

Does Recession mean that Style takes a Back Seat?

The radio, the paper and the fluffy morning shows you watch as you sip your daily coffee all agree on one thing: prices on everything are sky-rocketing. If it's enough to make you think about clipping coupons, it is enough to get you thinking about cutting back on your clothing budget. That said, recession is a great time to expand your clothes shopping horizons and get more for your money. Here are Stilista's favorite strategies you can try on for size!

Consignment / vintage stores – Some of these stores are simply treasure galleries. Shopping there is so much fun because you never know what you will find, items are often less expensive than mall stores and (this is our favorite) you will be the only one wearing what you buy! Still, there are ways to shop consignment and vintage smart:

- 1.** Assess if the store is overpriced – many of them are! A designer piece at a consignment store should not be priced less than 50% of the original price, regardless of its condition. Even if it's brand new, it is at least a season old, and you also never truly know it's not a knock off. If the store you are visiting has a few overpriced pieces, it is a good indication that most inventory will be overpriced, so steer clear!
- 2.** Assess condition of garments – all should be intact, clean and pressed. If they are not, the store is likely managed in a sloppy way.
- 3.** Look for stores that benefit a cause – not only will it ease some of your shopping guilt, but it will also mean that standards are high, and the amount of new items is high since stores will donate merchandise they can't sell off for a tax deduction.
- 4.** Know your vintage before you go – true vintage means that clothing has been preserved well enough to be wearable decades later, and it can be challenging because over time sizes have changed, and some items are more rare than others. Stilista offers shopping with a vintage focus, which can lay the foundation for your vintage shopping adventures.

Keep Eyes Open for Sales – Even though clothes are supposedly getting more expensive because of rising production and distribution costs, stores are struggling to get people to loosen their purse strings in this economy. That's why they offer sales, specials and coupons to

get people in the store. Recently Ann Taylor LOFT offered returning customers \$25 credit for every \$50 spent – a whopping 50% discount on anything purchased. So look online and in the paper before you shop.

Plan, Plan, Plan – Stilista stylists NEVER shop for clients without a list, and neither should you. A list will help you identify what you really truly need, and how to prioritize those needs and eliminate impulse buys.