

In Fashion: Spring coat check

by Sharon_Mosley

Spring may have sprung, but there are still chilly days and nights ahead. It is cool enough to warrant wearing a coat, but not just any old coat. It's time to dig up the trenches, which is this season's go-to transitional topper.

Mackage trench coats are a celebrity favorite of Eva Mendes, Blake Lively and Jessica Biel are classic staples with "attitude" that will update a transitional spring wardrobe instantly. Photo courtesy of Mackage trench coats. Let's get real. We've all had those days when we want to cover up what we're wearing underneath, and a stylish trench coat will do just that. It can be a great wear-to-work piece, an evening coat or a raincoat. Or, hey, just toss it over jeans and flip-flops for a casual Saturday morning coffee date. You can easily make a style statement with the right coat.

The trench coat, especially at this time of year, is one of the wardrobe staples you can't live without next to the little black dress and the black pump. All three together make for the perfect outfit; you can pair any one of them with almost any outfit. However, the worst part about them is that after awhile, these key items can feel stale or dated.

While a trench coat (created by Burberry in 1914 for British military troops in the "trenches") is a classic coat you'll turn to anytime of the year, this is the perfect season to update your whole "coat" wardrobe. No one coat does everything. A satin evening coat is not your best bet during a rainstorm or an Arctic blast of winter.

Here are some ideas to keep in mind when choosing a coat from fashion expert Paula Reed, author of the new book, "Style Clinic" (Collins Living, 2009, \$27.95):

The most versatile for almost all figures is a narrow, figure-skimming, three-quarter length coat that hits right on or below the knee. It is both modern and flattering. Curvier figures look good in its figure-skimming sleekness. If you are big-bosomed, go for an open collar that is cut on the wide side. It will never appear dated.

â€” A soft, belted style is the next most versatile shape for most figures. It works as easily with jeans and trousers as dresses. Just make sure the fabric is supple enough to drape, not clump.

â€” Belts are great figure enhancers unless you have substantial hips. A belted coat will give almost anyone an hourglass figure. But those who are short-waisted or wide in the middle look better in slim, tailored coats without a belt.

â€” If you are curvy, accentuating the narrowest part of your body â€” your waist â€” will give you instant glamour. Choose belted coats, whether they hit below the knee or mid-thigh. But a three-quarter coat that skims the body will look even better. Short, boxy styles as well as voluminous A-lines, which drop from the shoulders, will make your curves look bulky. Stick to tailored and curve-friendly options.

â€” Puffy parkas only work on slim women. If you don't want to add extra poundage, opt for unpadded versions.

â€” On petite women, belted shapes that sit on or just above the knee will look great. Short coats increase leg length. Proportion is the most important flattering element when it comes to choosing a coat.

â€” There's no easier way to update your basic look than to slip on a coat with a little attitude: op-art patterns, vintage or printed leather.

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