

Back to basic black and white

by Sharon_Mosley

When it's time to keep things simple, start seeing in black and white again, even when it comes to your closet. Some items like classic black and white never seem to go out of style. Fashion designers don't get tired of new combinations — this spring and summer find many new ways to see your wardrobe in black and white.

Updated this spring, black and white is featured in large brush-stroke floral prints by Three Dots. Most of us have neutrals in our closet that we can dress up or down. You can update the perennial favorite black and white mix by just adding one new piece or tweaking what you already own.

Audrey Hepburn's legendary designer, Hubert de Givenchy, said: "All a woman needs to be chic is a raincoat, two suits, a pair of trousers and a cashmere sweater." Black and white can easily provide you with the basic building blocks for a classic wardrobe. Add gray for a little edge, or you can always pop that black suit with a bright orange blouse.

Here are five ways to give your wardrobe a great foundation:

— The black and white dress. Thanks to Michelle Obama, the little black dress is still alive and well. And this spring, designers make it even more versatile in everything from a sporty graphic-striped shift at Michael Kors to an artistic floral wrap from Diane Von Furstenberg to the two-tone black and white cocktail dress at BCBG Max Azria.

— Wider pants. In white or black, pants are the perfect place to start giving your spring and summer clothes a new look. The fuller silhouettes are always best when topped off by a body-conscious top or jacket. Look for 7 for All Mankind's white stretch trouser jeans, Ralph Lauren's white sailor pants or St. John's black silk chiffon evening pants.

â€” The soft jacket. A black or white jacket may be one of the most pivotal pieces in any wardrobe. There are lots of choices from casual denim jackets like Gwen Stefani's version at L.A.M.B. Nanette Lepore, which updates the boyfriend jacket in her spring collection in white. Or William Rast has a white tuxedo jacket trimmed in black for dressier occasions.

â€” The printed skirt. It refreshes your solid jackets and skirts. The printed black and white skirt adds a fresh touch to wear-to-work black jackets or a chic updated look to a white silk blouse. White House/Black Market offers some of the best options for the printed skirt in tweed pencil skirts or medallion-printed skirts.

â€” The accessories. Of course, this is perhaps the easiest way to inject newness into your basic black and white wardrobe. Even if you suit up for the day in a black pencil skirt and white blouse, add a new black and white check print satchel â€” like the one from Burberry or a patent leather black and white clutch from Michael Kors â€” and you'll be set for day or night. For a more casual approach to spring and summer, choose black and white flip-flops a la Tory Burch. Now that's getting back to basics.

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