

# CREATE A VEGAN WARDROBE *with Style!*

Vegan fashion is pretty straightforward. The definition is nothing from another living being: wool, silk, leather, down, fur, feathers, pearls, or bones. Sounds easy, but many people think it's complicated.

When I became vegan ten years ago, I quickly realized that it wasn't enough just to keep animals off my plate. I had to look at all areas of my life and eliminate as much animal suffering and exploitation as possible. The scariest part for me, an image consultant, was to venture into my closet and assess what I had for clothes. Would I have to compromise my personal style to conform to my moral beliefs? While my rational mind was at ease and sure it was doable, my fearful mind had me wearing a burlap sack and uncomfortable plastic shoes.

Two big—but not insurmountable—roadblocks prevent adopting a vegan wardrobe. Let's dispel these myths.

## 1. Vegan Fashion Sounds Limiting

Taking some familiar fabric options away, people assume, will make getting dressed that much harder and they back out before they ever get started. The truth is that vegan clothing is everywhere. Everyone already has a wide variety of “vegan” clothing in their closet simply by default. Cotton shirts, jersey dresses, jeans, most trench coats are popular wardrobe items and are generally made from fabrics that do not harm animals including cotton, linen, rayon, polyester, microfibers, tencel/lyosell, modal, and hemp.

Open your closet door and read a few tags. You are bound to be pleasantly surprised. That blouse that feels like silk may really be modal or microfiber polyester. The jacket that feels exactly like wool could be a fine acrylic.

Vegan options are available in every price point. I have shoes from Payless for \$25 and a Stella McCartney handbag I found at a consignment store with an original price of nearly \$1,000. I have a beautiful off-white Armani jacket from a consignment store that is made of cotton and acetate sitting right beside my fun green polyester jacket from J.C. Penney. Since part of your wardrobe is vegan by default, just imagine what you can create with intention.

## 2. Vegan Fashion Might Be Uncomfortable and Ugly

Many years ago, the wardrobe options for vegans were limited. Consequently, some people still equate it as uncomfortable and dreary-looking clothes: stiff plastic shoes, hideous heavy 1970s polyester, or styles designed solely for those who are young, super thin, and trendy. Times have changed.

Most polyester is now a finer grade of microfiber so it is softer and more flowing. In the past nine years, the faux-leather shoe industry has exploded. In December 2013, *The Boston Globe* ran an article entitled, “Vegan Leather, Faux Fur Are Hot Holiday Gifts.” Now you can easily shop at most stores to find vegan clothing and shoes.

The bottom line is that there is no reason to let self-imposed fashion limitations keep you from a compassionate wardrobe. Wear clothes with style and a clear conscience.

—Ginger Burr



before

**After Photo:** Annie McGonagle is wearing a cotton tank and a faux leather jacket from T.J. Maxx, dark wash 'Little in the Middle' jeans she got online, studded faux leather pumps from Nordstrom, and crystal necklaces from a local jeweler. Her outfit is vegan, stylish, and she feels empowered.

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after