



# Guilt Free Wardrobe

Fashion Stylist, Kirstie Smillie wants to start the year off the right way...

Like many people, I am guilty of owning too many clothes. But, I do love them and wear outfits with joy, mend and repair where possible, buy vintage and preloved alongside a few well-thought-out new purchases.

My body shape has changed since my teens, through marriage and children (and not forgetting the crisps, wine and chocolate), so as I have moved through size ranges, my personal collection has grown. I try to keep my bedroom wardrobe as active as possible, but those I no longer wear, but can't part from, are stored away in the attic, while others are bagged and distributed.

'Circular Fashion' as referred to by Surrey Frills, is a term of wearing and then donating clothes to be worn again. The website, set up last year by founders Claire Hams and Marie Gibbens, promotes the beautiful Surrey Hills with all the independent boutiques that add amazing diversity to our shopping experience, while at the same time, offering advice and ideas of sustainability for our own clothes. They are busy meeting local shops and stylists who have a passion to make you feel confident and beautiful.

Here are four steps to get you started:

## First Step

### *Care for the clothes you own*

Wash clothes less and at a lower temperature, 30° is adequate for most items. Ideally wash jeans inside out on a cool wash to help preserve the dye and do up zips and buttons to avoid snagging other items. Wash knitwear on a very low heat, preferably in pillowcases to help hold shape and use a knitwear comb to remove any bobbles (available from Pure Collections, Guildford, £3.50).

Wash bras infrequently and hand or gentle machine wash them in small bags, available in most department stores or Lakeland. This stops the wires twisting and breaking through the fabric. Remember to avoid fabric softener on any fabrics with stretch to elongate the wear.

Make do and mend if at all possible. Small holes can be darned, zips replaced and hems re-stitched. Yes, another job to do but so worth the effort. Repair cafés are popping up in our areas including Dorking, Farnham and Guildford. For details, visit the Surrey Frills website at [www.surreyfrills.co.uk](http://www.surreyfrills.co.uk). You can learn the basics of sewing to help you do this yourself - Clare Dadswell from I Made This Crafts in Godalming hosts classes for beginners upwards ([www.imadethiscrafts.co.uk](http://www.imadethiscrafts.co.uk) or call 01483 417352).

Hang them properly. Jackets need to be on wider shaped hangers to support the shoulders and I find the flocked slimline hangers best for shirts and tops with clip styles for skirts and trousers.

Jewellery needs to be displayed to help save tangles and to actually see what you own. I covered cork tiles with black felt and fixed to the inside of my wardrobe so I can pin individual items and easily see what I have. This will stop you buying something you already own.

Buy Eco washing liquids. Take your own bottles to fill up on Laundry Liquid at Yard Market, Godalming ([www.yardmarket.uk](http://www.yardmarket.uk) or call 01483 418774).



*Great layers for more outfit options. Catwalk inspiration from (clockwise from top left) Stella McCartney; Prada; Victoria Beckham; and Kition. Catwalk images: FashionVogue.com*



*Buy vintage and pre-loved and mix in with your new purchases*



## Second Step

### *Enjoy wearing your own clothes*

Put aside a few hours of 'you time' to try on your clothes. Allow yourself to be creative and try new combinations, you may not like them all, but you may find a new outfit.

Colours don't have to match perfectly, in fact they often look more interesting a little off tone, and try to wear more than two colours, add a third maybe as an accessory.

If you notice a piece of clothing that you love but haven't worn for a while, hang it out on view to remind yourself to wear it that week.

And wear your scarves! I know you all have lots (many given as gifts) so sort out which ones you will really wear and bag up the others for someone else to enjoy.

Don't keep for best. If you love it, wear it.

## Third Step

### *Think about what you need*

When shopping, concentrate on your list of needs initially. It makes the process so much easier. You may need a long midi skirt as an option to jeans at the weekend - you can whizz around the shops, focusing on one item, look at the options and choose the best far more quickly.

Try and buy local by supporting the boutiques close to you. They offer a unique selling experience with lesser known brands, in a calm environment.

Think about making an outfit rather than just one item - what will it go with, when will I wear it?

Buy better quality on items you know you will wear a lot like coats, jackets and trousers.

Buy transitional items that can be worn in more than one season. Mid weight knits and layering styles can be worn all year round.

Or try vintage. A great fair is held at the Farnham Maltings and the next flurry for men and women, is on Saturday 25th January, visit [www.vintagefashionfairfarnham.co.uk](http://www.vintagefashionfairfarnham.co.uk) for details

## Fourth Step

### *Clear space so you can see the clothes you love*

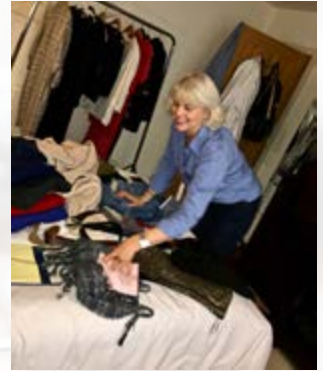
Donate clothes that you no longer love or don't fit into your lifestyle anymore. A simple reminder is to bag-up one each time you buy new.

If you need help, work with a close friend or a stylist to make decisions and move forward.

We all make mistakes, so if an item doesn't fit well or suit your life, let it go.

Bag-up textiles and damaged clothes and recycle at your local tip, good condition items can go to a charity shop or try selling your higher end fashion at one of the pre-loved shops in Surrey, listed on Surrey Frills.

My plan is to continue my fashion passion, whilst being mindful of the changing world and that less is best.



*Work with a close friend or stylist to help make choices of what stays and what goes.*

#### FIND OUT MORE

If you would like a chat about how we can work together visit my website [www.kirstiesmillie.com](http://www.kirstiesmillie.com) or email me [kirstie@kirstiesmillie.com](mailto:kirstie@kirstiesmillie.com).



Learn more about our area, independent boutiques, pre-owned stores, and useful tips and how to be more fashionably sustainable by visiting [www.surreyfrills.co.uk](http://www.surreyfrills.co.uk).