



Judith Mercer -
Personal Image Consultant

Let's start with your winter coat. This is your investment piece, something to last you for years, so go for the best quality you can afford. The trends this year are camel, military, leather or sheepskin. However, what's on trend when you're looking to purchase your coat is not the most important factor - remember, this is a long term investment. Think years rather than seasons and choose a style that will flatter your body shape and won't date. You can always style up your coat each Autumn with accessories to reflect that year's styles or colours. The trends in outerwear accessories seem to suggest a repeat of last winter's conditions, including boots and shoes with lower heels and proper tread on the soles to ensure you stay upright in the snow and ice. Smart leather and suede gloves will always add a bit of style to your look and you will also find that long gloves are making a bit of a comeback (part of the 50's revival and great for teaming with the current trend for capes). There's also some great felt and faux fur hats - anyone for a deerstalker? But if hats aren't your thing, consider a scarf, not just around your neck, but also on your head, since that is where you can lose a lot of body heat. But please ladies, think Grace Kelly, rather than Hilda Ogden! Staying with the scarf theme for a moment, there is one accessory I'm rarely without during the colder months - a pashmina. Whether you wrap them around your neck or shoulders over your coat or use them for added warmth once you're indoors, they will ensure you look good no matter how formal or casual the

Warm & stylish

THE clocks have gone back and the days are getting shorter, heralding what could be another long cold winter.

So, if we should have to endure another spell of heavy snow and freezing temperatures, it might be tempting to forfeit style in favour of comfort and warmth. But rest assured, you can stay warm and still look stylish.



occasion. Choose a couple in your most flattering shades, maybe add a pretty brooch to hold it in place and provide a focal point, and you will always look stylish and elegant.

Underneath your coat, the style statements can continue. It's all about appropriate dressing, so the general rule is to bear in mind the time of day, location and event, and dress

accordingly. After all, you wouldn't wear a cocktail dress to the gym or your wellies on a girls night out would you? If you are working in an office environment you may find that with central heating turned up you won't need to resort to fleeces and fur-lined boots, perhaps just a heavier weight dress or suit and some opaque tights to distinguish your winter look from your summer work wear. However, if your working environment is not so toasty or formal, you would be better with extra layers or maybe go for one of this season's seriously chunky knits and thick wool tights. Should you be meeting friends for lunch, attending your child's school play or out on a shopping trip, a wool dress or smart trousers and tonal sweater might be the order of the day, teamed with some great accessories - perhaps a pair of on-trend ankle boots and a statement handbag, large enough to hold your gloves, scarf and broly, just in case. But if you are dressing for a walk in the country or taking the kids to a firework display you would be much

better off in plenty of layers, flat boots and that faux fur hat I mentioned earlier. No matter what you're doing or where you're going, thin layers are usually a better option than one thick, bulky layer. For example, a camisole in a natural fibre (cotton, silk or even cashmere) against your skin is a great starting point. Add a fine knit sweater or cardigan in a tonal or contrasting colour then a jacket, chunkier sweater or fleece on top of that (depending on what will be most appropriate for the occasion). This will make it much easier to adapt to subtle temperature changes by adding or removing a layer. Keeping the layers thin will also be more comfortable, and for those with a fuller figure, far more flattering too. Let's hope that any snow we encounter is only a light dusting, to provide us with a pretty winter scene, rather than chaos on the roads. I'll take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and stylish Christmas and be back with you in January with some great tips on clever sales shopping.



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T: 01386 882464 - M: 07779 568047
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