

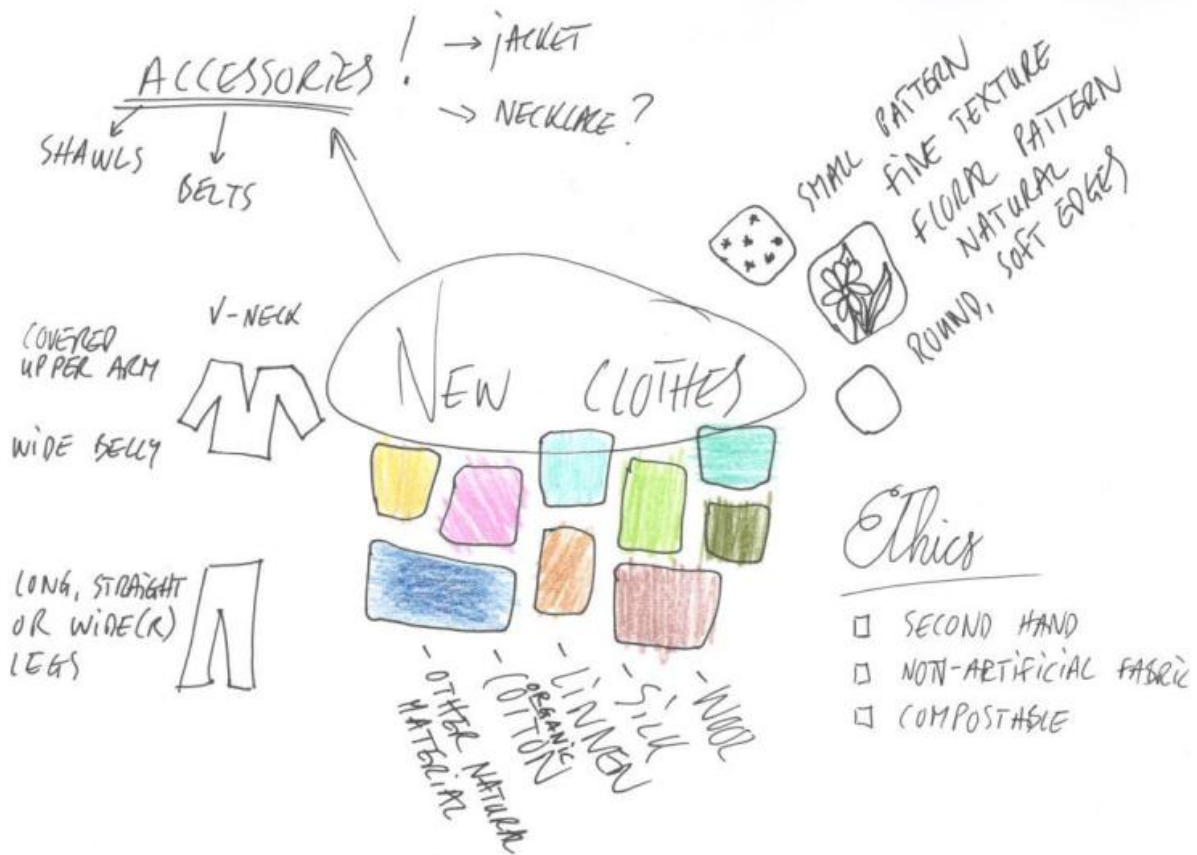
MY UNFASHIONABLE MINIMALISTIC CAPSULE WARDROBE

A capsule wardrobe is a collection of a few **essential** items that **don't go out of fashion**. It are interchangeable items in a colour scheme, to maximise the number of outfits that can be created.

The idea of a wardrobe in which each piece has a few matching items, really appeals to me. I am not picky or stylish but I do sometimes think that "I have nothing to wear". Clothes don't fit, have holes or stains or aren't appropriate for the weather. I would like to get organised. And I would love to just grab an outfit from my closet and know that I look fine!

The idea of making a personal permaculture design for what I wear, also appeals to me. It brings more permaculture in my life, more care for the planet, for myself and for the future.

I used [Looby Macnamara's Design Web](#) for this design.



Vision

My wardrobe is filled with beautiful, quality, long lasting clothes that do not go out of fashion and match my lifestyle needs in that season. "Everything" fits well and matches, so getting dressed is easy.

My clothes are repairable and compostable. That means natural materials like wool, silk, linnen or organic cotton.

When I need something new, I have a mental checklist with my sizes, colour scheme, preferred style, I know what materials to choose...

Limits

I have never given much thought to what I wear, what my style is, what colours go well with me. How I look is not high on my priority list and I have limited time to think of my outfit in the morning.

I have no clue about my size(s). It seems that my upper body has a bigger size than my but, and my legs are often too tall for trousers. And in the men's jeans department the size numbers are totally different and in the second hand shop the size is often missing!

My wardrobe is small: 2 shelves of 110cm each, a basket for socks and a basket for underwear. No hang space, except the coat rack where I hang my 2 hoodies.

An "official capsule wardrobe" has 30-40 items per season. With 4 seasons that is 160 pieces of clothing! Socks, sportswear and pyjama's not included! That seems a lot to me. I think I can go with 2 seasons: warm and cold. That will be 60-80 items in total.

When I'm working (in the garden or somewhere on the terrain), it is possible that visitors arrive or a camping guests wants my attention. So I can't just wear my stained old clothes with holes.

I don't wear an apron while cooking...

I have clothes that don't fit, that are really silly, that don't match with anything else or have too big holes or stains.

I am only willing to spend money in a second hand shop, or in a small, privately owned shop. So not big chains but small, local, family owned, home made clothes for me.

The majority of the clothes in shops are made from synthetic materials. I don't want to wear plastic clothes. The elasthan in underwear is enough. I prefer wool, silk, bamboo, organic cotton.

I have a sewing machine but I don't know where to buy nice fabric here in Croatia. So in order to have a good choice, I am limited to buying fabric while visiting my mum in The Netherlands.

44	in The Netherlands
= 48	in France
= 52	in Italy
= 20	in UK and Australia
= 18	in US
= 19-21	in Japan



Helps

My sewing machine

My mum who taught me how to sew and who can make "anything".

The second hand shop in Karlovac, where they also have a XL-rack.

Pinterest.com for ideas and patterns.

Etsy.com for home made clothes (and ideas to make them myself).

The internet for free patterns and size conversion tables.

I am ready for an intentionally put together wardrobe that fits me, also literally.

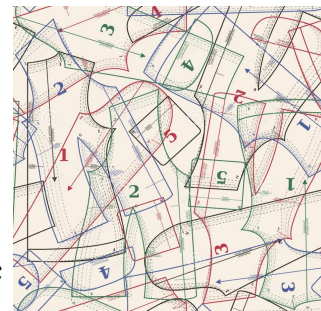


Patterns

My lifestyle pattern is that I am "always" around other people (guests, volunteers, people in the village or city) from spring until mid autumn. So I need to look representative all day. Only in winter there can be days that I see only my family.

I don't have a style (!?) and I don't know which colours and patterns fit me well. So I buy random pieces that I individually like, but don't go well together with me and/or with my other clothes. This pattern is unhelpful if I want a clean and neat wardrobe.

The patterns I see in my wardrobe, are "warm", "nature" and "flowers". There aren't any abstract or angular patterns; everything is "soft" and round and natural. Also the colours are coming from nature (except in my jeans). Greens, pink, beige...



Another pattern is that I don't know my size, and in my mind I am tall and slim. So I keep picking clothes that are too small for me.

Sewing patterns are easy to find online these days. And I can also make my own patterns, from clothes that fit well.

Ideas

I can do an online style and colour test to see what matches with me.

I should go through all my clothes with a critical eye and let go of the pieces that don't fit, are really silly, don't match or that have holes or stains. The Red Cross will be happy with them or really bad pieces can go as weed suppressor in a garden bed.

I can rearrange my wardrobe in 3 categories:

1. work clothes: strong wear for gardening and outdoors use: almost daily
2. city & course clothes: beautiful, colourful, "me" use: 2x weekly, or 10 days
3. special clothes: sports, wedding, funeral use: not often

The pieces that are not suitable for the season, can go in a transparent box under the bed. Transparent so I can see what is where, if the weather suddenly changes.

Maybe it is wise to also put the special clothes under the bed.

I should make re-dressing easy by hanging gardening clothes in the garden tool shed. The right gear in the right place.

And of course I should wear an apron while cooking!

There are cool ways to mend clothes, with nice patches of (different) fabric on or under the hole, with embroidery or Japanese "sashiko", with felting sheep wool on woollen clothes or other natural fibres...

I can do an online sewing course on Udemy.com to refresh my skills and get inspired.

The whole size-thing can be solved once and for all by measuring myself in detail, and noting it down in a drawing. Next I can look up the international sizes for my trousers and my shirts, and note/picture everything in my phone.

This drawing of my body and its measures also comes in handy with sewing my own clothes.

Principles

This design is all about observing and interacting, and a good capsule wardrobe will save a lot of energy.

6 Pieces to make 30 outfits (improved connections between the elements and stacking functions). All individual items should be matching with at least 5 other items! Least change for the greatest effect.

My clothes cycle and recycle: I buy second hand and bring unsuitable clothes to the Red Cross.

Waste not want not: if it is clear what my size, style, colours and my needs are, I can't buy something that doesn't meet the criteria. Learn from earlier mistakes and be prepared (with a checklist).

Integration

The key functions are:

- I need comfortable, strong and cool/breathing work clothes that fit me, for outdoors and gardening, that I can also wear around guests and visitors.
- I need enough city/going out/giving courses clothes that make me look good for 10 days
- I need 2 formal outfits: for a wedding and for a funeral.
- I need a (mental) check list with my size, my colours, my style and preferred fabrics. If an item doesn't tick all boxes, it's a NO.

I will make a knee covering gardening apron (with many pockets) to protect my clothes while working in the garden. If I hang my garden apron in the garden tool shed I have the right "tool" in the right spot, and an apron is easy to put on & off.

For my city clothes I choose a colour scheme that goes well with all the good items that I have. With this colour scheme I can make more "connections": 1 pair of cream coloured trousers can go with at least 5, but possibly 10 other pieces of city clothing.

I will design "outfit recipes". Take my few pairs of trousers as a base, and make note of which tops go well with each of them. Maybe go as far as trying them on and playing with them, adding accessories (that I don't really have...)? Make a mindmap with pictures for each trousers?

With these outfit recipe sheets I will never have to think about my outfit anymore.

City clothes that are getting too old, I will let go to the work clothes collection. In that way the colour scheme of my work clothes will slowly adjust to my city clothes scheme, and in the end ALL my clothes will go well together!

Action

Start with looking at what others do with clothing. Make a Pinterest board to collect ideas on how to dress, to stretch my ideas and beliefs.

Make a drawing of my body, measure all parts and note it.

Look up the clothing sizes for it and note them in my phone so I always have it with me.

Buy transparent boxes that fit under the bed

Find out what colours go well with my hair and skin. Make a colour scheme.

Find out what kind of necklines suit me well: V neck or turtle neck or anything in between.

Get organized and go through all my clothes with a checklist:

- ✓ Does it fit?
- ✓ Is the colour right for me?
- ✓ Is it my style/will I wear it?
- ✓ Does it match with at least 5 other items?
- ✓ Work clothes: are they strong and cool/breathing?

Old "city clothes" that aren't good enough any more to present myself well, can go on the work clothes pile (although they might tear soon).

I will find a nice way to mend the holes in my clothes. Find out more about sashiko. Make a Pinterest board about mending clothes.

Design outfit recipes, mindmap style, with trousers as the base. What goes well with these trousers?



Momentum

When my capsule wardrobe is there, I should take good care of it so it will last long. Not wash my clothes too often, not wash them too hot (30° or 40°), don't dry colourful items in the full sun. I can make a rod in front of my bedroom window to air clothes.

The idea of a capsule wardrobe will get more and more momentum over time because from this moment, I will only buy clothes that fit in! Fit the colour scheme, fit the patterns that go well with me, fit my size...



Appreciation

I love the simplicity of the whole idea of a capsule wardrobe! Thank you Susie Faux! The idea of matching clothes really resonates with me. To just grab the first trousers and shirt and they match and make me look good! Wow.

I appreciate my collection of woollen underwear because it makes that I can wear "anything" over it, even in the coldest weather.

What I appreciate about myself is that I don't need much. I appreciate all items on my 2 shelves and I'll be happy to repair them when necessary.

I also appreciate it that I never felt an urge to go "shopping" because I wanted new clothes. I am a functional buyer: I buy clothes when I really need them.

Reflection

In summer 2020 I first heard about a capsule wardrobe. A bit late: the concept already exists since the 1970's (Susie Faux). I read an article about it and immediately loved the idea, for so many reasons! The simplicity, the mind space it frees up, to have matching clothes in my wardrobe, to have a (mental) checklist for buying new things...

After critically cleaning out my 2 shelves and the boxes under the bed, I noted that I only need a new bra!

The best part of this all is that I have ALL of my clothes, yes all of them, for all seasons, on my 2 shelves. It fits easily! I have 47 pieces for all seasons. Or 50, when I also count my 2 shawls and a special belt. An "official capsule wardrobe" has 30-40 items per season so I officially "don't have enough clothes". That idea gives a lot of space in my head!

Pause

I think that having a capsule wardrobe will give me time to pause. Or at least ease of mind, because I don't have to think about what I wear anymore.

Maybe after a while, taking a pause in being concerned with my clothes, I am ready for something new. New clothes, a new style...