

It's All About The Shoes

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Women choose shoes over other accessories to complete their looks

Carrie Bradshaw had it right: the shoes make the outfit.

At least, that's what today's working women believe as more than three in five (64%) told Mintel they rely on footwear to complete or change the look of their work clothes.

Mintel's new survey on women's attitudes towards work attire found that women turn to shoes and dress boots over other types of accessories.

Jewelry is the working woman's second most popular embellishment, with 52% saying they finish their looks with necklaces, earrings and bracelets.

Less popular are purses, belts and scarves, used by less than one in three women to complete or change their work styles.

"Shoes and boots have come into the fashion forefront as women look for ways to make their outfits stand out," comments Kay Fay, senior analyst at Mintel. "Shows like 'Sex and the City' and even first lady Michelle Obama's bold footwear choices reinforce the shoe as a statement piece. Today's woman changes from stiletto heels to ballet flats to knee-high boots, often in the course of one day!"

Younger women are most likely to say they put their best foot forward at work with purposefully chosen shoes and dress boots.

Seven in 10 women aged 18-34 and 67% of women aged 35-44 say they use footwear to complete or change the look of their work clothes.

These younger women are also most likely to wear one pair of shoes into the office, then change into something more stylish at work (44% of 18-34 year-old women versus less than a third of women 35 and up).

"Demanding shoe styles, especially those with sky high heels, aren't ideal for walking long distances. But many young women don't care; they're perfectly content to cart in a second pair of shoes so they can commute in comfort yet look stylish in the office," explains Kat Fay.

Mintel's survey found a strong 82% of working women say they dress to please themselves, while only one in three (34%) say they like to keep up with the latest fashions.

Not surprisingly, younger women are the most trend-conscious: 46% of 18-34 year-olds say they like keeping up with the trends.

Nearly half of the 18-24 sect (47%) enjoy experimenting with new styles compared to 33% of working women overall.

Source: Mintel Oxygen Reports

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