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ESSAY

NEW YORK NEW STYLE

When fashion PR Sara Byworth relocated from London to Manhattan, she found dressing for work a whole new ballgame

My desire to overhaul my wardrobe and stop dressing like a preppy schoolgirl started the moment I left London 18 months ago for a new job in New York. In an incredibly competitive city and in an industry where you're brutally judged on first impressions, I needed a wardrobe that said professional, polished businesswoman. There was no place in my suitcase for those girly miniskirts and A-line shifts that had built the foundations of my London-fashion-PR look for the last 16 years. It was time to leave that girl behind and create a new, sophisticated signature work style for my role as brand director of Frame Denim.

Editing my wardrobe for the move was a ruthless affair. The only survivors were a Junya Watanabe crisp striped shirt (too formal for London but perfect in NYC) and my Christopher Kane pieces – they will always stand the test of time, whichever side of the pond I'm on.

My work style back home was fairly erratic: loafers and minis one day, flares and vintage tees the next. In New York, I've been swayed by the glossy Manhattanites to embrace a slick uniform that means business. For a start, my hemlines have dropped. I love the pleated midi skirts and culottes by Tome and Isa Arfen – they make me feel ladylike and authoritative. And I've rejected my flats for heels – high enough to make me feel 'done' but wearable enough to dash from Soho to Uptown. (Thank you, Tabitha Simmons.) My trousers are high-waisted and tailored, from Whistles, J Crew or Haider Ackermann, and I've invested in a black trench by Alessandra Rich. I've also fallen out of love with print. Fashion moves so fast and patterns can date quickly, so now I opt for 'timeless' rather than 'on trend', incorporating cream, black, navy and grey with pops of colour.

My earring collection is steadily growing, too. Women here love statement jewellery for work; Londoners are more low-key. I've treated myself to some hammered gold Hervé Van der Straeten pieces and Dior's tribal earrings in blue. I love the finish they give to a look.

Now that my style has grown up, there's just one thing left to 'fix' – my British teeth. I suspect that will take a little more time. ■

For more on how to dress like a New Yorker, visit REDONLINE.CO.UK



Classic colours and commutable heels set the tone for Sara's slick new working wardrobe



SARA'S 9-TO-5 NY FAVOURITES



Leather shoes, around £579, Tabitha Simmons at Moda Operandi

Silk shirt, £250, Equipment

24ct gold-plated earrings, around £315, Hervé Van der Straeten

Cotton-mix trousers, £195, Whistles



Silk skirt, £545, Tome at Moda Operandi



Leather bag, £795, Anya Hindmarch

For stockist details, see the Directory