



**I**t's what makes us scared that we look too big in certain pants. It's what makes us analyse what others are wearing. It's what urges us look to in the mirror to check our make-up and it's what leads us to check our shoes for stray toilet paper and carry lip gloss around. That's right, it's the fear of being judged for your unknown style blunders.

With image so seemingly important these days, Urbanlife thought we'd take some time to find out a little bit more about personal styling, and see just how much effort it takes to get it right.

Lucky for us here in the Inner West, we found the perfect woman to teach us a thing or two about fashion. Australia's very own version of Trinny and Susannah's 'What not to Wear', Balmain's Sarah Donges is re-shaping Sydney with her wardrobe detox diets.

A former fashion buyer here in Australia and in the UK, Sarah now works as a beauty tutor and image consultant. While she says seeking assistance is becoming more common, many of us simply don't know our own talent.

"Everyone has their own style, it's just that some don't know it," she said. "It's all about confidence and buying what makes you feel confident, and that's all you really need to do."

While fashion and style seem to go hand in hand, this doesn't mean you have to fall victim to fashion. According to Sarah, a lot of clothes buying and self styling comes down to practicality.

"At the moment, wearing leggings underneath a little dress seems to be the fashion, as well as skinny jeans, which to be perfectly honest only suit about 10% of people," she said. "If you just follow what you see you're just becoming a victim for fashion, and that's not what you want. You really need to get to know your body type and work with it."

For anyone battling with their own style, Sarah suggests what she calls a 'wardrobe detox'. Just as the name suggests, it's about going through your wardrobe and getting back to basics.

Then the fun part begins when you get to go shopping and fill in the gaps. A personal stylist such as Sarah then puts together a style guide for every occasion from going to the pub on a Sunday to going to a white tablecloth dinner. Like a clothing manual, it all goes into one little book that you can carry around with you. After that, it's a matter of taking what you've learnt and getting your wardrobe back on track. "Everything I do is about creating a basic wardrobe, and topping it up on a seasonable basis," she said. "You need your good black pant, white pant, good black jacket and a good light jacket, things you can't go wrong with. Then it's just a matter of adding seasonal bits and pieces."

If you're still at a loss, visit Sarah's website [www.thebeautytutor.com](http://www.thebeautytutor.com). For the mean time, here are a few simple rules you can follow to ensure your place amidst the successfully fashionable this season.

## FASHION MISS FIX

*Walking down the street, you see a dress you love. Seeing it there all dressed up on a mannequin, you think to yourself, 'I could never wear that'. Sound familiar?*

BY REBECCA FLOOD

### SARAH'S TIPS:

- When buying an item of clothing, you shouldn't buy it unless you can think of six pieces of clothing it goes with. If you're pear shaped, you're one of the majority! Seventy percent of Australian women are pear shaped so start thinking more positively. As a general rule, pear shapes should avoid drawing attention to their lower half and draw the eye to the top section of the body.
- If you're apple shaped (this means you are wider around the mid section) drawing attention to the lower half will flatter your figure.
- If you haven't worn it in a while, there's usually a reason why. Periodically, go through your wardrobe and get rid of the things you don't wear and replace them with good simple basics.