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**HOW TO BUY, CARE FOR, AND USE  
THE FAMILY WARDROBE**

BY

**MARGARET GLEASON**

DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF HOUSEHOLD ARTS



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# HOW TO BUY, CARE FOR, AND USE THE FAMILY WARDROBE

Clothing the family is one of the important tasks which is entrusted to the woman who has the management of a home.

Women everywhere are struggling over the problem of clothes.

Women everywhere are in despair over the result of each visit to the stores.

Women everywhere are asking: How is it possible for me to clothe my family on the money that is available for that purpose?

Women, who must solve this problem, realize more than anyone else how much the dollar has decreased in value because each day they are forced to pay higher and higher prices for the necessities as well as the luxuries of life.

Economy and How to Practice Economy under the present market conditions, are problems which have assumed larger proportions in the lives of women now, than ever before. The encouraging feature of the situation is the fact that women are really interested in finding the solution to their problems and are earnestly and intelligently studying the conditions and trying to work out solutions which are practical.

While it is true that each woman must in the end solve her problems individually because the conditions vary in the different homes, there are some general principles which may be applied and these will be most valuable, if stated in definite form.

## PLANNING FOR SYSTEMATIC BUYING

First comes planning: the value of careful planning cannot be overestimated.

Applied to the family wardrobe this means planning for the entire year if possible; factors in such planning are:

1. Estimate the amount of money available for clothing.

A careful study of many budgets gives 15 per cent. of the income as fair proportion to spend for clothing; with 20 per cent. as the maximum allowance.

2. Take stock of the clothes on hand.

Classify garments as

- Ready to wear.
- Needing remodeling.
- Needing repair.
- To be discarded.

3. List articles to be purchased.

Consider the needs of every member of the family. Make complete list of garments to be supplied.

Classify articles needed according to season.

Classify each list again according to use

- Outer garments.
- Undergarments.
- Accessories.
- Material for repair.

Classify purchase under heads

- Ready to wear garments.
- Material needed for garments.

4. Estimate cost of all articles to be purchased.

- Consider price.
- Consider quality.

5. Compare cost estimate of contemplated purchases with estimated amount of money available for clothing. Adjustments may be made by reducing the cost of the various articles.

6. Plan for the proper distribution of expenditure throughout the year or perhaps distribute expenses through several years.

### **STANDARD OF LIVING AS DETERMINING FACTOR IN BUYING**

The second important principle for guidance in buying the family wardrobe is this—let your purchases be determined by your own standard, a standard which has been consciously adopted because it represents the ideals of the family.

Ideals which stand for definite things and can be embodied in daily living. Ideals that are not only usable but lead **onward and ever onward**. Ideals which express themselves in clothes as well as in actions, words, and thoughts. Ideals which must result in character and will lead to individual expression

of character in what is ordinarily termed good dressing.

### **SUITABILITY VERSUS FASHION**

The predominant factor in good dressing is suitability. Here, again, general rules may be applied: there will be no difficulty in understanding that good clothing is that which:

1. Affords proper protection.
2. Allows freedom of movement.
3. Satisfies the desire for beauty.
4. Inculcates self-respect.
5. Commands the respect of others.

To do all these things, clothing must conform, in a measure, to the prevailing fashion. But clothes extreme in style brand the wearer as ultra fashionable, while conservative styles, indicated by use of good materials, simple designs without elaborate trimmings and worn on proper occasions, show that the family has established its standard to correspond with the needs and desires of its members rather than accepting slavishly the dictates of fashion.

### **INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS OF PROBLEM NECESSARY**

Suitability as a factor in good dressing is rather complex and must be considered individually and from many angles. First, it is necessary to apply the test of measuring up to the family standards. Will the wardrobe present these ideals properly and can it be supplied with the money available for that purpose?

The second test should be to measure up to the individual standard. In affairs pertaining to the home the individual preferences must be subordinated to the family ideals but in affairs of dress the individual characteristics should predominate. Of these characteristics we must consider both appearance and character. The type of person for whom the purchases are made is very important, and factors to be reckoned with are age, coloring, figure and style. Character is important as a determining factor in suitability and even with children this may well be considered. A dainty, beautiful girl should appear dainty and attractive. A strong, healthy child with active nature should be so dressed that he may express himself without any seeming incongruity.

A third measure of suitability which must not be forgot-

ten is the occasion. Working clothes which are perfectly all right in their place will cause embarrassment if worn where others appear in holiday attire. Party dresses on the street or at church are just as incongruous and therefore make the wearer conspicuous. Conventional usage is the best guide as a rule and it is less embarrassing to appear in simple clothes when elaborate dressing prevails than to be overdressed.

The third principle:

### **TEXTILE KNOWLEDGE**

Intelligent buying requires a knowledge of textiles. It is necessary for every woman to know something of the *principal* textile fibers, their characteristics and adaptability to different types of fabrics and various uses. A study of the comparative value of fibers commonly used will be a great help in estimating the value and practicability of different materials. Wise selection of materials is possible only if one has developed her judgment and acquired first hand knowledge which is possible only through an intensive study of textile fabrics and the process of their manufacture (which includes the methods of adulteration and devices used to improve the appearance of materials). This may seem like too much to require but such knowledge gives measurable results.

### **HYGIENE OF CLOTHING**

Knowledge of textiles can be applied to the various phases of the clothing problem. Its chief value is shown when one considers the subject of hygiene of clothing for that is undoubtedly the most important phase of this important problem. It should be made the basis of the selection of the wardrobe—alas! that it is not—except in a few isolated cases.

### **WHAT TO BUY**

Since it is impossible to buy the same clothing for all members of the family, it will perhaps be best to divide the family wardrobe into sections and consider the factors involved in providing clothing for the infant, children of school age, the high school boys and girls, and the grown-ups of the family.

### **CLOTHING FOR INFANTS**

General rules which apply may be stated as follows:

1. Clothing for babies should be simple and easily laundered.
2. The types of garments should be carefully selected, to allow for the greatest possible freedom of movement.
3. All babies should be protected by use of the flannel layer next the skin.
4. Several layers of clothing are better than the same weight of clothing supplied by one layer only.
5. Sufficient clothing for all ordinary needs should be supplied—a too generous supply is a burden as well as an extravagance.
6. White clothes are best for babies since they are most sanitary, and cleanliness is the chief consideration in the health of the child; white clothes are not only much easier to wash, but are the only kind which may be boiled and therefore kept absolutely clean.

### **CLOTHING FOR CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE**

The general rules which apply to clothing for infants may well be applied to clothing needed by young children of school age. It should be selected on the basis of its value from the health standpoint—it should be simple, allow freedom of the body, and be sufficient in quantity for ordinary needs. A few more general principles which will prove valuable are given for your consideration. Clothing for school children should in addition to the above be a type which can be kept clean without undue effort, and durable to a reasonable degree. It must also be adapted to the season. Such clothing can be attractive, that is, becoming, inconspicuous, clean, and neat. Extravagance in materials and elaborate trimmings and emphasis on fashion are to be guarded against since they tend to develop unlovely and undesirable characteristics.

### **CLOTHING FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

The period of adolescence tends to make more difficult all problems relating to our boys and girls and not the least of these problems is that of clothing. The importance of clothes results from the far-reaching influence which clothing exerts in many directions.

First is the matter of health: one of the purposes of cloth-



ing is to maintain the body temperature and protect the organs of the body. This is best accomplished if there is a uniform covering supplied and then, too, this covering should consist of a number of layers of material allowing an air space between the layers.

### **RELATION OF CLOTHING TO FOOD**

Few people seem to realize that there is a direct relation between the clothing worn and the food eaten. The body organs function best at a temperature of 98 degrees and if this temperature is not maintained by the clothing the body will appropriate a certain amount of food for that purpose.

When, therefore, the clothing fails to accomplish this purpose, extra work is demanded of the food and a more liberal supply must be provided to secure sufficient material for growth and repair of the tissues and supply the energy required for the activities of the individual.

Second, in the matter of habits: Adolescence is characterized by an impatience of restraint and also by the growing desire of youth to assert its individuality. These characteristics are manifested in the attitude taken toward clothes, the tendency to forsake the old habits and explore new paths, and must be given consideration.

There is also a desire to appear grown up which causes young people to imitate, in dress as well as actions, the grown-ups of their acquaintance. The conclusion is obvious, those who are in position to exert predominant influence must establish high standards and emphasize the importance of living up to these ideals.

When women are taught the dangers sure to follow from failure to observe the laws of health, girls will have no temptation to wear high-heeled shoes and thin stockings which are, to say the least, not suitable for everyday wear. When women realize fully their responsibility for the way the family income is spent, girls will be taught a nice discrimination of values which will place them beyond the influence of the fashion leaders. Extravagant materials and extreme styles which are inappropriate will be universally regarded as unsuitable and not to be tolerated. Silk hose and silk underwear now in vogue will be discarded because they are inappro-

priate, unsanitary, and not adopted by women who desire to have truly dainty apparel.

Certain demands may, however, be met to advantage.

Some privileges of grown-ups may without harm be extended to those on the threshold of manhood and womanhood. The cry of nature for expression of individuality should be heard and some freedom of selection of clothes as well as of associates should be granted. But freedom must not be interpreted as license and a guiding hand should determine the choice. This is not always easy, but if directed by the thoughtful love of those who have the best interests of boys and girls at heart, it will usually succeed. More wisdom on the part of those who control our young people is needed and will, we trust, be available soon, for the need is even now recognized and that is the first long step toward attainment.

### **CLOTHING FOR ADULTS**

The problem of clothing for adults lends itself to reasonable solution, as a rule. In general, an analysis of the situation will determine the kind of clothes needed and the amounts necessary.

Women in the home must have some clothes suitable for the work they do. Such clothing should be of washable material and simply made and of a type which is conducive to health and comfort. Comfortable, low-heeled shoes, and good fitting, whole cotton hosiery are necessities. Yet how often one finds women wearing around the house, old party shoes bought for looks and style rather than health and comfort and, with these abominations, old worn-out stockings which irritate the feet and temper and destroy the comfort and efficiency of the women who wear them. Clothing for women must include a varying number of garments of different grades, even different types, depending on the standards of living which have been established.

For street and church wear a coat suit is the most economical purchase. An afternoon gown made of certain kinds of wool materials, of various silks or even georgette, if carefully planned, will do good service as well as prove attractive. For home wear dresses of voil and crepe are suitable and not extravagant if properly cared for and properly worn.

For summer wear simple dresses may be provided but it is best to have a few and wear them constantly until they are gone. The beauty of tub dresses lies in the fact that one can have them fresh and always look immaculate.

### **OUTER WRAPS**

Coats and hats present difficult problems and problems which are largely individual. The coat problem may often be solved by the purchase of a sweater or dolman cape well selected. Again a coat of conservative style which can be worn several years may be bought just at the end of the season at a very reasonable price. Novelties in coats are to be avoided. Coats of conservative style will always give satisfaction and justify the expenditure necessary to secure them.

### **HATS AND SHOES**

Hats are always expensive and frequently last but one season, doubtless because the factor which determines choice is style and style alone. Two factors which are of importance to the woman who must decrease rather than increase her millinery bill are, first, careful selection to secure hats which are suited to her particular type, harmonize with her entire wardrobe, if possible, and will grace any occasion for which they must be worn.

The second factor in millinery economy is proper care of the hats. Hats are perishable articles of apparel. They should be handled with care when placing on the head, also when removing from the head.

Hats, like other garments, should be aired and brushed, and all hats, even those most commonly worn, will be improved and last a much longer time if they are kept in boxes provided for that purpose.

The woman who has sufficient ingenuity to retrim or remodel her hats has a third factor which will prove very valuable. This factor, however, is one which only the exceptional woman has at her command.

Shoes at the present time constitute one of the largest items of expense. The purchase and use of two pairs of shoes has long been advocated to lengthen the period of wear: two pairs worn alternately lasting much longer than if one were worn out before the others are worn at all. The high cost of

shoes is due largely to the fact that there are so many styles made up in all colors, and smart shoes are considered essential with the short skirts now in style. All women feel that they must have white shoes, black shoes, brown shoes, and possibly grey shoes, also, high shoes and low shoes of various types, and all women invest in a much greater number of pairs of shoes than ever before in history. Few persons consider whether the shoes they desire will improve the appearance of the feet. The only consideration being the fact that they are the latest style. In spite of the well known fact that black shoes have a tendency to make the feet look small, many women will discard their black shoes for white ones not only willingly but joyfully. All shoes deserve better care than they receive, and it is to be hoped that the effort to solve the clothing problems will lead to a widespread movement to conserve the supply on hand.

#### **WHEN TO BUY**

What to buy is only part of the problem of clothes.

When to buy is scarcely less important and here, too, there are general principles which may be followed to advantage. If the first principle stated is followed and the yearly purchases have been carefully planned it is possible to secure the advantage of systematic buying, and this should be so arranged that it is possible to pay cash for each purchase; no one should consider buying any articles of clothing if he must ask for credit, beyond one month in advance. A truly honest person cannot enjoy having clothes for which he cannot pay. Money may be borrowed for the lasting benefits to be secured from an education, but not for the transient pleasure of securing new clothes.

In general, it is best to buy at the time the article in question will satisfy an immediate need, but there are exceptions to this rule, i. e., clothes bought out of season can often be secured at a saving of from twenty-five to fifty per cent of the original price. Again, if garments are to be made at home, it is often advisable to buy ahead of the need in order to allow time for making the garments. Or if one lives at a distance from a good market it is necessary to buy when he has access to the good market, even though he may at times have to de-

lay his buying or perhaps anticipate his needs to be supplied.

### **WHERE TO BUY**

Another important phase of our problem is where to buy. The wise woman chooses a reliable house. One which expects to remain in its established place must depend upon the continuous good will of its customers. Such a house can be depended upon to give value received, to represent goods as they are, and to handle such goods as the customers demand.

The up-to-date woman is not ignorant of the menace to health which lurks in garments and materials which are made or distributed under unsanitary conditions and she recognizes the fact that she may pay dearly in sickness and suffering for the bargain which seemed too good to be passed by.

### **HOW TO BUY**

From all this analysis of the problems presented by the family wardrobe we should be able to deduce some definite rules for intelligent buying which will prove to be of service.

1. Go shopping with definite purpose in mind.
2. Allow time to procure what you need in order that you may investigate all the possibilities as to materials and prices.
3. Weigh the various alternatives carefully before making a decision.
4. Be conservative: avoid extreme style, novelties in material, and all kinds of fads.
5. Be not lured into the extravagance of buying something you have not planned to buy, because it is cheap.
6. Do your own thinking; calculate exactly the amount of material you need and buy just that, choose what is becoming to you and be your own judge in the matter. Choose what is appropriate for your own use. No one else knows all the conditions under which you are buying. In buying ready-made garments insist on good materials, correct style, and good workmanship, and demand sanitary conditions of manufacture and distribution.
7. Reduce your purchase to a minimum. Plan definitely for certain occasions. Buy things which will serve more than one occasion, or for more than one season of the year. Choose good materials and conservative styles.
8. Do not ignore fashion but make it serve you.

9. Select suits and dresses which harmonize in color, in order that hats, gloves, and other accessories may be used to the best advantage.

10. Develop your judgment of materials and keep yourself posted on prices so that you may take advantage of legitimate bargains.

11. Insist on getting full value for every dollar spent. This requires a trained judgment of needs to be satisfied and of available satisfactions.

### **CARE OF CLOTHING**

There is all the difference in the world in the way different persons treat their clothes, and this difference shows in the life of the garments as well as in their appearance.

An analysis of the problem of caring for our wardrobes leads us to divide the work according to the frequency with which it must be done and we have:

Daily care of clothing, which consists of:

1. Airing all clothes after wearing. No garment should be put away in closets or drawers until they have been thoroughly aired.

2. Brushing and cleaning are necessary also. Dust spots from whatever source are unsightly and may injure the fabrics.

3. Care must be taken to remove stains but definite information may be secured very easily and there is no question regarding the results.

4. Careful hanging of clothes in a closet which should be light and well aired. Coats keep their shape best if hung on regular coat hangers. Skirt hangers which clamp the bands are satisfactory for all skirts. Waists and dresses should be hung on hangers and may have the sleeves stuffed with tissue paper.

5. Underwear and stockings. Do not leave garments in a heap on the floor. Whether they are to be worn again or go into the laundry bag, they should be aired well. Stockings should be turned wrong side out and hung in a convenient place.

6. Shoes should be put away clean and dry. If shoes become wet they must be dried carefully, not too near the

heat, which hardens leather. Shoe trees should be used to keep the shoes in shape; if these are not available, the shoes may be stuffed with paper.

7. Simple repairs must be included in the daily care of the wardrobe. Sewing hooks and eyes or buttons to insure proper fastening. Sewing up rips in seams, etc. Renewing collars and cuffs to freshen the toilette.

#### WEEKLY CARE

Weekly care of the clothing usually devolves on some one person and requires expert treatment. The process of laundering is a weekly renovation and is too complex a process to be treated here, but a few brief directions may be found advantageous. The steps in the process include:

Sorting and mending is necessary.

Removal of stains, if they require special treatment.

Soaking clothes in cold water should be regarded as absolutely essential, because it makes washing easier.

Wash in warm water and soap suds.

Boil all white goods of either cotton or linen material; boiling helps to clean the clothes and is the only way to sterilize clothing which has come in contact with the skin. Boiling should follow the washing. Good suds should be used and the process should continue for five minutes after the boiling point is reached.

Rinse well, using two hot rinses and one cold rinse.

Blue slightly to insure white appearance.

Starching when used follows the bluing.

Dry in the air, pin carefully on line so stretched that the clothes do not touch anything. Sun-dried clothes are most hygienic and busy housewives may well adopt the practice of folding underwear and bed linen off the line when they are thoroughly dried by the hot sun.

Remove clothes from the line, folding at once to avoid wrinkles. Clothes iron best if folded down over night. Sprinkle slightly and roll tightly. Pack closely in the basket.

Iron with clean hot irons, making sure that the garments are ironed dry.

Hang smoothly on wooden racks for an hour or so, before putting away.

White gloves are easily washed. Cotton gloves in hot water with ivory soap. Silk gloves in cold water with ivory soap.

Weekly care of clothing includes besides laundering the mending of stockings and underwear. Timely repair of both is economy, and children should be taught to put aside the stockings as soon as holes appear, for this lessens the work for the mother.

Pressing and sponging of wool dresses and skirts is no small task, but the results are so satisfactory that the time and energy seems well spent.

#### **OCCASIONAL CARE OF CLOTHING**

Under this head we include dry cleaning, when necessary, and dyeing of faded garments which are not yet badly worn.

These processes as a rule require the services of the professional, but remodeling is done at home. The ways of the woman who would make use of all her resources are many and varied. Large garments may be cut down; material may be turned; the style of garment may be changed completely; a few changes only may be made; certain portions may be renewed. The possibilities are really inexhaustible.

A study of care of clothing would not be complete without a consideration of seasonal care of clothing.

#### **SEASONAL CARE OF CLOTHING**

In most parts of our country it is necessary to make a decided difference in the clothing for winter and summer. Woolen materials, which are so essential in winter, require especial care through the hot summer weather, and it is customary to pack away all articles which need to be protected from moths. There are several available methods but the principles involved are the same in all. Cleanliness is essential. All washable clothing should be washed; other garments should be brushed and aired, preferably in the sun. Moth-proof containers of some kind may be used; of these cedar chests and tar-paper bags are most common. Newspaper, however, is just as good, and a convenient way to dispose of all winter clothing for the summer is to pack them away in a barrel lined with newspapers and sealed over the top with eight or ten thicknesses of newspapers. This is such a practical method that I shall



explain in detail how to proceed. Secure a clean, dry barrel, and paper the inside with newspapers, making sure that every spot is covered (overlapping the pieces will insure this), and paste well. Remember the ink on the paper is the important factor in keeping the moths out. Dry the barrel in the sun if possible. Air all garments to be stored and pack away clean. Paste eight or ten thicknesses of newspaper over the top of the barrel. Keep the barrel in a dry place. Winter care of summer clothes is less important than summer care of winter clothes. However, it is a saving of time and energy to store away such things as will not be worn for months. Cotton and linen materials should be washed out but not starched or ironed. Silk should be rolled rather than folded. All should be placed in containers which are proof against insects and mice.

### **CLOTHES RIGHTLY WORN**

This discussion of our clothing problem cannot be considered complete without emphasizing the importance of proper use of clothes.

It is not sufficient to plan carefully and buy wisely; all the advantage gained in this way may be easily lost if the clothing is not rightly worn and treated with proper respect. Specific instances may be illuminating, for instance: a tailor-made suit for use on the street and away from home should be removed as soon as one reaches home because the small tasks performed at home will not allow the proper care of the dress or skirt; and even when the duties have been reduced to supervision one cannot always guard against accidents, which, if they do not ruin the tailored suit, at least deprive it of its prestine glory.

A street suit should not be worn at home because the coat is not needed indoors and thus the wear on the various parts will be uneven. Tailored suits depend on their trim appearance, on good pressing, and the ordinary wear given tends to keep the clothes in shape, but the less formal activities of the home have exactly the opposite tendency.

Clothing of various types purchased for occasional use must not be worn ordinarily because its value to the wearer is lessened by everyday wear. Therefore it is advisable to insist that fine underwear, blouses, and dresses be reserved for the

occasion for which each is suited and for which it was purchased.

Another phase of this improper use of clothing is wearing of old party dresses, slippers, and gala attire around the house even when there are no visitors. A proper respect for one's self and the family will deter most women and prevent this really lamentable mistake. Suitable house dresses for morning, afternoon, and evening can easily be provided because fortunately no extravagant outlay is necessary to secure appropriate clothes to be worn at home.

Actual abuse of various articles of clothing is frequently noted, the most flagrant cases being:

1. Use of the underskirt as a towel.
2. Use of handkerchief to clean shoes.
3. Handkerchiefs are also frequently used as dusters.
4. Aprons are used for various and sundry purposes.
5. Clothing, both outer and undergarments, should not be allowed to get too dirty because when dirt is ground in it is removed only with difficulty.

The last topic to be considered, although not least in importance, is care of clothing while it is being worn.

### **CARE OF CLOTHING WHILE IT IS BEING WORN**

Gloves cannot be as roughly treated as fingers and still be wearable; care must be exercised to avoid friction, which dulls the leather, and dirt, which makes frequent cleaning necessary. Other articles of leather need care. Shoes must not be allowed to rub together, for continued rubbing makes the leather look shabby; shoes must be protected from the water and from mud. This means that storm rubbers are a necessity. All leather goods, whether gloves, shoes, or bags, require special care but they also repay in appearance and service for care extended.

Coats perhaps more than any other garment are abused in the wearing, since it is necessary to remove coats frequently even when no place can be provided for their proper care. How often do we see coats thrown down in a heap, or trailing in the dust? Coats which are provided for use, when providing a wrap is only a precautionary measure, should be as well cared for as conditions permit.