

## Gray is the new black

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### Scale gray this season

Worn a certain way, it may conjure schoolmarm, but it also channels schoolgirl. Stereotypically boring on its own, but incredibly versatile when paired with this season's vivid jewel tones, gray is fall 2007's muted winner.

Whether smoldering pewter or classic charcoal, there's a way to work it into your wardrobe, even as an accent color.

At Express in [Hamilton Mall](#), gray pants and suitjackets are a mainstay, where a popular combination is also the chain's Editor pants paired with a button-up collared shirt, standard-issue work attire. Winning matches alongside basic gray pieces are emeralds, burgundies and maroons. Especially prevalent are high-waisted and belted pants, said assistant manager [Crystal Taylor](#).

"You can pretty much put anything with it -- pink, black white," she said. "The burgundy and the wine colors look really good with the darker gray."

Deep purple, deep red and aubergine along with mustard orange provide autumnal accents. Still, placement and shape are key in making sure the color doesn't wear you.

"Gray can be a very tricky color," said [Jamie Yasko-Mangum](#), style consultant at [www.successfulstyle-image.com](#). "It can make you look older than what you are. It can wash you out if you don't wear it correctly."

For men, the color is everpresent in dresswear: especially hot right now are vests, along with layered color crews underneath gray knits. Ladies' classic pencil skirts, pleated pants, wraparound dresses with three-quarter length sleeves and argyle and V-neck zipper knits for both sexes are also abundant.

#### *Tips for wearing gray:*

Rayon says spring, wool definitely says fall or winter. "The material dictates whether it's spring or fall," said Yasko-Mangum.

Light gray demands strategy. "It can make you look wider in the hip area," said Yasko-Mangum. If your worry area is your middle section, go for medium to darker charcoal grays, especially on top, and steer clear of dressing in light-gray monochrome ensembles.

Hoisery and tights in gray and charcoal can easily incorporate the shade without dragging an outfit down.

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#### SIDEBAR: **Give it some shine**

Even if your gray wardrobe items are muted, watch out for metallic accents in silver on bags and coats.

"We're seeing metallic across the board," said [Amy Cafazzo](#), style expert for Marshalls. And it's OK to go with some patent leather, even if the last time you sported some was on those black shiny dress shoes of your youth.

Just beware of balance: even sneaks come in patent leather varieties (witness: oh-so-shiny [Adidas Superstars](#)), but that doesn't mean you need patent leather shoes, a silver bag and a shiny suit. Not only will you look lost, but also like something out of "Lost in Space."