

THE KIT

Fast fashion detox: Our editor-in-chief swore off Zara. Here's what happened **PAGE 5**

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The grown woman's guide to adulting

How to make your life better by doing less. (Hint: It starts with saying no, and learning to love it.)

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY RILEY STEWART

SMYTHE JACKET, \$935, [SHOPSMYTHE.COM](#).
UNIQLO TOP, \$30, UNIQLO



Move over, balm

Lip serums have arrived—and promise to do it all **PAGE 3**



Don't break your resolutions

Editor-tested sports bras for your fittest year yet **PAGE 7**



The most perfect leather jacket

It does exist—and it's custom-made in Canada **PAGE 3**

SKIN REVIVAL

Kick off the new year right: put your best face forward with these ultimate skin-perfecting products.

CLEAN SWEEP

Matcha is every wellness guru's drink of choice, and now you can reap the perks in skincare, too. With its clever cooling applicator, a high-powered eye cream uses green tea to treat puffiness, wrinkles and dark circles. Leave skin pristine with a multi-talented cleansing stick, made with matcha and bamboo stalk extract.

Teaology Matcha Tea Ultra-Firming Eye Cream, 15 mL, \$49, and Matcha Pore Cleansing Stick, 12 g, \$29



SILKY SMOOTH

Moisturizer is a beauty staple, but this nourishing cream is anything but basic: it's powered by a collagen-boosting Tri-Peptide Lift Complex. You'll see plumper, firmer, more supple skin that looks healthier than ever.

Estée Lauder Resilience Multi-Effect Tri-Peptide Face and Neck Creme SPF 15, 50 mL, \$115



HELPING HANDS

Masking isn't just for your face and hair; let your hands soak up the same attention. Slip on these gloves for 10 minutes, and this coconut-rich hand and cuticle mask actually warms as it moisturizes.

Patchology Perfect Ten Self-Warming Hand and Cuticle Mask, \$14



PEEL APPEAL

For a quick pre-party skin detox, reach for this pearly-red mask infused with red shiso. It's able to sneak deep into pores to draw out impurities. Then just peel and reveal for your freshest face.

Shiseido WASO Purifying Peel Off Mask, 100 mL, \$38



COMING UP ROSES

From the lovely golden jar to the sumptuous cream inside, this moisturizer adds a little luxury to your day. The star ingredient is an exclusive blend of skin-regenerating grand rose extracts you'll find only in this line.

Lancôme Absolue Soft Cream, 50 mL, \$260



PRIME TIME

To ensure your makeup is always ready for your close-up, prep with this next-level primer. The shea butter-based best-seller not only creates a smooth canvas, but also hydrates—a beauty boon in wintry weather.

Bobbi Brown Vitamin Enriched Face Base, 50 mL, \$77



WAKE-UP CALL

This rejuvenating eye cream is the next best thing to actually getting your beauty sleep. Made with crystal resin, jade powder and sea emerald, it leaves your entire eye area looking firmer, smoother and more luminous.

Darphin Stimulskin Plus Multi-Corrective Divine Eye Cream, 15 mL, \$176

BESPOKE BEAUTY

Creating a custom moisturizer for your skin's individual needs is now as easy as mixing and matching. With the revolutionary Clinique iD, you first pick your favourite base from three Dramatically Different options—the Hydrating Jelly Base, Moisturizing Lotion+ Base or Oil Control Gel Base—then add in your choice of five concentrates.

Each offers unique solutions, whether you want to address uneven skin texture, uneven tone, signs of fatigue, lines and wrinkles, or irritation.

Clinique iD Base, 115 mL, \$29 each, and **Clinique** iD Active Cartridge Concentrate, 10 mL, \$18 each



STARTER KIT

If your New Year's goal is to get your skin in tip-top shape in one month flat, consider this your beauty boot-camp. This four-week course of serums, meant to be used in order, promises to make skin stronger, more resilient and age-defying.

StriVectin Skin Reset 4-Week Intensive Rejuvenation System, 4 x 9 mL, \$149



CRYSTAL CLEAR

Makeup is no match for this pampering balm-to-oil cleanser, which melts away every last trace while leaving skin super soft and nourished. One of the most luxurious cleansers you can find, it's infused with real diamond powder to maximize your glow.

Rodial Pink Diamond Cleansing Balm, 100 mL, \$59

BRIGHT IDEA

Many anti-aging products feature a hero ingredient or two, but this one calls on no less than nine powerhouses. The water-light essence, full of encapsulated retinol, a tri-peptide complex and potent plant extracts, gives you the dewy skin of your dreams.

Eve Lom Time Retreat Radiance Essence, 150 mL, \$124



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TORONTO THE SHOPS AT DON MILLS

EDMONTON WEST EDMONTON MALL

VANCOUVER OAKRIDGE MALL

Murale
by SHOPPERS DRUG MART

Custom cool

Searching for the ultimate leather jacket? Get it made-to-order

BY JILLIAN VIERA | PHOTOGRAPHY BY RILEY STEWART

My search for a forever jacket had been fruitless. I'd scoured vintage stores and lusted after pieces from high-end labels, but there always seemed to be a snag: It fit too snugly around my slightly wide shoulders, the leather had a less-than-ideal hand feel, the bells and whistles didn't meet my aesthetic needs. Short of splurging on major alterations or conceding on some of my must-have elements, the options felt limited.

There are reasons it's worth trying to find your perfect leather jacket: Closets are built around these kinds of iconic pieces; a good one transcends trends, living eternally and getting better with age; the right jacket grants you entry into the Assured Women's Club by equipping you with don't-mess-with-me confidence.

This was the impetus for Toronto-based leather brand Namesake's new Try-at-Home method, which brings an atelier-like experience to you. Launched last month, the complimentary service results in a completely custom leather jacket, from fit and style to all the accoutrements your heart desires.

The easy-peasy process begins with selecting one of its eight base styles—options include a cropped moto and a lengthier, streamlined jacket—all fittingly named after trailblazing women in history, like Yoko Ono, Maud Wagner and Grace Jones. Then you're delivered a sleek box equipped with canvas versions of your pick ready to

be made your own. Swatches of real leather samples let you touch and feel before making the big decision. More than 100 colours of lining allow you to nail down the optimal shade of vintage russet. If you're hoping to veer outside silver hardware, there are gunmetal and rose gold alternatives to appease you. You can even go wild with extra embellishment like lacing, fringe or a detachable fur collar, if you so choose.

But the real benefit of going custom is getting that specially tailored fit. "For a piece to withstand the march of time, rather than a 'wear once' trend, a jacket must fit perfectly," says Namesake's founder, Rosa Halpern. "We embrace the fact our customers are sometimes not 'off the rack' sizes." A straight-forward, step-by-step video takes you through the precise adjustments, marking up the canvas jacket to your exact measurements.

Three weeks after returning my completed box, I received a bespoke jacket that felt positively mine, like nothing I'd tried before: a classic moto in a medium-weight, high-stretch leather that's like butter and built to my particular dimensions. There's even a subtle monogram spelling out my initials on the tag. It already felt lived-in when I tried it on for the first time and suddenly I found myself standing with a devil-may-care attitude. "A great leather jacket can be one of the most empowering pieces," says Halpern. "You slip it on and become the fiercest, bravest version of yourself."

Fashion director Jillian Vieira models her minimalist custom-made jacket.



NAMESAKE JACKET, FROM \$1,125, BY THENAMESAKE.COM. HORSES ATELIER DRESS, \$415, HORSESATELIER.COM

Why it works

Fashion director **Jillian Vieira** breaks down the beauty of an on-point street-style look. This week: a vacation-ready look featuring malted layers and perfectly piled-on gold

When you imagine a Mexico City holiday, where sunny mornings spent touring 18th-century cathedrals give way to cool nights and plenty of mezcal, this undeniably chic look, as seen on Italian fashion editor Giovanna Battaglia Engelbert, is likely what you're wearing. It starts with what might just be the breeziest shirt dress we've ever encountered: the ideal shade of almond in an inflated trapeze shape, with a collar that's effortlessly perked up. Knotted cashmere in a similar hue adds warmth and texture, while her bevvy of gold jewels, stacked from the neck down, glint in the magic-hour light. Finally, a couple subtle accessories—namely a curvaceous top-handle bag and dainty mules—bring an element of modernity to a carry-on friendly outfit.



BEN-AMUN NECKLACE, \$295, BEN-AMUN.COM



ACNE STUDIOS TOP, \$560, ACNESTUDIOS.COM



COS DRESS, \$155, COSSTORES.COM



STAUD BAG, \$500, STAUD.CLOTHING



MICHAEL KORS WATCH, \$295, MICHAELKORS.CA



ALBERTA FERRETTI SHOES, \$1,340, FARFETCH.COM



Game changers

Meet your next skincare saviour: the suddenly everywhere lip serum

BY KATHERINE LALANCETTE

If your go-to balm isn't meeting all your needs, it may be time to bring out the big guns. Whereas balms, like face creams, are designed to form a barrier over skin and lock in moisture, serums are formulated to penetrate deeper. Their smaller molecules (hence their thinner consistency) allow them to deliver high concentrations of active ingredients and target specific concerns like dryness or loss of volume. So beyond proving wonderful for curbing chapping, a lip serum can address a slew of issues like minimizing the look of fine lines around the mouth and plumping your lips from the inside.

When shopping for a lip serum, seek out a formula tailored to your particular goals. If you're on the hunt for hydration, nourishing oils and vitamin E are your best bet. Want to tackle wrinkles? Look for youth-preserving peptides and antioxidants. And if you're after fuller-looking lips, reach for a serum containing hyaluronic acid, an ingredient that attracts moisture and swells up, therefore adding volume.

How to use it? Apply a thin layer of the product over clean, dry or freshly exfoliated lips and allow it to fully absorb. You can then smooth a balm on top, slick on some lipstick or follow up with an overnight mask if you're heading for bed. Some formulas can also be reapplied over your lip colour throughout the day to provide a hit of moisture and shine.

TOOL KIT

You can use this multi-tasking tube as a volumizing treatment, a lip primer or a high-shine gloss.

BEAUTYBIO THE POUT SPARKLING ROSE VOLUMIZING LIP SERUM, \$57, HOLTRENFREW.COM



This K-beauty offering pays homage to green tea with oil from the plant's seed and a fermented version of the ingredient.

AMOREPACIFIC DUAL NOURISHING LIP SERUM, \$42, SEPHORA.CA



A decadent blend of botanical oils drenches lips in deep hydration to banish all signs of dryness and chapping.

HOURLGLASS NO. 28 LIP TREATMENT OIL, \$61, NORDSTROM.COM



How to be a grown-up

Let this be the year you earn your badges in life’s important disciplines: saying yes to what matters, buying only what you love and listening to your needs

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RILEY STEWART

Master the life-changing art of saying no

It’s difficult, learns **Olivia Stren**, but it’s worth it

About 10 years ago, I had a house cleaner named Bozena, who, when I’d ask if she might, say, be available the following Friday, would look at me squarely and say in a deep gravel: “Friday? Impossible.” She never cluttered her answer with any of the usual “Let me check my calendar” charade. Instead, she cleaned her response of the vagueness we deem as politesse. Her calendar was surely a dream of controlled tidiness, much like the state of my apartment for six minutes after her visits. Bozena and I parted ways when working with us became, presumably, impossible for reasons I was too polite and terrified to ask her about.

I think of Bozena often and her knack for the “no.” Her readiness for nay-saying was about as strong as my struggle with it. I tend, rather, to say yes to things (“yes, I can!” “yes, I’d love to!”) but not because I’m so game. My positivity springs more from a place of pathology. I’m a lifelong pleaser. I have trouble saying no for fear of burning a bridge at work, of not doing enough for a friend, of being bad at life.

But if I can blame myself, I can also blame gender politics. Girls, at least traditionally, are raised to be pleasers and are rewarded for their compliance. I can also blame our yes-obsessed culture, held in thrall to ideals of productivity. Multi-tasking—ostensibly saying yes to many things at once—has long been exalted as the most requisite skill in successful adulthood.

Of course, chronically defaulting to yes results in over-committing, under-delivering and starting virtually every email exchange with “I’m so sorry for the delay” and a sick feeling in your stomach.

Greg McKeown’s *New York Times* bestseller *Essentialism: the Disciplined Pursuit of Less* is a valentine to the glory of saying no—although McKeown would probably hasten to say no to such a reductive summary. As McKeown explained on a recent Goop podcast, “I didn’t write a book called ‘No-ism.’” Rather, his philosophy is about saying no to the non-essential things in order to be able to say yes to what matters. It’s a life audit; a call for the life-changing art of tidying up your calendar, your relationships and your life.

The prevailing cultural algorithm for a fulfilling adulthood has long gone something like: “If you can do it all, you can have it all.” But this, McKeown argues, is not only a great con, but a damaging narrative that leads us to collective misery; essentialism, he teases us, can deliver us from the cultural madness. “Only once you give yourself permission to stop trying to do it all, to stop saying yes to everyone, you can make the highest contribution toward the things that really matter,” McKeown writes, outlining the book’s basic value proposition.

It’s a sensible and wildly seductive proposition. As I read the book, I felt like a 16-year-old toying with a new set of car keys—fantasizing about my new, freer life, one with more license and promise of agency and enjoyment. But, unless you’re Bozena, saying no can be hard. “The book should come with a warning,” McKeown has said. “This is the hardest thing you’ll ever do.” Yes, but it could also be among the most radical and the most thrilling.

As a sort of call to arms to the yes slaves among us, McKeown, asks: “Have you ever found yourself stretched too thin?” I hate to be so predictable, but in fact, I actually have a recurring nightmare that I’m a balloon—stretched so thin that I am reduced to airborne particles, scattered about, floating around like an idiot, aimless, at the mercy of every passing breeze, unable to summon the gravity to touch down. (I know, my subconscious has never been prone to subtlety.)

I resolve to take control and learn to say no—at least more frequently and more guiltlessly.

I take my first step by saying no to a possible work assignment. It would provide more aggravation than income, making it essentially repulsive. I express my feelings more gently in an email: “I’m going to have to pass on this one,” I write. The response is sympathetic; my honesty was apparently appreciated. Bridges have not, so far, set fire. I feel both empowered and uncomfortable, as if I’m masquerading as a superhero, and the costume doesn’t quite flatter. But then what follows is a lightness that feels like flying—without popping.

The next day, a recovering yes addict, I relapse. In crazed

short order, I find myself hastily agreeing to three social engagements and two children’s birthday parties, in one weekend that also needs to include some work, grocery shopping, child rearing and, ideally, showering.

After a brief meltdown, I decide to send a series of retro-active “no”s. (Note: This is not ideal form; it’s a rookie move and not the kind of “graceful no” McKeown exhorts us to practise). A cyclone of texts and emails results in a virtual explosion of cancellations on my newly, delightfully minimalist calendar. Adding to the festivities, the cancelled-upon frankly seemed overjoyed by the prospect of the rain-check, responding with just a hair too much speed and understanding.

Nothing quite compares to the cork-popping high of a cancellation. As Larry David once told Jimmy Kimmel in an interview: A cancellation is a celebration.

I think of my almost-four-year-old son, Leo, who, like most small children, has long been a natural at the “no.” For the past two and a half years, most conversations involve some version of the following: “No, I don’t.” “No, I can’t.” “No, it’s not.” “No. No. No.” In fact, when Leo was about two and a half, he’d wake up in the morning and all we’d hear from his crib was: “No! No, I don’t want to!” Like, you don’t want to what? Whatever the day ahead might involve, whatever compromise to his desires it might bring, he was going to have to give it a pass.

His no style might need some finessing, but I can respect the clarity. (In some ways, toddlers are more adult than adults: They build boundaries with ease and have a flare for self-assertion. Their commitment to their ideas is inspiring when it isn’t infuriating.) Similarly, conversations with Bozena never left me wondering what she wanted, never left me trying to read between the lines or manage her emotions. In retrospect, that could actually be the highest form of politeness and consideration toward others.

A few days later, I’m hitting my stride: I say no to myself about attending that spin class I’d been meaning to try (this no pops out with professional, practised ease), and I also say no, repeatedly, when Leo runs into the bedroom at 5:30 a.m. with the announcement: “It’s morning time!” I merely roll over. “No, it’s not.”

Like most newly acquired skills, this one requires dedication. I practised it again this morning with Leo, speaking his language. When I told him it was time to go to school, he asked if he could stay home. “No,” I said. And since I haven’t completely kicked the habit of being a pleaser, I tried to soften the blow, suggesting maybe we could go and get a cookie after school. He was unimpressed. “Maybe, we could go to the moon?” he asked, as he is currently obsessed with the solar system, often proposing a quick trip to the lunar surface, after a trip to, say, Loblaws.

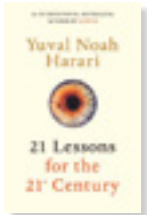
“No, we can’t,” I said. “What about Saturn?” he bargained, “Maybe, on Friday we could go to Saturn,” he persisted.

I persisted, too. “Friday?” I said, “Impossible.”



Book shelf

These reads will get you amped up to take charge of your life



This bestseller offers bite-sized lessons for those who want to stay current in our fast-paced world.

21 LESSONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY BY YUVAL NOAH HARARI



This sharp read is a reminder that sometimes your struggles can be catalysts to improving your life.

GIRL, WASH YOUR FACE BY RACHEL HOLLIS



Meet your new life handbook, which exposes the lies women often tell themselves.

—Jing Pang

*UNLEARN: 101 LIFE LESSONS WITHOUT THE BULLSH*T* BY HUMBLE THE POET

Look skin deep

When **Danielle Groen** got herself a grown-up skincare routine, she realized that the results were more profound than she expected

When I was a smoker—an identity I still find a bit heart-breaking to stick in the past tense—no cigarette gave me anywhere near as much pleasure as my fresh-out-of-the-shower, early-summer-morning-on-the-deck cigarette. The weather would be warm but not hot, and I hadn’t started to worry about the stuff that’d drive me to smoke throughout the day: my inbox, a massive deadline, an endless meeting, some weird text. This cigarette was pure pleasure, and I was purely present for it, feeling the smoke in my lungs and the sun on my wet hair. Ages after I quit, I still craved the ritual of that early-morning cigarette. So I did what any responsible adult who valued longevity over sweet nicotine would do: I got myself a skincare routine.

The routine, I knew, would help with the ravages that lay ahead (age, continued Twitter use, the obliteration of our ozone layer). So that was my future sorted. But I also believed that adopting various serums would make amends for the sins of my past. The democratization

of skincare knowledge—thanks to industry professionals on social media and unnervingly well-informed subredditors—means I have a good handle on which ingredients will do what for my face. Give me enough niacinamide and alpha-hydroxy acids, dammit, and I’ll pass as a person who never once went to bed with the tequila spins.

But in those minutes after I shower in the morning or before I go to bed at night, I’m not concerned about taking control over a scary future or a stupid past—I’m firmly rooted in the present, in the pressure of my fingers on my face as the serums sink into my skin. It’s the closest thing I’ve found to replicating the reliable Zen of that first cigarette.

There’s something more radical going on here, though, than just the application of the right products in the right order. Good grooming requires a candid (not reflexively critical) assessment of your face and a clear (not instantly brushed-off) articulation of your needs.

Women, historically, don’t have a great track record with either one of these things. I’m far more inclined to lean in super close to my mirror and apply eyeliner and lipstick with surgical focus—by the time I pull back to gauge the results, a reassuring layer of artifice has already been built up.

Skincare, on the other hand, means stripping away: cleansing, then double-cleansing, maybe exfoliating, then toning, until all that artifice is dissolved and you’re left with a fresh slate. You need a little courage to look at yourself that way, completely unadorned. That might be why, for me, a well-groomed woman broadcasts strength and commands a respect that doesn’t quite transfer to someone merely gorgeous. No effort goes into razor-sharp cheekbones, but proper skincare takes work—work that’s not only about fluency in retinoids and hyaluronics, but identifying, addressing and embracing the demands of your skin. It isn’t just observing a 10-step regimen. It’s witnessing yourself.



Kick your impluse shopping habit

Could you handle a “no-Zara” diet?
asks Laura deCarufel

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: AMERICAN APPAREL JUMP-SUIT, \$150; AMERICANAP-PAREL.COM. UNIQLO TOP, \$30, UNIQLO (BLUE). ANN TAYLOR JUMPSUIT, \$240, ANNTAYLOR.COM. TOP (WORN UNDER-NEATH), STYLIST'S OWN (GREEN). EVER NEW TOP AND DRESS, PRICE UPON REQUEST, EVERNEW.CA (YELLOW)

You know the thrill. The heavy-lidded Zara.com scroll, when every item seems better than the last: teddy coats, moto jackets, jumpsuits with sparkly trim. Model Saskia de Brauw slouches in an oversized knit, insouciant cool wrought in cloth, promising the possibility of a better self for the cost of a pizza. A couple of clicks and a couple of days later, when people compliment your new outfit, you say, “It’s just Zara!” and everyone gasps, “No!” and instinctively leans in to touch it.

The trouble with Zara is that it’s *good*. The Spanish brand’s hyperbolic global footprint—2,200 stores in 96 countries, many billions in online sales—only backs up what every shopper knows: No one does fast fashion better. The stock turns over every 13 days. The prices are great; the quality is totally fine! Everyone, even those with Birkin budgets, wears Zara: Oprah, Ariana and Queen Rania of Jordan, who recently stepped out in the brand’s \$50 culottes.

I wouldn’t say I had a *big* Zara problem—I spent a couple hundred a month, more if I could convince myself that buying a co-ord set at midnight could be considered self-care. But last summer, when it started to feel like the world was on fire and the threat of environmental calamity felt too urgent to ignore, I decided to take a hard look at my own habits, starting with my clothes.

The eco-impact of fast fashion is increasingly impossible to dismiss: 100 billion new pieces of clothing are produced each year, most of which end up in landfills. It takes 10,000 litres of water to produce one pair of jeans. Half a million tonnes of clothing micro-fibres entered the oceans in 2017—they’re becoming woven into the stomachs of fish. Those are the kind of stats that burrow and cling. What kind of world was I cultivating for my four-year-old? I had a flash of myself as a *Terminator 2*-era Linda Hamilton, clinging to a fence in a \$19.90 tank top while the playground burned.

So I stopped. I called it my “no-Zara diet” to be cute (and to suggest, at least to myself, that it was temporary). Was it hard? At first, yes. When a co-worker wore the world’s best patterned jumpsuit, she confirmed its provenance in a whisper. I called my existing pieces “old Zara,” mournfully, ridiculously, like I was talking about Old Céline. One dark night, I drifted onto the site, clicked around and then with quickening energy, added items to my cart. (The stock changes over every 13 days! Who would know?) “Well, Mother Earth, for one, girl,” I said out loud, like a psychopath. The clench in my stomach suggested that something had changed. The point was that *I* would know, and it would feel like a betrayal. As time passed, my small experiment started to feel like a test of something big.

For the first few months, I didn’t shop at all. Then my boss sent me a photo of black Roland Mouret pants

with delightful, unexpected slits to the knee. They were on sale at The Room at Hudson’s Bay, marked down from \$2,800 to \$400. Buy less, buy better, right? I bought the pants. Every time I wore them, people freaked out about their amazingness. At a black-tie event, a socialite nodded at the slit and gave me a saucy wink. I’m human; it felt good. Afterward, I did the Kondo test: I rested my hand on them and asked, “Do you bring me joy?” The answer surprised me: Some?

A few weeks later, I went to Inland, the bi-annual shopping showcase featuring Canadian designers, where I tried on a \$1,500 coat from Montreal designer Elissa Crossow. It was a perfect black coat and it fit like a dream. “You’d wear it forever,” said the voice in my head, cultivated from a billion investment fashion articles. “You’d wear it forever,” said other shoppers, who had absorbed the same lessons. I didn’t buy the coat. Instead, I left with an \$85 Amanda Moss turtleneck, made of bamboo fabric so soft that I didn’t need to Kondo it to know how joyful it was.

Stepping outside the swirl of routine can create clarity: You see your patterns, your weaknesses. Early on, I suspected that most of my fashion consumption was sparked by the itchy prickle of boredom or abject laziness. But I didn’t expect the experiment to upend my world view, too. Of course it’s madness that Zara’s stock changes every 13 days. It’s madness that the average North American throws out hundreds of pounds of clothing. It is also, however, madness that when

most of the world’s population lives in poverty, a pair of pants can cost \$2,800, sexy slit or no. Who is it all *for*? Is the whole system rigged?

Questions like that only lead to more questions. My unhelpful self-protective instinct—“Well, it’s *also* madness that we’re spinning in space right now”—has been tempered by a humbling takeaway: No matter what you’re wearing, you’re left with yourself. I didn’t buy that perfect black coat because even if someone would wear it forever, I knew that I wouldn’t. I’d wear it for a year, then I’d fall in love something else, and the coat would end up like most of my other “forever” pieces: hanging dustily on a rack or balled up on the floor in service to an elaborate *Paw Patrol* game. I saw myself clearly, and I also saw the invisible strictures of the fashion world, like the lights turning off to reveal a room criss-crossed with *Mission Impossible* lasers. It’s what you can hear in the darkness that really matters: the voice too urgent to ignore that says, “No really, you need to do better.”

So no, I’m not going back to Zara, and I’ll buy less and, yes, better, but I’ll continue to struggle with the fact that I know the world deserves more. One day, I’d like to put a hand on my heart and say, yes, *that* brings me joy.



Starter pack

A big-girl regimen that will score you better skin now—and for years to come



Because falling asleep with your makeup on isn’t cute, wash off the day with this gentle deep-cleaning gel.

SUNDAY RILEY
CERAMIC SLIP
CLEANSER, \$49,
NORDSTROM.COM



Smooth on this iconic hydrating essence using long, slow strokes to calm your complexion (and your heart rate).

SHISEIDO EUDERMINE REVITALIZING ESSENCE, \$78, THEBAY.COM



From wrinkles to dullness and loss of firmness, this serum tackles it all.

BAREMINERALS AGELESS GENIUS FIRMING & WRINKLE SMOOTHING SERUM, \$78, SEPHORA.CA



Take the time to really massage your cream in; it’ll help with absorption while boosting blood flow.

KIEHL’S SUPER MULTI-CORRECTIVE CREAM, \$79, KIEHLS.CA



The first signs of aging show up around the eyes, so do your future self a favour and dab on this rejuvenating cream.

TATA HARPER RESTORATIVE EYE CRÈME, \$123, THEDETOXMARKET.CA

How to be a boss— from women who win

We recently launched The Kit Connect Leaders Live, a monthly round table with inspiring, successful, amazing Canadian women. Here, four entrepreneurs—Kristen Gale, Tahnee Lloyd-Smith, Sharon Zohar, Shemina Jiwani—talk to editor-in-chief **Laura deCarufel** about first impressions, failure and how to enjoy success

Women often battle perceptions that we’re too nice at work. What can women do to be taken seriously in the office?

Sharon: “You have to put yourself out there and be the first person to say, ‘Let me take that on.’”

Shemina: “People will take you seriously when you take on hard projects and become more assertive than you might naturally be. I work in the tech industry, which is very male-dominated, so being taken seriously is about having a voice. In meetings, people will often speak over you, and it can be easy to give up. Always make sure you say your point.”

Kristen: “I don’t know if I actually am taken seriously so I’m going to go off the premise that I am! *[laughs]* I try to be as well read as I can, especially as an entrepreneur, so that when I’m speaking about something outside of my immediate wheelhouse, I have the relevant info and vocabulary. It makes a big difference when people feel like you’re speaking their language.”

Tahnee: “Fashion and beauty can be like your armour. As soon as you walk into a room, you’re making an impression. You say your point, you say it clearly, and then you’re just a powerhouse. Like, ‘Damn, you look like *that* and you sound like *this*. You are a force.’”

Kristen: “You also show respect for other people by showing that you made an effort. I love to wear a power lipstick—there’s something about makeup that makes me feel more put together.”

Shemina: “The other piece to being taken seriously is knowing your worth. I’ve read so many things about how women accept the offer given to us—men negotiate 75 per cent of the time, and women only do it 25 per cent of the time. We need to ask for what we want.”

The idea of success—and how to achieve it—often gets a lot of ink, but not succeeding is also important to foster growth.

“Crying on the floor, I felt despair, but I needed to get through that to understand what the next step could be.”

How do you deal with failure?

Shemina: “I don’t like the idea of, ‘Oh, just move on.’ You need to give yourself time to mourn your failure—sit in it, wallow, and then maybe you’ll see the teachings in it.”

Sharon: “As an entrepreneur, you come up against failure all the time. I had a particularly hard time a few years ago, when staff were leaving,

investors were saying no, and it felt like the whole thing was crashing down. I decided to walk away and sit somewhere else for a second, and out [of that choice] came a whole new company, direction and purpose. But I needed space to get there.”

Tahnee: “Recently, I was sitting on the bathroom floor weeping, and then I stopped and went, ‘Wait, who am I to think that there’s never going to be a problem?’ Failure is part of life.”

Shemina: “My biggest failure was not being able to have a second child, but that’s what led me to adopting my son. I had options—a lot of people don’t. Now I have this amazing, squishy child! So I get that, the crying on the floor. In the moment, I felt despair, but I needed to get through that to understand what the next step could be.”

Kristen: “When I’m feeling sorry for myself, I’ll think, ‘Hold on, I live in Canada, my kids aren’t sick, everything’s actually pretty great.’ I don’t always succeed, but I try to think of failures as something I can learn from and ask myself, ‘What can I do differently next time?’”

Tahnee: “I was at a dinner party recently and one woman was going on and on about all these horrible

things happening to her. I think she couldn’t get the wheels up on her private jet—those kind of problems. *[laughs]* I said to her, ‘You could have been one of those girls that got kidnapped by Boko Haram. Perspective!’ She looked at me and she goes, ‘We’re getting them back now.’”

Kristen: “What?!”

Tahnee: “Right? I was adopted. I could have stayed in St. Vincent, which is basically a third world country, and I think, ‘Wow, that could’ve been different.’”

Anyone who manages people will say that it’s the most rewarding and most challenging part of any job. What’s your advice for being a good leader?

Sharon: “Learning to listen. The truth is, we may be bosses, but we’re still learning all the time. You have to have people around you who are smarter than you—and you have to listen to them. Take their advice but also have your own passion and vision—the fire that drives you. Being a leader is never a straight line, but navigating it is a fun ride.”

Kristen: “When you start something, it means that you’re a doer. It’s a weird transition when you have to stop being the doer because you have a team whose job is to do it better than you. I’ve consciously had to step back and say, ‘I’m in charge of strategy and relationships. I have amazing people to do the rest.’”

Shemina: “Inclusion is important, too—making sure everyone on the team is heard. You might have a timid person in a meeting who is the most intelligent person in the room. It’s important to give people platforms to share their ideas in ways that make sense for them.”

Tahnee: “Every day, I ask my team, ‘Is there anything I could’ve done to make your day better?’ I thank them every day. As an entrepreneur, you’re doing everything and sometimes, in the frenzy of doing, you don’t listen. In the restaurant industry, they call it ‘touching the table’—checking in regularly so you don’t need to have weird conversations a month later.”

When life and work is so busy, how do you take time to enjoy your success?

Sharon: “For me, it’s about spending time with family. I have two great daughters who are teenagers now and when I’m with them, I’m with them.”

Kristen: “One of our franchise partners had a staff party recently: 250 people in the ballroom of the Ritz-Carlton. I was like, ‘What?!’ Certain moments or celebrations stand out, but I think it’s probably a better idea to have that gratitude on the day to day.”

Shemina: “I try to scale back and look at the daily successes that can get lost. We’re a new tech company and we said we were going to do these things, and we did them, and that is so amazing! Highlighting achievements to be proud of on a regular basis is key.”

Tahnee: “My husband is an entrepreneur, so we control our own schedules and work four days a week. We consciously try to work as many hours we can in four days. We’re not Instagrammers or Facebookers; I don’t spend 15 minutes



AMERICAN APPAREL BRA TOP, \$36, AMERICANAPPAREL.COM, WILFRED TOP, \$138, ARITZIA.COM

Meet the round table



Kristen Gale, founder and CEO of Ten Spot beauty bars



Tahnee Lloyd-Smith, founder and creative director of fashion label Pretty Denim



Sharon Zohar, founding partner at The Big Push, a business accelerator for women-founded tech startups



Shemina Jiwani, senior vice-president at global tech firm AscendantFX

Look the part

Anything-but-ordinary investment pieces to build your work wardrobe around

1. Amp up your collection of white blouses with a version that’s tastefully embellished with a fringed scarf.
VANESSA SEWARD TOP, \$665, VANESSASEWARD.COM

2. A to-the-floor cashmere coat brings a sense of polish to any outfit you’re wearing beneath it.
JOSEPH COAT, \$3,470, JOSEPH-FASHION.COM

3. When a big meeting calls for some cool confidence, consider these orbit-like earrings that are a total conversation starter.
JENNIFER FISHER EARRINGS, \$660, JENNIFERFISHERJEWELRY.COM

4. Confirmed: This rich, dark olive hue acts as a neutral, so don’t even think about purchasing another black bag.
MULBERRY BAG, \$1,650, MULBERRY.COM

5. A ribbed trouser decked out with a high waist and wide leg has “regular rotation” written all over it.
SOLACE LONDON PANTS, \$540, SOLACELONDON.COM

6. Switch to a sleek, stainless steel timepiece that wows with a café-au-lait-coloured face.
OMEGA WATCH, \$4,950, OMEGAWATCHES.COM

7. Reasons you need a grown-up glass slipper: It’s elegant, architectural and let’s you live out that princess fantasy at the office.
CULT GAIA SHOES, \$460, CULTGAIA.COM





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WE PUT THE VERY BEST SPORTS BRAS TO THE TEST

Just in time to support you through your New Year’s resolutions, we wrapped our wind sprints and dead lifts to bring you the top picks

BY JILLIAN VIERA



THE BEST FOR RUNNING

The tester
Jillian Vieira, fashion director

The big ask
“Ever since I took up running with some actual dedication, it’s become a priority to find a sports bra that supports me (literally and figuratively) while training. While clocking all those kilometres, I’ve learned what my prerequisites are: anti-bounce cuppage, a locked-in feel and enough coverage up top so there’s no chance of spilling out. Oh, and a little design flair doesn’t hurt either.”

1. The top pick: Under Armour Crossback Clutch Print
“After a couple clicks on the treadmill, this second-skin bra earned its top spot. There was no sweat pooling; in fact it was nearly dry (sweat-wicking material will do that). And the removable cups let me adjust the fit to my preference. Did I mention the built-in mesh panel that lets you stash your keys or a credit card for those outdoor runs?”
\$65, UNDERARMOUR.COM

2. The runner-up: Nike FE/NOM Flyknit
“When I was going through some interval training, I swore I wasn’t wearing this sports bra at all. The ultra-technical Flyknit fabric it’s made with catapulted Nike’s running shoes to fame. My only complaint is about the too-roomy fit: The extra space in the chest area is probably a plus for more well-endowed women, but in my case, the gape-y fit left me feeling a bit self-conscious.”
\$100, NIKE.COM

3. The third-place finish: Lululemon Enlite Bra
“If you’re familiar with the struggle of peeling off a sports bra post-sweat, this back-clasped piece is a blessing. Slipping it on and off with the extra room was a cinch, but fastening the hooks behind my back took some getting used to. And while the fabric was some of the smoothest I’ve ever worn, its structure had a tendency to cut in, which was a bit irritating after a couple laps.”
\$98, LULULEMON.COM



THE BEST FOR LARGER BREASTS

The tester
Oana Cazan, associate art director

The big ask
“You’ll always catch me going all out at the gym; high-intensity workouts, like TRX, sprints and spinning, are my thing. The only issue? My C-cup boobs are a bit too eager to participate along with me. I needed to find a sports bra that could tame them into submission without the suffocating feeling that usually comes with a compact fit. Why can’t we bigger-chested women have both?”

1. The top pick: Adidas Stronger For It Bra
“This bra had practicality—and aesthetics—in spades. The stabilizer cut-out on the front did an ace job of keeping everything in place, even when I really put it to the test while running laps and doing dead lifts. I usually leave the gym with a sore chest and shoulders after working out, but the straps offered the perfect amount of padding. No post-cardio pain here!”
\$85, ADIDAS.CA

2. The runner-up: New Balance Power Bra
“This might look like a no-frills sports bra, but don’t be fooled: With a lengthier below-bust band for added support, gel-padded shoulder straps, a sleek, compressed fit, plus separated, moulded cups for each breast, I didn’t have to think twice about going all out during a cardio circuit. The only reason it didn’t make number one was its not-so-current appearance.”
\$65, NEWBALANCE.CA

3. The third-place finish: Victoria’s Secret Incredible Knockout Ultra Max
“I definitely felt confident walking into the gym sporting this flashier piece. I liked being able to zip it up in front, but the point at which the straps met in the back became a bit of a distraction when I got to my weight routine. Even still, I’ll be adding it into the mix for those days when I want to bring a bit more of an athleisure vibe to my look.”
\$60, VICTORIASECRET.CA



THE BEST FOR EVERYDAY WEAR

The tester
Caitlin Kenny, digital director


The big ask
“At the risk of sounding completely ridiculous, I’ll admit that I own more than 30 sports bras. Despite the storage issues, it’s great—I’ve got bras for any workout, colour scheme, mood. But I’m still looking for something comfy enough to wear on the daily. My requirements: snug support that doesn’t make my chest feel girdled, a neckline that’s undetectable under sweaters, and a bottom elastic band that won’t curl up.”

1. The top pick: Girlfriend Collective Paloma Bra
“This bra delivers medium support while also feeling like I’m not wearing anything at all. The slightly longer silhouette sits flat on my ribs, the elastic band has a bit of fuzz on the inside for extra comfort, and the fabric (made from recycled water bottles!) is so soft. I want to live in it.”
\$50, GIRLFRIEND.COM

2. The runner-up: RYU Versa Bra
“I love this bra’s streamlined design: the way the scoop neck comes to a gentle V, the extra-slim straps and the ring that connects them at the back. It’s great on the bod, too, with slick, stretchy fabric, a fine mesh lining that feels cool to the touch and light (removeable) cups inside for a bit of shape. My only complaint is that the top layer of the fabric tends to bunch up along the neckline, making it too lumpy to wear discreetly under a fitted shirt.”
\$57, RYU.COM

3. The third-place finish: Michi Lotus Bra
“This made-in-Canada bra is soft on a whole other level. Made with what the brand calls ‘cashmere feel tech fabric,’ it reminds me of the plushiest of jersey cottons. In keeping with the cozy vibe, the bra has an extra-wide chest band, but I found that it was riding up over the bottom of my boobs. If I sized up, I could wear this to yoga and feel very om about my chichness level, but it’s a bit too thick for my day-to-day vibe.”
\$105, MICHINY.CA

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HOW TO RUN FASTER

Five tricks that worked for these *Kit* editors

BY CAITLIN KENNY AND JILLIAN VIERA

Adulthood doesn’t offer us many opportunities to take home a medal. It was that yearning that led us to take on a new challenge: completing our quickest 5-km race ever. We turned to Toronto-based Nike running coach Brittany Moran for guidance on how to run faster.

1. TAKE BREAKS
“You can’t start off by completing all of your training runs at a very fast pace or you’ll risk getting injured,” says Moran. Instead, she recommends interval training to help increase running speed and stamina over time. Every week, we hit the track, where we cranked up our speed for a set of shorter distances, such as five 800-metre laps (two loops of a standard track) at our goal pace, with a minute’s rest in between each. We won’t lie: The first time we ever finished a speed session, we thought we were absolutely about to keel over. But over time, it became easier, and we noticed our long runs were also getting easier as a result.

2. DON’T PUSH THROUGH PAIN
Despite our most conscious efforts to avoid injury, we both found ourselves with knee pain as we approached race time. With help from Moran, who is also a chiropractor at the Runner’s Academy in Toronto, we assessed whether it was safe to keep running. While she recommends getting a doctor to weigh in, if you’re tight for time before a race, you can do this simple test: “Jump on a single leg for one minute—if you can’t do that, it’s probably not a good idea to run, because running is basically jumping from one foot to the other.” Because a lot of our strain was coming from imperfect form, we swapped a few distance sessions for shorter bursts of near-sprints. The speed causes your form to tighten up. This adjustment allowed us to keep building our fitness, while working on form without making the aches worse. The only pain that was

worth pushing through: foam-roller stretching sessions, which also played an important role in keeping injuries at bay.

3. HAVE A MANTRA
The mental battle is often the biggest obstacle most runners face on race day. Moran’s best advice? Come up with a mantra. “Why did you sign up for the race? Why did you spend all of that time training? Use that to come up with a mantra and have it ready for when it gets tough out there.”

4. EAT RIGHT, DRINK LOTS
We’ve all heard that “food is to the body what gas is to a car” analogy enough times to know that fueling is important. As for the best foods to eat before a run? It’s all about having a nutritious breakfast—think one packet of instant oatmeal, half a banana and a cup of fruit juice—about 1.5 to 2 hours before you hit the course. Skip out on high-fat or -fibre meals beforehand, too; all the bouncing and sloshing can produce, well, less than ideal digestive conditions. Once you reach a hydration station, reach for water (pinch the cup while you sip to avoid mid-running spillage). Even if you’re not particularly thirsty, a swish-and-spit of an electrolyte-packed drink can give you a mental boost.

5. FIND A BUDDY
Ninety-nine per cent of training runs that we skipped were ones that we had planned to do on our own. Having a running partner—or team!—will give you the push to show up on days when you don’t feel like it. On race day, that partner can motivate you, recite the mantra, call you out when you want to quit. Plus, it makes the whole thing a lot more fun and gives you someone to celebrate with at the finish line when you achieve your goal (which, P.S., we did, both shaving minutes off our previous personal bests!)

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Real women.
Real talk.

Tanya Talaga shot by Luis Mora for The Kit

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