

What to wear on a date: dos and don'ts

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"Give a girl the right shoes and she can conquer the world," are the enduring words of fashion icon Marilyn Monroe. But what if you're not wearing the right shoes? Does that mean you'll struggle to conquer the walk to the bus stop? Hopefully not, but the truth is that what you wear can affect how you feel and behave.

Which is why choosing something to wear on a date is so difficult. We turn our wardrobes inside out, plagued by the thought that if we pick the wrong outfit, the date will go as badly as one of those disastrous Dr Pepper ads. So, whether it's a casual coffee or a formal dinner, here's some advice to help you look the best you can be.

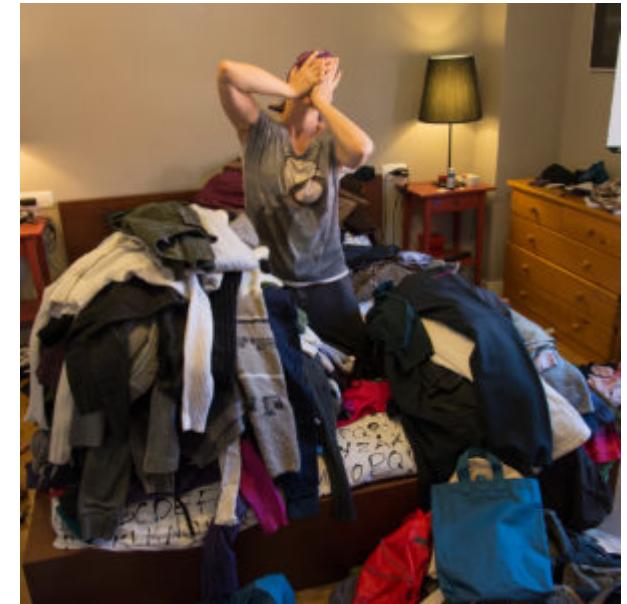
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Do wear something you know you look good in

Rather than suddenly jumping on the latest fashion trend an hour before the date, choose an outfit that you're familiar with. Think about what clothes make you feel relaxed and confident, the outfits you've been complimented on in the past, and the colours people always remark look excellent on you. Wear something you know you look good in and your natural confidence will shine through.

Do think about the location

Before picking the outfit, consider where the date is going to be. This may sound obvious, but while those killer heels or shiny brogues make you feel a million dollars, they might not be the best choice for a romantic stroll around the (probably muddy) park. You'll want to spend the time getting to know one another, not grumbling about blisters. Being comfortable is key to keeping the conversation flowing and relaxed.



Do start with something simple, then build

If you're really lost for what to wear, then go back to basics. Choose a simple outfit, like black jeans and a plain top (black is arguably boring, but it is a very forgiving colour and therefore good for dates). Then add layers and accessories depending on the weather or the location. A big coat if you're going to be outside, sunglasses if it's sunny, a smart jacket if you're going for dinner. Keep it simple and you'll find there's less to worry about.

Don't hide who you are

Jennifer Baumgartner, author of *What Your Clothes Say About You*, writes, "the worst clothing is the kind that tries to undo, ignore or hide where or who you are, or the kind that shows you didn't pay attention to your body/age/situation". So again, don't suddenly decide you're into designer crocs because you saw them on your date's Instagram. If you're hoping your encounters will turn into something long-term, be honest about the kind of person you are from the start, so they fall in love with the real you.

Don't dress too smart on the first date

This one is important to remember. By all means, dress smarter than usual on a first date - after all, you want to make a good impression - but make sure you save your nicest outfit for a future outing. Who knows where you may go together in the future? You wouldn't want to play your aces all at once.

Don't wear anything that you can't walk in, eat in, or breathe in

This one's particularly important for dinner dates, but can be applied across the board. While it may sound a bit ridiculous, simply make sure you pick an outfit that doesn't hinder your normal behaviour.

Whatever you do decide to wear, remember a date is meant to be special. It's a chance to connect with another person. It's not an interview or a business meeting. It may only last for a drink or two, so try not to dread it - think of it as a special event just for you and enjoy it.

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