

# Building a Minimalist Wardrobe

**HIYA ISLAM**

At first thought, you may think a minimalist wardrobe does not define you. The word “minimalist” itself has a scanty, pained connotation. However, that’s far from what it is. As Joshua Fields Milburn, a well-known minimalist, put it “Minimalism has never been about deprivation. Rather, minimalism is about getting rid of life’s excess in favour of the essential.”

Minimalism has been at the heart of sustainable fashion and is often misunderstood. The essence of minimalism is to focus on what’s *really* important and to free yourself from the clutches of consumer culture, all the while allowing yourself to reclaim your life. It’s been said that 80 percent of the time, you wear only 20 percent of your clothes. Go on, think it over. It’s safe to say getting rid of and limiting your closet would bless your pockets and the planet.

The first step to building a minimalist wardrobe, is discovering your own style; depending on the kind of person you are, this may be the toughest yet. Often, we have all types of clothing mixed up in our closets, and therefore we do not realize what kind of clothing resonates with us. What are some of the colours you can’t get enough of? What fits perfectly for your body type? What kind of cuts and fabric do you love wearing? Who’s your fashion icon? There are plenty of bloggers online who’ve dedicated themselves to help you out on this.

Moving forward to the existing bane of a wardrobe. There is no fixed figure to stick to; 15 to 50 clothing items is a common range to follow. Begin with some decluttering. Remove items that would not suit your newfound sense of style. Keep pieces that you absolutely need and love. However, it’s not as easy as it sounds. Decluttering is a process that takes time. Leaving out all items at once may not serve you the best.

How does shopping look for a minimalist? Well, for starters, not fun. But I am not trying to talk you out of it. You will need to invest initially. Analyse your wardrobe before a haul. Keep a running list of items you need. Go for clothing items that you can pair up to make several OOTDs. Lastly, shop intentionally, not impulsively. Do the 30-wears test. Ask yourself if you will wear what you’re holding at the mall for at least 30 times.

A great way to get started is to hop on a challenge -- Project 333. Pick 33 items (including jewellery and footwear) from your closet. Now, stylise these items for the next 3 months. Experimenting this way will help you gain a sense of what’s coming and how to deal with it. There are other variations; 10x10 (10 items for 10 days), 7x7 and so forth. Or, try creating a capsule cupboard for a season. A capsule cupboard is a small collection of useful clothing that you love.

Minimalism does not correlate with asceticism. There is no hard and fast rule to it as long as its essence thrives and the satisfaction prevails. But, it does demand a lot of self-discipline. Minimalism looks different for everyone because we all have specific needs and are at different points in our lives. At the end of the day, it only aims to create more fulfilment from what we own.

*Hiya loves food that you hate by norm – broccoli, pineapple pizza and Bounty bars. Find her at hiyaislam.11@gmail.com*



# Is Your Relationship Burning Out?

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If you google what a healthy relationship looks like, you are most likely to come across 3 C’s – communication, compromise, and commitment. These are the most crucial factors that come into play among the myriad of other things needed to keep the flames of a relationship burning. But sometimes it’s not the flame that you focus on – rather the wax that’s been melting away with time.

Feeling stuck or dwelling on the negatives doesn’t necessarily mean that you have started to despise your partner. Maybe there was a spark once, however, with the smallest things your partner does, it burns down in resentment. Realistically speaking, burnout can not only happen from regular arguments or mere disputes, but also due to loveless bonds where you’re tired of pretending things are okay. When you mask your feelings or strive hard to portray a version of yourself that looks good in someone else’s books, you face inner turmoil that exhausts you. The proper term for this is “surface acting” which loosely refers to faking emotions in order to keep up with what’s going on around you whereas “deep acting” is when one starts to believe that these fake emotions are actually real and positive. Acts like this require a lot of emotional labour and it sure can leave a person feeling drained.

Burnouts are like slow poison. Unlike an abrupt breakup, it kills a relationship slowly. Although you feel the pain, you can’t get out of the cycle easily. For many, it comes down to spending sleeping nights trying to melt that emotional frost with

their partners. However, hyper-focusing on a single topic or person can also make someone lose interest in all the other important things around them. Things that once provided you joy don’t seem interesting anymore. You feel stuck and render yourself disoriented.

A relationship is not a one-person job. It requires time and effort from both sides to make an alliance successful. A hurting relationship can be healed. Even if you feel silly talking about the things causing you problems, there is no way of fixing things other than having a sincere conversation with your partner. Setting up boundaries is important, and both parties decide together on what works best for them.

It is equally crucial to portion some time to yourself where you can work on your goals and desires. Sometimes a little space can bridge the distance. Do things that make each other feel valued. Words of affirmation, gift-giving, acts of service, or any other love language may rekindle the spark that you lost on the way.

A loving relationship is where you grow, it’s a safe place where you don’t need to wear your mask of presence. It shouldn’t wear you down and make you feel miserable. And if you see no end to the daily fights and emotional burnouts, it sometimes is better to let the person go instead of playing the crippling blame game.

Be free.

*Farnaz Fawad Hasan spends most of her time dreaming about chicken nugget castles. Tell her to snap back to reality at farnazfawadhasan@gmail.com*