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Style Guide



CRYSTAL CAVE
Stylist to Not So Skinny Women



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The Three Statements That Are Holding Us Back In Our Closets



by Melanie Kluger

When was the last time you walked into your closet and thought "I love everything I have"?

For most women that answer is a resounding NO. Our closets are one of the first things we see in the morning and if it's giving off a super negative vibe, chances are it's not the best way to start your day.

While it does take some leg work (like a big old closet purge) to really see a difference in your closet, there are some reframes you can make that make an instant change.

It all starts with hearing and recognizing the negative statements we say the second we open our closets. Next comes the part where we identify WHY we are saying them. Then, the last piece is the puzzle is finding a way to really make a change.

NEGATIVE STATEMENT 1: "I HAVE NOTHING TO WEAR"

Why Are We Saying This: Most women only wear 20 percent of their closets. Yep! That's it! That means that when you open your closet, you are looking at 80 percent of things you don't like or that don't fit you. If you are looking at clothes you don't like, no wonder you don't feel like you have anything to wear!

How to Make a Change: The goal is to make it so you feel like your closet is full of clothes you want to wear, right? So probably the best thing we can do is ACTUALLY put clothes in our closet that we want to wear. I know it seems self-explanatory but it's actually not something we can do easily. Every time you look at a clothing item that you don't like in your closet, ask yourself "Why am I holding onto this?" If you don't have a good reason it's time for it to find a new home.

NEGATIVE STATEMENT 2: "I NEED TO HOLD ONTO THIS FOR SENTIMENTAL REASONS"

Why Are We Saying This: Man are we attached to our clothes. Every single piece of clothing in our closet reminds us of a story, a person or a memory. Our closet is literally full of memories.

How to Make a Change: What of instead of saying "I need to hold onto this for sentimental reasons." we found another way to hold onto these memories. The remembrances are there whether or not we have the piece of clothing.

One way to make this an easier transition is to allow yourself to keep 5 sentimental items. By prioritizing these important pieces you'll end up realizing that they all aren't as important as you might have once thought. Also, those 5 items must now go in storage or be put somewhere safe. No point in having them taking up room if you aren't going to wear them.

If you still are having trouble releasing these pieces, I love the idea of repurposing. Framing an old sweatshirt, making a quilt from old t shirts and creating a photo book full of pictures of your favorite clothes from days past are all great ways to commemorate you prized pieces without keeping them in your closet.

NEGATIVE STATEMENT 3: "I WILL FIT INTO THIS AGAIN AT SOME POINT"

Why Are We Saying This: The fact that we have clothes that we still like and are in good shape makes it REALLLLY hard to justify getting rid of it. So we tell ourselves we will hold onto it until it fits us again.

How to Make a Change: The answer varies depending on your circumstance really does change the answer for this one. It's really about you asking yourself a few questions.

a) If I did fit into this now, would I love it? – So often we hold onto clothes without really asking ourselves if we like it. We tend to think we should like

something or we used to like it and never took the time ask ourselves if it was currently our style.

b) Realistically, when am I planning to fit into this again? - I'll give you the perfect example of when this question applies. I am now currently pregnant with my second baby. I have a lot of clothes that I was holding onto since before my first pregnancy. I had to realistically ask myself if I was going to still like these items after it being in my closet for 5 years. A lot of it was already not my style anymore. I can't imagine by the time I'm back to my pre pregnancy weight that a lot of those clothes I'll like. Staring at them as my body grows and grows is not what I need to feel good about my body and where I'm at now.

c) "Is this worth me looking at until I fit into it again?" – You have to weigh the pros and cons. There is nothing wrong with putting clothes in storage or moving them to a different location for the time being. It is a really powerful change to look into your closet and not see the clothes that don't fit you anymore. I like to focus on the clothes that you love and that fit you well NOW. That's all that matters.

STOP Shopping for Size and START Shopping For Style!

Living More Starts with What You Choose to Put On In the Morning



by Crystal Cave

Most of my clients want to play bigger in life. They want to step into a higher level of self-care and they want to reach their dreams - personally and professionally.

So why the heck do they come to me, a wardrobe specialist?

Because, they've realized that from the moment they get dressed in the morning they are playing small.

Playing big in life, living more - starts with dressing for a life well-lived every day! If you get up and put on a blazer that is too tight or conversely, a huge sweater that's too big, you are setting yourself up for failure and disappointment. You're either feeling confined and restricted by the tightness of your clothing, or you're hiding your body behind some huge, bulky top. Feeling confined, restricted, or hidden puts you in a self-esteem deficit! How can you possibly step outside of your comfort zone, towards your goals, if you're fighting to feel confident in the here and now?

So, what's the deal? Why does this happen to us?

All of us fabulous women, who are size 14+ (67% of the female population in the US, by the way!) have been taught by society that we must wait until we are down to our ideal size before we go wild with fashion and create our own style.

I'm here to tell you that's a load of poo! And, I want to offer you an alternative to shopping for size. It's time to shop for style.

Why Shop For Style Instead of Size?

1. SIZE IS RELATIVE, TRANSITORY AND FLEETING!

What was a size 6 a decade ago is now a size 8 or 10.

Worse, what is labeled as a size 6 in one store is labeled as a size 4 in another, and a size 8 in a third one.

More confusing is the fact that women's "sizes" women's "sizes" don't actually correlate with women's body measurements. They are assigned off the fit model, whomever she is and whatever her body looks like. Women's clothing sizes have become random, arbitrary numbers slapped onto the inseam of tops and bottoms. They are left to confuse and frustrate us in the department store. No wonder dress shopping can feel like a nightmare!?

2. YOUR STYLE PLAYS A BIG ROLE IN SUPPORTING YOUR GOALS

When you shop for style instead of size, you create a look, a feeling and an attitude with your wardrobe. For example, maybe you want to express an unconventional attitude with your look, and feel artsy all day long. If that's you, then consider doing some Boho Style shopping!

You want your clothes to help express who you are and where you see yourself going. AND, it's vital that you step into that look NOW, instead of waiting until you fit back into your size X clothing.

When you get dressed in the morning in clothes that represent your desired attitude and feelings, you can't help but act accordingly!

3. IT'S ALL ABOUT SELF-CARE & SELF-INVESTMENT

When you shop for style instead of size, you are saying YES to self-care because it is an investment. You can't just buy whatever, or avoid buying anything until you lose X pounds. Nope. Not going to fly. You are officially done with letting the shopping experience be a frustrating disappointment.

Instead, it's time to embrace your body, your curves, and your style. When you go shopping you need to take the following steps:

A. Locate the style that screams "you in your dream style"

B. Pick the articles of clothing that fit the biggest part of your body well. That could be your boobs, your arms, your stomach, your thighs, your butt...whatever fabulous asset of your's that demands attention. Get the article of clothing that fits it!

C. Take your garment to a tailor. The tailor can take in the top, bottom or waist to help accentuate your sexy body and your style.

Now, Step C is where most women get wonky. They come up with all sorts of excuses as to why they shouldn't take their garment to a tailor. They say things like,

"I already spent \$30 on this top, I don't want to spend any more."

"That's so much extra work."

"I don't know any tailors."

"Will they really tailor my new button down shirt? It's such a small job."

Then, they'll try to convince themselves it's okay...

"It's okay that I'm drowning in this dress, I'll just wear a blazer over it. No one will know."

"It's okay. I'll buy a size smaller and just deal with the tight arms."

YIKES! This is your ego trying to keep you down!

Shopping for style is about self-care and the best way you can show yourself that you're worth it - that you deserve the life of your dreams, is to invest in yourself. Investing in a tailor is an investment in yourself. You are worth it. Say that again, you are worth it!

Don't let that monkey brain convince you that you're not worth fabulously tailored clothing, because you are!

And, if finances are a serious concern (not just an excuse), consider this: Instead of buying 5 tops that don't really fit well (3 of which you'll never wear because they'll get shoved to the back of your closet), buy 2 or 3 tops and spend the money that you would have spent on getting all 5 tops on getting the 2 tops tailored.

The Top 10 Pieces You Need In Your Wardrobe



by Melanie Kluger

I'm a huge proponent of everyone exercising their right to wear what makes them feel amazing. This means I don't like to say, "You must wear a jumper." or "Every woman must have pink lipstick!" because I know that if you don't feel great in pink lipstick, you shouldn't wear pink lipstick. That being said, I do believe there are key pieces that help make getting dressed an easier and more streamlined process.

Since my goal is to make getting ready a fun and enjoyable experience for you, this list is meant to give you focus, clarity and confidence. If I say casual button down and your casual button down is hot pink with polka dots... rock on with your bad self.

1) A Great Black Dress – A black dress is a must in everyone's closet for so many reasons. There are a ton of events that call for black. You can wear the same black dress to a rehearsal dinner, funeral (sorry... I went there), date, church (or synagogue or whatever religious event you are attending) and wedding. A black dress is something that I would splurge on and make sure it fits you well. You will certainly get the mileage out of it.

Notice how I didn't say a "Little Black Dress" aka "LBD". While I personally love a "LBD" that doesn't mean that your go-to black dress can't be a maxi.

2) A Casual Button Down – Since this list is meant to cover all sorts of shapes, sizes and styles I am not going to talk about a structured, crisp button down. That being said, a casual button down can be anything from chambray to white to polka dots. Something that you can throw on with a relaxed pair of jeans and still feel cool is always a favorite in my book.

3) A Warm Sweater – One that makes you feel cozy and want to drink hot chocolate in. Even if you live in LA at least one warm sweater will come in handy. When choosing a sweater, ask yourself how it makes you FEEL. Warm sweaters are all about the evoking a snuggly feeling.

4) A Favorite T Shirt – Everyone needs a go-to tee in her wardrobe. There is nothing better than an outfit that is casual, yet still put together. Your favorite tee will give you confidence in the simplest of looks.

5) Medium to Dark Wash Jeans (that make your butt look good) – Having a pair of jeans that you LOVE that are in a darker wash will allow them to go from day to night more easily. If it's a really great pair, get two in different washes so you can extend the shelf life!

6) Stackable Bracelets – I'm a huge fan of "arm parties" aka "bracelet extravaganzas" aka "bangle heaven". If your outfit ever feels like it's missing something, throw on a few bracelets and it'll most likely do the trick.

7) A Great Pair of Shoes – Ever feel like your outfit needs "a little something special"? An awesome pair of shoes will amp it up, plus it'll make you walk with more of a strut instantly. My fav pair? Sparkly gold loafers. Awww Yea!

8) An Awesome Lightweight Jacket – For some of you, that's a leather bomber jacket, for others it's a super cute jean jacket. No matter what kind of lightweight jacket you own, the goal is to be able to throw it on and feel great. Functional meets cute is where it's at.

9) A Patterned Scarf – A scarf that has interest is a sure fire way to add something special to an outfit. You can add it to a t-shirt and jeans, black dress, cozy sweater or with your lightweight jacket.

10) A Neutral Purse or Bag – While I love the great pop of color a bright bag gives, it's not as versatile as a black, brown or gray one. When your outfit has a ton going on, sometimes the neutral bag is your best option. This is also definitely a splurge item in my book.

The Only 2 Things You Need to Know to Dress Your Body



by Crystal Cave

In my eyes, dressing your body shape is all about knowing 2 things: your body type + how to dress in proportion, using something I call the "hourglass principle." This technique is one of the core lessons I teach in my 24 videos that are a part of Not So Skinny Style School, so I'll give you the nuts and bolts of it below!

WHAT IS THE "HOURGLASS PRINCIPLE"?

The "ideal" woman's shape is an hourglass. Meaning, that the bust + hips are the same size (within an inch), and there is a smaller waist in proportion.

Although the hourglass is the "ideal" shape for women, only 8% of the women in the United States are actually an hourglass. This means that the other 92% of women need to give the illusion of an hourglass with how they dress themselves.

Therefore, to apply the hourglass principle, you should figure out which 1 of the 5 body types you are, and allow your clothing to give the illusion of an hourglass.

So, if your bottom is larger, use clothing on top to draw the eye up to the width of your shoulders, creating the illusion of an hourglass and drawing the eyes to your shoulders.

To dress any body, all you need to think about is dressing yourself to look like an hourglass, that's all it comes down to once you know your measurements + what your ACTUAL proportions are!

WHY YOU NEED TO MEASURE YOUR BODY

The thing that always seems crazy to me is that the majority of the women I work with tell me that they are an hourglass shape. With only 8% of women truly being an hourglass shape, this is statistically impossible. However, when it comes down to actually measuring their body, they find they are not an hourglass or whatever they originally thought.

It's funny how our eyes can make us believe we're larger, smaller and more hourglass than we really are.

For me, I am a true believer in taking up-to-date measurements. This should be done seasonally or any time your body undergoes a transformation.

From what I've found, our bodies change frequently, especially if you're applying the Live More Weigh Less principles, so even if you were once an hourglass, you may gain or lose weight and become a different body type for example, a triangle.

WHAT MEASUREMENTS DO I NEED TO TAKE?

Ok, so grab some measuring tape, there are a few measurements you need to take to determine your body shape...

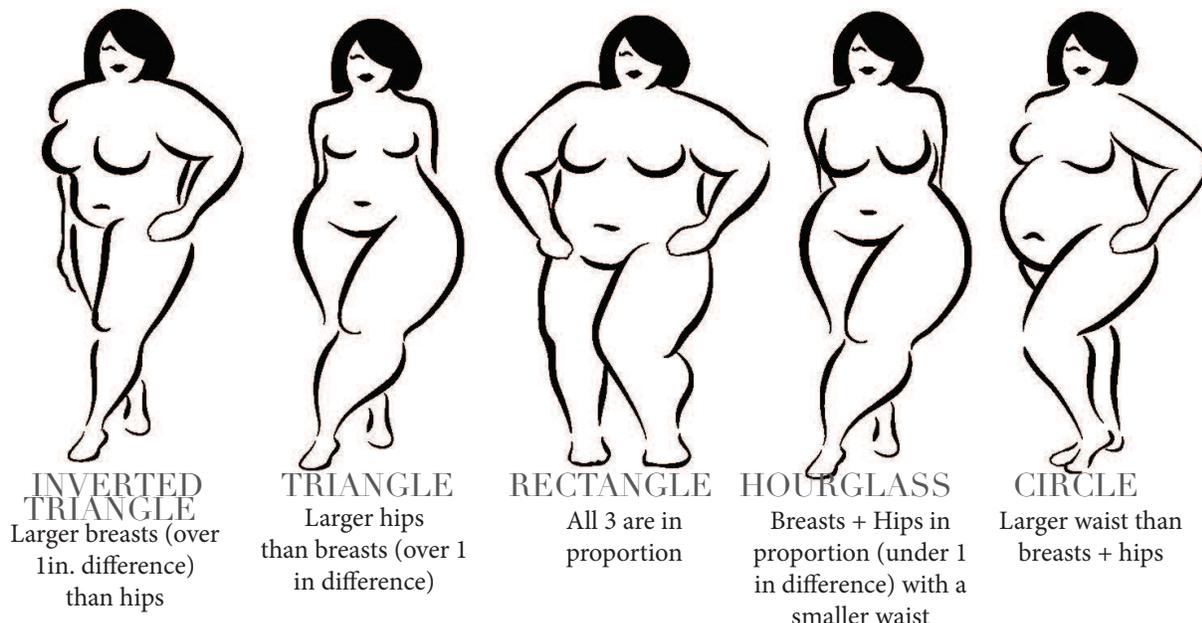
While measuring, make sure to put a finger under your measuring tape and measure evenly around each section of your body. Measuring in a diagonal around your body (which is the biggest mistake, especially when you measure yourself) will throw off your measurements, and you'll end up dressing your proportions wrong!

There are 3 simple measurements you need to take in order to figure out what your proportions are:

1. Bust: This is the largest part around your boobs. Take this measurement with your bra on.
2. Waist: This is the SMALLEST part of your torso. Not to be confused with your tummy, which is where your belly button is (a common misconception). This typically falls halfway between your bust + belly button
3. Hips: This is around the largest part of your lower half.

When comparing the 3 measurements, you'll be able to see where your weight falls in your torso.

THE 5 BODY TYPES



Once you've identified how these 3 measurements compare to one another and you've determined your body type, you'll be able to start the process of finding clothing to dress your body to the hourglass principle.

However, as much as I say "dress yourself like an hourglass," I want to make sure you know this in no way means you need to. This is a guideline. There are no "rules" in fashion, only suggestions as I see it.

It all comes down to celebrating your body and showing the world your amazing beauty.

So, if you are a triangle, love your larger hips and flaunt your amazing assets and curves. Do what makes you feel proud of your body. When you hide behind ill-fitting clothing you have no style, period. So, the hourglass principle is a great guideline to add to your style, but a style must come first. Then you will be dressing everyday with confidence.

Accessorizing Like You Mean It



by Melanie Kluger

When was the last time you left your house feeling like your accessory game was on point? Accessorizing is one of the number one ways to make an outfit feel complete and add some extra personality into your outfit.

Most women fall into two categories. In my online course *The Confident Closet* I call them over-accessorizers or under-accessorizers. It's sort of like a "goldilocks syndrome". You either accessorize too much, too little, or just right. Let's try to make it so we all fall into the "I accessorize like a boss" category, shall we?

Under-accessorizers tend to be nervous to add accessories because of a lack of confidence in their ability to put pieces together. So, instead of trying anyway, they just don't wear anything. Or, they wear the same thing over and over.

Over-accessorizers have such a love for accessories they don't know when to stop. They tend to want to wear it all at once and even though they KNOW it's too much at once, they have trouble figuring out how to scale back.

Which category do you fit into? Once you have identified where you fall on the accessorizing spectrum it's much easier to find ways to cure your accessorizing-itis. .
Ok, accessorizers, it's time to fix the problem. Let's break it down.

TOP 3 CURES FOR THE UNDER-ACCESSORIZER

Choose Three – When you are getting dressed, you have to pick at least three items to compliment your outfit. If that overwhelms you, start with something small like a pair of small stud earrings. Allow one item to be the star. All the accessories you are wearing don't need to be statements; they just need to be there!

Broaden your Definition of What an Accessory is – A bold lipstick, great pair of glasses, haircut, colored shoe, scarf, hat, necklace, tights, and belt are all examples of great accessories. It doesn't have to be a piece of jewelry. Allow yourself to think outside the jewelry box. Pun intended!

Trial and Error – Knowledge is confidence my friend. If there is a trend that you are scared to try, take the time to practice. Sit in front of the mirror layering necklaces long enough to figure out what works and what doesn't. It really doesn't take that long, but allowing yourself the time instead of rushing in the morning will permit you to feel way more confident in your ability to accessorize. Also, playing dress up is actually a great tool for creating outfits the night before. It's pretty fun too.

TOP 3 CURES FOR THE OVER-ACCESSORIZER

Let One Piece to Be The Statement – By reframing your view on accessories to feature one item, you are subsequently pulling back on the rest of the look. If the necklace is the star, the earrings, makeup and dress need to compliment the “star accessory”, but not over power it.

Size Matters – If you are wearing a large pair of earrings, sometimes it can feel overwhelming to also be wearing a large necklace, big hair, 30 bangles and bright shoes. I’m a huge fan of big jewelry but I’ve made a rule for myself. If the necklace is big, the earrings are small and vice versa. Works every time.

Simplify Your Makeup – If you feel your clothes and accessories have a lot going on, sometimes the best choice is to pull back on your makeup. Again, everything can’t be the star and having a more natural makeup look will help tone the whole look down.

Shopping Guide for the Double Digit Size Woman



by Crystal Cave

I'm so excited to share with you my favorite plus size stores! In general, I recommend going to big department stores, or stores that carry multiple brands because it's a great place to be introduced to new brands and to start to figure out your own style.

Next time you go shopping take note of the brands you gravitate towards the most + keep track of them. If you want to start exploring your style without the commitment, check out the rentals + subscription services section!

If you want even more shopping strategies + resources, I recommend checking out Not So Skinny Style School. I have a whole section on shopping + shopping strategies!

CRYSTAL'S GO-TO STORES

Bloomingdale's – My favorite for high end staples, with an amazing accessory assortment!

Plus sizes from 14 – 24.

<http://www1.bloomingdales.com>

Forever 21 – I love experimenting with on-trend items from here.

"Forever21+" is offered online and in select stores up to a size 20.

<http://www.forever21.com>

Macy's – A great place to experiment with exploring many different brands. I love their INC in house brand, which has a lot of fun trendy tops, especially great for business wear. Women's department online and in select stores run up to size 24W

<http://www1.macys.com/>

Nordstrom – If there's 1 department store that does plus right, it's Nordstrom. From their overall selection, to how they style the women on their site (ie. actually looking hot + stylish, not like they put sacks on them), they're my most recommended source.

Look for the "Encore" departments in select stores and online they run up to size 24

<http://shop.nordstrom.com/>

Not Your Daughter's Jeans – The only jeans I'll wear. Tummy+ bun flattering, need I say more?'

Up to size 22W

<http://www.nydj.com/>

Simply Be – A beyond huge assortment ranging over many different styles, all generously fitting. Just note, since they're in the UK, shipping can take a week or two, so this isn't for any last minute shopping.

Online retailer based out of U.K. that offers sizes 14-22. Great resource for discovering multiple brands all under one roof.

<http://www.simplybe.com/>

Torrid – The first store that I ever came out looking stylish and age appropriate. They have amazing on-trend pieces. I especially love their tops and dresses.

Size ranges from 12- 28 with select styles in store

<http://www.torrid.com/>

DEPARTMENT STORES (many brands under 1 roof)

ASOS –

Their department is named "Curve" and features clothing up to a size 24

<http://www.asos.com/>

Dillard's –

Women's department online and in select stores run up to size 24W

<http://www.dillards.com/>

Kohls –

Sizes range from 16W – 30W with select items in store

<http://www.kohls.com>

Lord & Taylor –

Plus sizes online and in select stores run up to size 3X

<http://www.lordandtaylor.com>

Neiman Marcus –

Women's collection offered online and in select stores up to size 28

<http://www.neimanmarcus.com/>

Saks Fifth Avenue –

"Salon Z" is available online only, up to size 24

<http://www.saksfifthavenue.com/>

INDIVIDUAL BRANDS

Evans –

UK based retailer offers clothing in sizes 14-32

<http://www.evansusa.com/>

Gap –

Extended sizes of their line are offered online in up to size 20

<http://www.gap.com/>

Lane Bryant –
Sizes from 14-24, can be found online and in-store
<http://www.lanebryant.com/>

Lands' End –
Sizes from 14W28 to 26W32 and tops from X – 3X
<http://www.landsend.com/>

Lola Getts –
Active wear for the curvy girl sizes 14-24
<http://www.lolagetts.com/>

Modcloth –
ModCloth Plus is offered online up to size 26
<http://www.modcloth.com/>

Old Navy –
Their "extended" sizes are found online up to a size 30
<http://www.oldnavy.com/>

Rachel Pally –
Rachel Pally White Label features sizes 14-22 and can be found in their online store, as well as select retailers, including Nordstrom
<http://www.rachelpally.com/>

Talbots –
"Women" & "Women Petites" lines available in-store & online to size 24W
<http://www.talbots.com/>

Wet Seal –
+Plus by Wet Seal in select stores, but the full collection is available online to size 28/4x
<http://www.wetseal.com/>

RENTALS + SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

Gwynnie Bee –
A monthly subscription for renting clothing up to size 32. Get a free 30-day trial when you sign up!
<http://www.gwynniebee.com>

Rent the Runway –
RTR+ offers high-end rentals up to a size 22 online or you can try on rentals in-person at their Manhattan showroom
<http://www.renttherunway.com/plussize>

Who Are Your Live More Stylists?



Mind Body Green.

CRYSTAL CAVE, stylist to Not So Skinny Women, is the founder of xoCrystalCave.com and creator of Not So Skinny Style School. With a background behind the scenes styling some of the biggest celebrities and brands, including Taylor Swift, Mercedes, Kate Upton, and Nike, from NY to LA, Crystal now hones those skills she learned to help everyday women realize that impeccable style has no size!

Crystal has been seen on CBS, ABC, NBC, The CW, Fox, The Huffington Post, Boston.com, and

If you're ready to love your style for the body you're in now, watch her FREE Not So Skinny Style 3 Part Video Training Series at NotSoSkinnyStyle.com.

MELANIE KLUGER is a personal stylist, blogger, confidence coach, closet connoisseur, and your new best friend. She's passionate about making women feel amazing in their clothes and their body. According to Melanie you don't need to lose those 15 pounds to feel good in that dress. You just need to know how to accessorize it, buy the right size and wear it with pride. It's Melanie's mission to help as many women as possible have wardrobes they love and she's determined to make it happen! When she's not working her style magic she's playing with her daughter (the sweetest toddler on the block), her sassy Boston Terrier and beyond lovable hubs. Obsessions include dance parties, navy and white stripes, girl time, and wine country. For more from Melanie head to her blog headoverheelswithmelanie.com



Her upcoming closet course "The Confident Closet "is a 6 week online course to purge, organize, and build a wardrobe for confidence and personal style. To find out more about this killer course head to www.myconfidentcloset.com