It's 7 a.m. after a grueling Thursday night-out. You're late for class, the Advil isn't **helping your hangover** and picking an outfit is the last thing on your mind. Before throwing on the same sweatshirt, spice things up with some **fashion-forward tips.** It doesn't take a rocket-scientist to elevate everyday staples — just **some accessories.**

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► **UPGRADE ANY OUTFIT** with a spunky jacket. Even without this statement piece, you can always add a belt or jewelry to spice it up.

UPGRADE

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It's Miami 101: the classic revolving uniforms many students wear throughout the week. How can you escape the cycle? How do you differentiate yourself on a college student budget — and what if you don't want all this attention of standing out? Don't worry, it's a lot easier than it sounds.

"A supposed stigma around dressing up for class is where a lot of students falter," University of Miami senior Isabel Ackerman said, wearing her lounge fit of white Alo Yoga sweats, a thrifted Dolce and Gabbana top, an Aritzia cardigan, Adidas shoes with pink ribbon laces and socks with hearts on them.

"You're getting up, you're exhausted, maybe hungover, but even when I am putting on a comfy outfit I like it to be cohesive," said Ackerman.

Resident "it-girl" Ackerman has made viral fashion TikToks that showcase her sense of style. You can easily spot her on campus because of her elevated outfits, making her stand out among the sea of hoodies. Ackerman explains that a simple way to elevate your look is by curating your wardrobe.

► **PATTERNED PANTS** and a simple top — what could go wrong?

"Go through your closet and develop your basics — not what is basic, but your basics," said Ackerman. "I'll have one piece in mind and I'll style around that or I'll have one color or color scheme. One way I'll make my comfy outfits look more put together is basing it off of one color … I think if you want to look a little more put together, figuring out a color palette is a great way to start."

UM senior Gabriella Trama agrees and cites capsule wardrobes as a leading force in her fashion. She adjusted her closet to 95 percent neutral colors over the past few years.

"I feel best that way," said Trama. "It's all about finding your personal style and for me my personal style is mostly in neutrals, and that just makes me feel more comfortable."

Curating your closet can also make your wardrobe more sustainable. The constant pressure of needing a new outfit or something specific traps students into the fast fashion cycle, both unsustainable to the planet and their wallets.

"When I was younger and I bought more colorful clothing. I was always trying to keep up with the trends," Trama said. "I buy less now, and I feel less of the need to purchase things as often because I feel like my wardrobe never goes out of style … And I think that's where I have fun with fashion — in silhouettes and textures. Velvet, satin, low rise versus high rise. All that."

Another way to avoid feeding into micro-trends is by steering clear of fast fashion. Ackerman suggests secondhand shopping, like thrifting or apps like Depop or Poshmark instead.

"It's crazy how quick trend cycles are nowadays," said Ackerman. "Which is fine, don't get me wrong. I do wear some trendy stuff, and my style will change somewhat based on trends … It just takes practice and going in knowing what you're looking for. People think it's overwhelming … But you

just have to spend a week or a few hours liking and saving stuff. Just like TikTok and Instagram have an algorithm, so does Depop. Look at different people you know about and look at who they're following."

Accessorizing is also an easy way to elevate your closet. A simple T-shirt and jeans become cooler by adding sunglasses and jewelry. Statement accessories can show off your unique flare. Miami has a plethora of local designers, and the internet is crawling with small businesses waiting to be discovered. Hats, jewelry, sunglasses, shoes, bags — there's no limit to style yourself.

Another fashion trap at the U is the overemphasis of labels.

"The older I got, the more I got away from name brands," UM junior Jordan Berrada said. "I like pieces where people have to question, 'Where did he get that from?'"

Your aesthetic can add to your allure, but if you're wearing exactly what everyone else is, what's the appeal?

"The way I see fashion, with high luxury brands, is it's not so much that you're buying the product itself. It's that you're buying their credibility," said Berrada. "You're using brands' credibility to express yourself, but I think there's more merit in expressing yourself in your own types of ways of dressing. I think there's beauty in subtlety. I think that has a cooler outlook and a cooler message."

Berrada initially explored fashion as an escape. Growing up in Milwaukee, he felt like he didn't really fit in but, by taking risks with his clothes, he developed confidence, and it changed his outlook on himself and life.

"I wasn't really happy with how I looked weight-wise or face-wise, and my way of hiding that was the way I dressed," said Berrada. "It killed two birds with one stone. On the one, it helped my confidence a lot but it also differentiated me for sure from people

who I didn't feel like I fit in with. I'd say I'm a person who is not really scared to stand out or do my own thing and, in a way, how I dress kind of shows that."

Unfortunately, sometimes fashion in Miami brings new meaning to the dreaded phrase "one size fits all." There seems to be a need to wear very little clothing, in large part due to the hot climate.

"[When I was younger,] I thought that in order to feel pretty I had to wear really, really cut off denim shorts and have a really low-cut shirt just so I could feel pretty and attractive," said Trama. "As part of growing into my personal style and becoming more comfortable with myself, I started to dress in ways that made me feel comfortable because I realized that what made me feel pretty is feeling comfortable. So for me that means not really showing as much skin anymore or wearing looser things, and also weird quirky things like Dickies around my ankle with long socks and boyish sneakers."

In a city where it's all about the flashiness and the hype, it's interesting to consider how daily looks don't require the same effort.

"I will dress up in a fit to go to Target and everyone's like 'oh, you look so nice' versus in New York, whatever errand you're running, it's always a fashion show. Since you're walking everywhere or taking the subway, you're not just throwing on a pair of sweats or leggings and driving, you're always being seen," said Ackerman. "The whole attitude toward it is different [in Miami]."

When it comes down to it, fashion can be about showcasing who you are — the real upgrade is internal. Being comfortable and confident in your own skin is essential to elevating your look. Be it wearing rhinestones on your face like Trama or wild accessories like Ackerman and Berrada, there's so much more to explore than the standard UM fashion formula. ⓘ