Reddit Hot Take:

Fashion Faux-Pause

How this year’s fashion trends are making Millennials realize they’re no longer the trendsetters.
In 2021, Millennials were +66% more likely to be mentioned in Fashion Trends communities than Gen Z.

In 2020, Millennials were +66% more likely to be mentioned in Fashion Trends communities than Gen Z.

In 2021, that gap decreased to +7%.

SOURCE:
1. Brandwatch; Net votes; Last 2 months (Feb. 2022 vs. Dec. 2021)
2. Brandwatch; # of users; Last 4 months (Feb. 2022 vs. Nov. 2021)
3. Reddit Internal Data, Fashion Trends Child Interest Group; 2021 vs. 2020
Growing up is realizing that Harry was drippy way back in 2001.

Source: Reddit
What is “fashionable” in 2022? I think I am lost

Caution: The following paragraphs are confused ramblings from an old fart (34) who doesn’t know how fashion works anymore.

I am just really confused about what makes a "good" outfit nowadays.

In 2013, if someone asked for advice dressing well, you could give them a very simple set of rules and they would look pretty good. You could spend a couple hours on r/MaleFashionAdvice and be the well-dressed person in your friend group. In 2022, I don’t know what those rules would be.
DOES THIS MAKE ME LOOK OLD?

Fashion trends have always operated in a cyclical nature. Refreshing trends of the past is a well-worn path to success. But micro-trends brought about by fast fashion and social media have shortened these cycles. Millennials simply don’t have time to keep up.

And it’s not just the time that’s an issue. Amidst a pandemic, growing families, and wfh, fashion trends just don’t seem that important. Why waste time trying to keep up when there’s nowhere to go anyway?

Underneath all of this is the realization that Millennials are struggling with the body changes that happen as we approach middle age. Suddenly the styles we could rock in our 20’s feel a lot harder to pull off. The result? A feeling of being just out of step, and the surprising realization that perhaps that’s for the best.

From: Fashion-forward  To: Opting Out

86% of US Millennial redditors do not feel represented in the advertising they see.

+78% YoY increase in redditors feeling like they don’t have enough time.

44% of US Millennial redditors do not consider themselves to have a normal/healthy weight.

"I'm 31... I have been shopping at "young" stores less only because a lot of Gen Z trends aren't flattering on my body. (Like mom jeans make me look heavily pregnant.)"

The Origin:

Created by the Reddit Partner Insights Team

Source:
1. GlobalWebIndex, USA data, Q4 2021
2. Within the Fashion Interest Group, 2021 vs. 2020
3. GlobalWebIndex, Core data, Q4 2021
Athleisure vs. Fairycore Conversation

Unlike a macro fashion trend like Athleisure that continues to gain interest over time, micro trends like Fairycore are hot one-week, then out the next; there is no consistency — and, long-term growth flatlines.

weekly spike in mentions of Fairycore, only for mentions to decrease to pre-spike levels immediately the following week.

SOURCE: Reddit Internal Data, Global Mentions, 2018-2022
1. Week of 6/29/20 vs. 6/22/20 and Week of 7/6/20 vs. 6/29/20 and 6/22/20
MONOTONOUS FASHION

So where do Millennials go in a post-trendsetter world? Could it be that the forever anxious, never settled generation find some peace in fashion monotony? It certainly seems that way.

Conversations are spiking around “wearing what you want” and creating a “capsule wardrobe”—Millennials’ version of GenX’s uniform look. Having seen fashion come full circle, it seems like Millennials are ready to choose a look and stick with it.

But it goes beyond creating an identifiable look. The past two (or more) years of future-phobia have sent us reeling for nostalgia. But after years of wallowing in the past, the comfort has run out. Now, it’s not looking back that provides peace, but reducing mental load in the present. Following fashion is just another burden.

For Millennials, the confidence to wear what you love may be the trendiest move of all.

SOURCE:
2. Jan 2022 vs July 2021), Across all of Reddit
3. Within the Fashion Trends Child Interest Group, March 2021-March 2022

NEXT: AN EVOLVING TREND

Just a reminder that it’s perfectly acceptable to wear the same couple of outfits over and over.

Despite what peer pressure/society tells us, we don’t actually have to spend our time and money to stay up with the trends and have an outfit for every day of the month or even year.

I just want to throw a little support out there for anybody else like myself who has felt pressured to live up to certain wardrobe expectations. Wear what you want and how often you want!

YoY increase in support for wearing what you like/want

+119%

increase in “Capsule Wardrobe” mentions in the last 6 months

+54%
“The current iteration of capsule wardrobe-ish closet strategy that works for me is hiding all of the things I'm not currently into ... it helps with decision fatigue to be able to see the clothes I enjoy without sifting through stuff that I am not in the mood for right now.”

— Redditor in r/FemaleFashionAdvice
If Gen X dressed for the task (power suits, anyone?), and Millennials dressed for feeling (athleisure), then Gen Z will dress for values.

Whether it’s the ethics behind the garment or the identity-smashing impact of breaking gender norms, Gen Z dresses as though they’re wearing their beliefs on their sleeves. It’s less performative, less capital-S Style, and more bringing the inside, out.

If history is any guide, these new trendsetters will widen the aperture for the other generations as well. Just as Millennials taught Xers that it’s ok to wear sneakers with a suit, Gen Z will push everyone to stop dressing to impress and start dressing to impact.

**From: Fit  To: Philosophy**

**BELIEFS OVER NORMS**

- **+153%** increase in mentions of *ethical/ethically* from 2019-2021

- **+72%** YoY increase in mentions of Gender Norms

- **+70%** YoY increase in mentions of Identity

- **+66%** increase in mentions of Thrifting in the last 6 months

**SOURCE:** Reddit Internal Data, Global

1. 2021 vs. 2019, in the Fashion Trends Interest Group
2. 2021 vs. 2020 in the Fashion & Style Parent Interest Group

**Philosophical Fashion**
[DISCUSSION] Should men wear pearls? I like mine, but lots of people suggest they’re feminine/unattractive on men. Thoughts on the aesthetic?

Do you think this is wearable as a guy?

Has anyone here intentionally bought a piece of clothing "meant" for women?
“I think so often we see our self image as this fixed identity, but the fun part of fashion is how changeable and fluid your image can become.”

— Redditor in r/TheGirlSurvivalGuide
For the first time in their lives, Millennials aren’t the trendsetters—it’s Gen Z.

Millennials are opting out of trends and embracing what they love.

Marketer Implications:
Just because they’re settling down, doesn’t mean they’re settling. Here’s how to capitalize on a less trendy, but still relevant Millennial target

01. No-stalgia: What used to feel like a reboot now just makes them feel old. Don’t focus on what’s in or out of style; focus on curating their unique style.

02. Adjacencies: Fashion is just the tip of the cultural iceberg. Music, entertainment, hair, and makeup should all be on notice.

03. Permanence: Chase timelessness, not trends by upgrading classics and repairing favorite looks.

04. Values: Start building the bridge to Gen Z now by infusing values into every aspect of your product and marketing.

05. Humor: For cheekier brands, now’s the time to lean into Millennial’s mid-life crisis by pointing the lens at yourselves.
Thanks!

Want to Learn More?
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