

Beat winter fashion blahs with a flurry of sale-priced goodies

by Sharon Mosley

When the winter blahs blast at our doors, it's time to take some action and cheer up those dreary wardrobes that have piled up around us during the holidays. After you've hung up the satin pants and the sequined tops, sent the tuxedo to the dry cleaners and stowed the diamonds in the vault, it's time to get personal and take a fresh look at yourself.

CUTE CAP - A knit cap with an upbeat print can keep your spirits high. CNS Photo courtesy of Picasa.No, you don't have to sit cross-legged and light a dozen candles for each New Year's resolution you probably won't keep, but you can beat the winter fashion blahs by putting some fun back into your life. Here are some ideas to get you off the sofa:

First, you do have to get your closet back in order. Yes, it's true, that the hectic rush of the holidays have probably put you behind in clutter control, and you've put off the inevitable. But if you'll clear away the party clothes, you'll feel much better, and you'll probably find your ski clothes hiding in there, too.

After you're sure that your closet is in good shape (you can always save the real clean-up time for spring), you're ready to take a break. This is where the real fun can start - it's called "shopping the sales." Now, if you've already had a mall meltdown, and you've sworn you're not stepping foot back into a store before you have to try on that swimsuit for your beach vacation, you can always do a little browsing in cyberspace, where great discounts exist, too.

But in my experience, there's nothing that beats a little retail therapy at this time of year. The pressure is off for now, and you'll just never know what you'll find - and I always seem to find plenty of goodies for next year's holiday season. And getting a head start on next year's gift list will make you feel great.

It's also a great time to enjoy the sights and sounds of new fashion trends - some you probably blew by on the way to find that perfect gift for that perfect someone. Now you can stop and smell the roses, or the lilies or the ginger grass or whatever new fragrance the perfume counter has in store.

And don't miss the makeup counter. Another way to give yourself a fresh boost for the new year - take up those makeup magicians on their offer to do a makeover. You'll be surprised at what you might learn. And if you can't remember how to do that smoky eye bit? Stila cosmetics has solved that problem, too. Just press a small button on the inside of their new compact cover, and a makeup artist will guide you through every step of the way. (Available at Sephora.)

Book a hair appointment after you've thumbed through all the new magazines and torn out a few pages of some new styles you'd like to try. There's nothing like a fresh haircut to get you through the winter. Ditto for the pedicure and manicure. Just because you're wearing boots and gloves most of the time doesn't mean you should skimp on the care of your nails. You see them every day (and perhaps someone else does, too).

Take a spa day if you can afford it. Slough away the old year with a facial. Consider having your eyebrows waxed by a professional. Or simply purchase an aromatic shower gel that will open up your sinuses (Philosophy has some of the best. Visit www.philosophy.com). Make looking good a priority and you'll feel good, too.

Which brings up another part of retail therapy - stocking up on underwear. Why not buy those necessities on sale while you can? And if you see a special pair of woolly slipper socks or a little cashmere robe on sale, too, then why not indulge yourself now instead of waiting for Valentine's Day?

Post-holiday sales are also a great way to enjoy a few of those "quirky" accessories that you might not otherwise buy for yourself. Take some of those gift cards and pick up a new handbag in a cheery cherry red, a pair of wedge shoes in a tapestry velvet or a wacky striped knit hat that will keep your spirits high. And the fashion blahs will soon go away. Guaranteed.

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