

# Spring CLEANING

You might think a woman can never own too many pairs of shoes or bags. Well, think again. ALICIA TAN takes on the challenge of forsaking bad habits and making new wardrobe rules – all in the name of fashion.

**I** think I speak for my fellow fashion editors when I declare war on wardrobe clean-outs. I am a hoarder in denial. Well, I was until two seconds ago. The greatest punishment I can ever think of is wardrobe spring-cleaning and throwing things out – that's just cruel. There's nothing that I don't need anymore – that includes those legwarmers I knitted during my rave kid days (you do the math).

While there are mums who collect Tupperware and recycle food containers, I just can't get enough of anything related to fashion. From the LBD to an everyday tote bag, I am guilty as charged. When the annual house-moving event draws near, I find myself with lesser and lesser pals willing to lend a helping hand due to the sheer frustration of having to deal with my endless loot.

So this year, after several mental pep-talks and one quick scan around my bulging closets, drawers and suitcase (yes, I still live out of a suitcase), I've decided to do myself a favour and put myself through the daunting task of clearing my wardrobes to make room for 2012. To prepare myself, I organised a mini drill and after three hours of compartmentalising my possessions, decided to part with one very mouldy pair of Havaianas – the rest of my 100 pairs of shoes stayed safe and I breathed a sigh of relief.

Now for the real deal. For such a big step, I decided to do what the experts say and get down to making lists. Being one of the lucky few to have attended Paris Fashion Week, I'm privy to



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next season's trends, so that helped. To kick start this overhaul, I made a list of the trends for the New Year, and then I took stock of the fashion items I owned. This was no easy task and took more than a day. By the end of that day, I had a mini heart attack and reality hit me hard – I am rich in material goods and poor in cash flow. What's more, I had no one to blame but myself because I put myself in that situation with my inability to resist. Also, if I weren't that much of a hoarder and didn't simply relegate previous purchases right to the bottom of the drawer, that Gucci leather jacket from a few seasons ago wouldn't have gone to waste, and I wouldn't have ended up a proud owner of eight white collared shirts that I can't tell apart.

I digress. The lists really did help me put things into perspective and from then on, I was on a roll to cull. I drew up my final list to 'Store, Wear and Chuck'. That's where things got tricky and I had to constantly remind myself to stop being over-analytical and trying to find some lame reason to save a very hideous pair of flared jeans that will probably never see the light of day again. Anything that looked like it had seen better days – like that Jean Paul Gaultier leather purse that saw me through some pretty wild times – I threw out. Moth-eaten, mouldy and mangled were the three M-criteria to make it into the bin pile. Faddish and impulse purchases that made me question my sanity didn't last either. By the end of this exercise, I actually ended up clearing out half of my wardrobe. Shocker. It was a painstaking process and, since we are going down this honesty route, it actually took me a week to finally get rid of the bin piles. As long as they continued to sit in my room, it didn't feel like I was throwing them out. Classic separation anxiety.

So far, I'm a fortnight into my spanking new wardrobe and I feel lighter just subscribing to the 'out of sight, out of mind' mantra. I never knew that hoarding was such a burden, and now I am finally able to keep track of my possessions and have room to add on some investment pieces. While this might be a bit too extreme for many or simply unnecessary for those who are disciplined, I'd recommend it to fashion victims – trust me, it's hard work, but you will thank me later. **A**