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# Shopping Phases We Go Through



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On July 28, 2015

As we get older, we go through changes in our life. Growing up means continuing to expand ourselves, our minds and our lifestyles by experiencing new things and going in different directions. Along with our physical and emotional growth, we may find ourselves trying to find who we are as a person and a part of that is how we dress. Yes, even our style changes over time too.

We tend to gravitate towards different types of stores at different times in our lives. Here are the major shopping phases we've all been through (or will go through):

## Food Court > Shopping

There was a point in my life when I absolutely hated shopping. I detested it. When I was really little I despised going to the mall and being dragged by my mom from store to store. At that time, I would rather eat salted soft pretzels and drink iced lemonade than spend too long in a stuffy store.

## Fifth Grade

My interest in shopping—and I mean real shopping, not toy shopping—started in fifth grade when the clothes you wore at school became a big deal. Really, I'm just referring to the one store that all the girls went to: Limited Too. Known as [Justice](#) now, I feel like every girl can recall her time spent in this glittery, girly store. It was kind of a rite of passage for all young girls around that age to experience what this store had to offer. Who can remember the thin spaghetti straps, the colorful ponchos and the cool zip up pants that could transform into shorts and capris? Limited Too just made us feel special and offered all the things our little girl-selves could want. [Claire's](#) and [Icing](#) felt the same way. They had all the right accessories, like cute animal earrings and soda flavored lip balm.

## Middle School

In middle school, shopping became a little more serious. Everything had to be the epitome of cool. It was all about [Abercrombie Kids](#) and [Hollister](#) and their pitch-black stores and blasting music. All the girls and guys shopped there and proudly showed off branded tees, polo shirts, jeans and sweatshirts. Having the little deer and bird logo on the edge of your clothing meant you were "in." Although these outfits were ultra popular, they were also on the expensive side. Nice alternatives were [Aeropostale](#) or [PacSun](#). They had cool options and were usually under your parent's budget.

## High School

Shops like [Abercrombie & Fitch](#), [American Eagle](#), [Urban Outfitters](#) and [Free People](#) were big influences on how we dressed and what types of looks we were into during that time period. [Forever 21](#) was a major game changer, too. It was a store that was reasonably priced and had so many sales on stylish clothing. During this time it was all about socializing and going out with friends. For those events, we needed outfits that were cute, fashionable and a little more mature. So, sometimes we shopped at [Victoria's Secret](#) to get that mature vibe.

## College

Everything's different and unfamiliar, which caused another shift in the shopping department. [H&M](#) was always my go-to haven for decently priced clothes that were a step up from my high school attire. They had cool chunky sweaters, all kinds of crop tops and tight dresses and skirts: the unofficial wardrobe for a woman college student. Other stores that contributed to this stage of life include [Topshop](#), [American Apparel](#), [Anthropologie](#), [Uniqlo](#), [Madewell](#), [Lululemon](#), [Francesca's](#) and [Lilly Pulitzer](#). These stores knew how we wanted to come across: a somewhat older, chic yet still fun to go out and party girl. At the same time, most of us became more aware of expenses in college, so we opted for places like [Marshalls](#), [TJ Maxx](#) and [Target](#) as alternatives.

## Adult Life

Towards the end of college and even after, more changes take place especially when people start to know what they want to do and be in life. This phase is accompanied by a lot of significant events like interviews, internships, jobs, meetings and big presentations where dressing the part creates a lasting impression. These activities rub off on our fashion choices—we look for things that are more sophisticated, polished and expensive. [Aritzia](#), [Express](#), [Gap](#), [J.Crew](#), [Tory Burch](#), [White House Black Market](#) and [Banana Republic](#) are favored stores. No matter what store we're at, we're focused on designers, materials, and the quality of the clothes. As we move into our own spaces, furniture shopping turns into something essential and fun. We turn to [IKEA](#), [HomeGoods](#), [Ethan Allen](#) and [Pottery Barn](#) for home décor inspiration. Interestingly, my own mom likes to shop at most of these stores, which shows that the taste gap lessens levels as we age.

You wouldn't think the places we shopped at would be so defining and have such a pull and influence on us, but they really do. I think it's important to reflect on all the different stores because it shows how we have grown and developed as women.

Feature Photo via [We Heart It](#)