

5 Season Staples

by Tasleem Khan

I LOVE AUTUMN. When it's warm—and I know that's infrequent—I find it difficult to know what to wear, especially clothing that's permissible for work. There's also the issue of British weather never being reliable. But when autumn starts, it feels so much easier! The chunky knits, textures like (faux) fur and suede to layer with, and then there are the coats. Not to mention the colours to add to make everything feel richer and even more like Christmas.

So where to start? (Warning: I cannot accept any responsibility for the urge to shop that may come from reading.)

1. THE COAT

I have a wardrobe just of coats. They're my second obsession, after shoes, much to my husband's dismay. (He is slightly jealous and ends up with less wardrobe space.) A coat makes your outfit and also keeps you warm, of course. The maxi to mini lengths, tweeds to velvet and capes to macs. Options are endless but for this season?

The traditional Mack has reappeared—but with an added twist, be it embellishment, velvet or fur to make a statement. If you're looking to keep it neutral, you won't go wrong with a sand or camel colour. There are a variety of shades to suit everyone. Those wanting to be more daring, think pink, from blush tones to lighter pale hues. Opt for one in an oversized style; if you buy a little bigger even if not oversized, it really helps combat that "armpit pinch" when wearing chunky jumpers underneath. (You know what I mean.)

At right is one I spied in Topshop, with added pleated balloon sleeves. That shade of pink is good enough to eat!



2. THE BOOT

Not just any kind of boot, but the biker style. A couple of years ago, these were seen everywhere from Chanel to Zara and now they're back again with a vengeance. I love the pearl-embellished versions with straps as seen in Zara—very Chanel-esque. I recommend choosing a style like this that is versatile, so you can wear the boots for all occasions and with anything—skirts and chunky knits, jeans and even maxi dresses. These boots will make a statement to suit anyone. Don't forget to layer on your trusty coat for a look worthy of any catwalk.

3. THE HAT

I am a "hat person," because I believe hats can make a simple outfit instantly more refined. Quite Parisian. Moving away from the floppy wide-rimmed varieties we saw earlier this year, for winter the style focuses on the more structured trilby. (Or give in to the *Indiana Jones*-inspired fedora.) If you worry about wearing strong colours, this is where you can add it without investing too much in a piece, as you would with a coat. I've spotted some great ones at H&M, Reiss and Accessorize for a great affordable range in the latest season colours. Tip: No matter its colour, a hat can be dressed up by repurposing a brooch or a silk scarf tied around the rim. Trust me—it makes the hat look like it's expensive.

4. THE DRESS

Maxi length, specifically. I am quite tall, so this particular staple is key to my wardrobe all year round. It is nice to see the maxi-and-jeans trend back again (a go-to look for me since I was 11 — thanks, Mum!). But this is



a nice way to wear one with heeled boots or strappy heels, either dressy or in the day for any occasion. You'll start to see everything from floral to block neon colours—there are a lot of choices. It's quite hard to decide where to go for quality; COS and H&M are my go-tos, not just for price but quality as well. I recently nabbed the classic blue one pictured above and haven't taken it off.

Tip: Orange and green jewel tones will upgrade you from mustard. I pair mine with jeans or culottes for a more suited, coordinated look. Add layers of camel, golds and maroon tones and be instantly chic.

5. THE EARRINGS

A personal hobby of mine. I'm going to cheat and highlight two styles for you:

1. Tasselled. They are everywhere, in every colour, size and style. Inspired by Oscar de la Renta's ombre beaded versions, there's everything from hoops to long styles, chains to beads. The options are endless and give a designer look to any outfit. A couple of my

favorite pairs are the blush, dusty pink pair from H&M, at upper right, and the black tassels at lower right that were a birthday present from River Island.

2: Mix and match. Not one single pair; use one each from different styles—a stud with a cuff or a cuff with a longer chain style. Or, if you dare, just wear one statement earring, like we saw on the Burberry catwalk. This trend is great for those who, like me, always lose one earring (usually a favourite) and can't part with the other. I particularly love doing this in the evening, because I like to have a bit of "rebel" look sometimes and go against the norm. It's when the magic happens.

These five staples will last way beyond just this season. Happy shopping! ■



NEW COLLABORATION ALERT! Look for the Erdem x HM collection out 2 November in stores and online, for your maxi dress, boots and oversized coat needs in one.