for a looser fit. Dress pants aren't meant to be skin-tight, and unlike how jeans fit, dress pants should be more drapery and forgiving.
- **DO** focus on fit. Well-fitting basics, even if they're cheaper, are the key. Make sure you can comfortably walk, bend, and sit in whatever you're trying on. If you can't, move on and find something you're comfortable in that fits you right.
- **DO** bring the shoes you plan on wearing with them to try them on. It might help you avoid buying pants that are too short or too long.
- **DO** shop for a straight-leg pant and avoid skinny cuts.
- **DO** shop for classic cuts. Straight-leg pants, A-line skirts, button-down tops, and wrap dresses are great basics.
- **DO** look for shirts and dresses with sleeves, since some offices frown on women wearing sleeveless garments.
- **DO** shop for solid colors and simple patterns (like polka dots or stripes) that you can easily mix and match.
- **DO** remember to take tax into account when shopping.
- **DO** bring a friend if you need help. Explain your budget, your needs, and task them with keeping you on track.

## SHOPPING DON'TS



- **DON'T** buy shoes that aren't comfortable in the store. That's not going to change after you bring them home.
- **DON'T** buy shoes with crazy patterns or funky colors. Keep things as neutral as possible to get the most wear out of what you buy.
- **DON'T** buy shoes that look like they could be sneakers or have any athletic-inspired elements.
- **DON'T** buy trendy pieces. Your basics need to be classic, building-block pieces you can remix easily and wear often.
- **DON'T** buy items that are too seasonally-focused. Items you can wear year-round will give you the best bang for your buck.
- **DON'T** buy fabrics that easily wrinkle, like linen, or attract pet hair. Stick with easy-to-maintain poly blends.
- **DON'T** buy denim. Avoid it at all costs! There's no guarantee your company will be ok with denim, regardless of the cut or color.
- **DON'T** buy anything that hits more than three inches above your knee when standing. It'll get shorter when you sit, and you don't want a wardrobe malfunction.
- **DON'T** buy anything that you think you can wear if you just toss Spanx on underneath. It's too tight... size up.
- **DON'T** buy sleeveless shirts. Some offices frown on them and it's best to have items you can wear without layering at first.
- **DON'T** buy shirts that are too low-cut. If you absolutely must, make sure you have a camisole for underneath.
- **DON'T** buy a shirt that pulls at the buttons in front. It's too tight if it does that, so you need to size up.
- **DON'T** buy crop tops or sleeveless tops. They are generally not appropriate for the office.

## AND OF COURSE, BE THRIFTY AND SHOP SMART!

Start in the sale section, use coupons whenever possible, and if you *really* want to stretch your dollar, don't be afraid to hit the thrift stores!