



# How to Shop for Vintage Clothing

When first making the decision to shop for vintage clothes it can all seem a bit overwhelming - there are so many beautiful garments, a wide range of styles, and a bewildering array of sizes. You may find yourself wondering just where to begin. To help you find an easy path through this vintage maze, I've put together my three vintage shopping fundamentals.

## Fit

Get ready to ignore your modern clothing size, because in the world of vintage they mean very little. Body shapes have changed considerably over the years, so when it comes to getting the right fit for vintage clothes, it comes down to the measurements.

Use a tape measure to determine your bust (around the fullest part), waist (around the narrowest part of your torso), and hip (around the widest part) dimensions as they are the most critical. Another good way to determine your fit is to take the measurements of a garment that you know fits you well. Try to be as accurate as possible, because an inch here or there can make a world of difference.

## Feel

While you may be drawn to the cut of particular garments, another important element in shopping for vintage is being able to determine different fabrics.

Unlike modern garments, you can't always guarantee that you'll find a label inside a

vintage garment telling you what it's made from. The best way to judge different fabrics is through their look and feel - this is especially important if you're keen to recognise the difference between natural and man-made fibres.

You'll tend to find that natural fabrics like linen and cotton will crease more readily than synthetics - so feel the fabric between your fingers if you're shopping offline. Acrylic and polyester fabrics, which are often used as cheaper alternatives to higher quality fabrics, tend to have a slight sheen and a rougher texture. If you're shopping online, you're more reliant on the expertise of the seller, but the item photos should allow you to confirm the fabric type. It also helps to do a little "hands on" research in modern boutiques so that you'll feel more comfortable identifying the look and feel of different fabrics, and get a better idea of what you do and don't like.

## Function

The final thing to consider is just what it is you want from your vintage wardrobe. Are you interested in buying a stunning dress for a special occasion?

Or are you looking at incorporating vintage into your everyday wardrobe?

Before you hit the shops, spend a bit of time working out what kind of style you want to make your own. Have a look through your current wardrobe and see what works well

for you, and where you'd like to make a few changes.

Whatever direction you decide to go in, the beauty of vintage is that there's something for everyone.

With just a little bit of planning and preparation, your vintage buying journey will be amazing from the very beginning.

## Tracey Sargent

*Tracey is obsessed with all things vintage and loves making the history and beauty of secondhand clothing a part of her own fashion future. She also blogs about her thoughts at [quietpaws.com](http://quietpaws.com)*

