

STELLA

AWARD - WINNER

23 December 2018

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7 golden rules for teens unwrapping new screens

Pyjama party
Is your loungewear posh enough?

Finishing touches
Interior designers reveal their Christmas Eve rituals

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Diana Henry conjures up Twixmas treats

Baby love

Call the Midwife's Helen George on her new arrival

The Sunday Telegraph

All we want for Christmas is... loungewear

But not just any loungewear, oh no. Thanks to an explosion of new luxe brands, the tracksuit is back – softer, snugglier and (most importantly) chicer than ever. And it's exactly what you'll want to wear over the festive break, says

Caroline Leaper

ARKET
Wrap cardigan,
£99
(arket.com)



MINT VELVET
Cotton/cashmere
sweatshirt, £69, and
bottoms, £59
(mintvelvet.co.uk)

WAREHOUSE
Jumper,
£33.60
(warehouse.co.uk)



TABITHA WEBB

Wool/
cashmere
tracksuit,
£475
(tabitha
webb.co.uk)

OLIVIA VON HALLE

Silk-blend tracksuit,
£995 (oliviavonhalle.com)

**MADELEINE
THOMPSON**

Cashmere jumpers,
from £295,
(madeleine-
thompson.com)



YOU KNOW HOW, before the days of Netflix, the national grid would surge during the *Coronation Street* advert break as half the population switched its kettles on in sync? I have a theory that a similar phenomenon could be recorded at around seven each evening, if we measured the moment that the nation arrives home from work and collectively exhales.

It's a golden hour for relaxation and in the few minutes you spend getting changed out of your workwear, you send a signal to your brain that it's over, you're done for the day. But what do you put on when you change out of your 'uniform'? According to a survey of 1,500 women conducted for *Stella* by wellness website Hip and Healthy, 80 per cent of us put on our pyjamas, our 'comfort clothes', or a mixture of the two.

Checked PJ bottoms, yellow slipper socks, an old university T-shirt, no bra and a stained grey fleece. It's not exactly my chicest look. And yet, hilariously, it's the version of me that my husband spends the most time with, while he too is padding around the house in black jogging bottoms and a hoodie. The strange thing about these clothes is that, even though they are hideous to look at (make no mistake, they are totally unflattering) these are some of the things in my wardrobe that feel the best on my body - warm, soft, stretchy. But I would never, *ever* leave the house in them.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, several new fashion labels have started to take a closer look at what we're wearing behind closed doors and are bidding to make it all a bit more aesthetically pleasing (and, dare we say it, sexy). Loungewear as a product category is exploding and the range of items is broader than ever. Gap's current offering spans no less than 61 pieces, with soft jersey hoodies from £28. Net-a-Porter's luxury edit contains more than 130 styles, the most expensive being a £995 silk and cashmere-blend tracksuit by Olivia von Halle.

Sadie Reid, founder of Hip and Healthy, has centred her new clothing label Luxe + Hardy entirely around the idea that we need

Below Millie Mackintosh wearing a Mint Velvet tracksuit on Instagram



THE WHITE COMPANY

Cashmere-blend sweater, £98
(thewhitecompany.com)

CHINTI & PARKER

Cashmere hoodie, £225, and bottoms, £315 (chintiandparker.com)



BODEN

Cashmere bottoms, £150
(boden.co.uk)

60% say changing out of daywear makes them instantly relax

Instagram: @milliemackintosh

a specific set of clothes to rest in. 'The transition from our work day to sleeping is an important time for our mental health,' she says. 'It's the moment of the day when we can de-stress, and what you're wearing contributes to that.'

'Different clothes make you feel certain things when you put them on - for example, activewear changes your mindset to say, "right, go for it" and you then exercise,' she adds, noting that Lycra sports gear is actually not the right thing to wear during rest hours as it's too tight. 'Your resting clothes need to send that one specific message to your brain when you put them on, telling you to relax, you're not at work.'

The posh tracksuit is undoubtedly the centrepiece of the luxe loungewear revolution. Designer cashmere brands specialising in statement two-pieces are popping up all over the place. Former fashion editor Charlotte Lewis launched her label Ven earlier this year with a mission to design the perfect soft grey hoodie and jogging bottoms, while the new British-made loungewear brand Sutton & Tawney offers

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jersey fabrics in beautiful, flattering cuts.

Arguably the instigator of the trend was knitwear designer Madeleine Thompson, who launched her rainbow cashmere sets six years ago and whose sales have doubled in the past year alone.

'When you think about it, chic loungewear makes total sense because it marries comfort and elegance,' says Thompson. 'These are not just being worn at home any more, they have become street style.'

As having time to chill out is now considered the ultimate luxury, it was perhaps inevitable that showing off how you relax in style would become a huge Instagram trend. Thompson's two-piece sets are tagged dozens of times a week by customers on social media, while a particular grey cashmere-blend tracksuit has brought incredible success for high-street brand Mint Velvet after it was picked up by fashion bloggers and linked to the Danish 'hygge' trend.

'Pronounced "hoo-gah", hygge is the art of building a sanctuary of cosiness,' explains a Mint Velvet spokesperson. 'From a fashion perspective, it is about staying in and changing into something comfortable after a long day.' Recognising these small actions as hygge, apparently, makes us able to appreciate them more.

So we're now posting about our downtime on social media too. Oh, the irony. You didn't think this was about actually switching off and relaxing, did you? ◇



65% say they change as soon as they get home from work

LUXE + HARDY

Jersey top, £190, and bottoms, £95 (hipandhealthy.com)



VEN

Cashmere bottoms, £145 (ven-store.com)



EBERJEY

Tie-waist bottoms, £66 (eberjey.com)



SUTTON & TAWNEY

Cashmere bottoms, £265 (suttonandtawney.com)