

Blossom

MAYIM BIALIK'S WARDROBE GOES FROM WILTING TO WONDERFUL
ON *WHAT NOT TO WEAR*'S SEASON OPENER BY INGELA RATLEDGE



"Most of the clothes I own I've had since I was a teenager," says Bialik (right, pre-makeover, and above, in character in 1991). "I'm not trendy, I'm not hip, I don't understand fashion. I have weird taste and not a lot of time. So it's a challenge!" The one thing she and the experts were in perfect agreement on? "No hats!"



Stacy London and Clinton Kelly are kicking off Season 7 of their TLC makeover show, *What Not to Wear*, with a bang—or make that a Blossom. For the first time ever, the cruel-to-be-kind series is taking on a celebrity: Mayim Bialik, who starred in the 1991–95 sitcom *Blossom*. "Apparently they've been watching what I've been wearing for years," says Bialik, chatting with TV GUIDE Magazine mid-makeover at *WNTW*'s newly revamped Manhattan studio. "We've made *Blossom* jokes on the show in the past," confirms Kelly. Adds London, "Yeah, like, 'Oh, look—a hat with flowers. It's Blossom!'"

Clearly, Bialik's star status wasn't going to make them go easy on her. She found out

that she had been targeted for an overhaul, just like anyone else on the show, when she got ambushed during what the Los Angeles-based mom of two (who's also got a Ph.D. in neuroscience) thought was a routine visit to see relatives in New York City. "Stacy and Clinton came up behind me on the street and grabbed me—that was shocking," Bialik says. And it might've been the least jarring part of the process.

She was then shown footage of herself in her oversize, outdated threads—"Yeah, I looked pretty bad," she concedes—given an earful via video from former costar Jenna von Oy ("She very diplomatically said, 'Mayim is a wreck,'" Bialik says), and subjected to a



"She had no sense of her body at all—her shape or how small she is," says London (with Kelly and Bialik at NYC store Intermix). "Being pregnant on and off these last four years really skewed her vision of herself."



Bialik was shown mannequins wearing suggested looks. Her favorite (right) had “a funky, vintage-y style to the skirt, which I love,” she says. “And the cardigan was cute and fitted—not like my grandmother’s.” Catch the reveal on May 29.

“THE GOAL IS TO ENHANCE MAYIM—not make her into someone she isn’t”
—STACY LONDON

offbeat taste: “I still wear army boots and dresses and a lot of dark colors—I like to say it’s always winter in my mind.”

The pros scrutinized every last stitch of her wardrobe—shipped to them by Bialik’s husband, Michael Stone, a graduate student in American politics—then tossed it into the trash. “When I went home, I felt naked—they threw all my clothes and shoes away! I didn’t have a coat, sneakers. Nothing!” Bialik says. “That was the hardest part: They went through every item and found nothing of value, and that’s stuff I’ve worn and loved for a long time.”

Purging complete, Bialik got a crash course in how she *should* be dressing—but Kelly and London quickly discovered that she wasn’t going to go down without a fight. “As much as they’re challenging me, I’m challenging them,” she says. On her list of no-ways: pants (“I prefer skirts”), leather goods and anything too vanilla. “I want to look better, but I can’t look like every other person,” she says.

She hit the stores armed with a list of directives: Seek out quirky items that could

be paired with tamer classics, bright colors and—most important—a flattering fit. London and Kelly’s voices haunted her. “I’d hear them saying, ‘You look dumpty!’ in my head,” Bialik says. Even so, not everything she bought passed muster. “They made me return some things—there was this one shirt that I really thought was gonna fly, and they didn’t even want to see it on me,” she says, sighing.

In the end, though, all three were happy with the final results. “I’m standing up straight—and I haven’t been able to do that with confidence for a while,” says Bialik. “She really gets it now,” says Kelly. “She’s sophisticated-casual as opposed to sloppy-casual,” adds London, “but it’s still an easy look for a mom on the go.” And with any luck, the transformation will pay off on the career front, as well. “I’m in a business where I do need to care what people think,” says Bialik, who recently did a guest spot on *Bones* and is eager to take on more gigs.

But the question remains: Will she be able to keep up her new look far from the watchful gaze of her gurus? A mischievous grin spreads across her face. “I’ve got enough pieces to mix it into my normal style,” she says. As her long-lost character’s knuckleheaded brother, Joey, would say: *Whoa!*

WHAT NOT TO WEAR Season premiere: Friday, 5/29, 9/8c, TLC; also online at iTunes (\$)

session in the dreaded four-way mirror.

“When you hear that you need a makeover from your mom or your best friend, you don’t take it seriously. But when you’re attacked on the street and shown yourself in this mirror that highlights how dumpty you look, it really hits home,” Bialik says. According to the stylists, the intervention was a must.

“Her clothing was so discombobulated: There was goth stuff, hippie stuff, granny stuff, Asian themes,” London says. Adds Kelly, “Nothing went together. It looked like, ‘Oh, Blossom fell on hard times.’”

Even Bialik admits that fashion has been taking a major backseat. “I have a 3 1/2-year-old and an 8-month-old, so my life has been about putting on whatever’s around,” she says. (She also owns up to

STACY AND CLINTON’S FIVE STYLE TIPS FOR EVERY WOMAN

- 1. MAXIMIZE CURVE APPEAL** “Always choose pieces that create an hourglass figure and play up the smallest part of your waist,” says London.
- 2. DON’T DRESS WAY DOWN** “Make smart decisions about casual wear,” Kelly suggests. “Enough with the oversize sweats—there are so many

alternatives, like a blouse instead of a tee, trouser jeans instead of light-wash denim. It takes as much time to pull good pieces out of the closet as it does bad.”

- 3. SHOP FOR COMPLETE ENSEMBLES** “When you buy outfits instead of simply one piece, you know you’ll always have something to wear,” says London.

- 4. STAY IN THE GAME** “Trends are important, no matter what your age. Don’t opt out altogether,” Kelly says.
- 5. GO FOR QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY** “Invest in fewer pieces, but spend a little bit more on them,” advises London. “Chances are they’re going to fit better and last longer.”



FROM LEFT: ALICE S. HALL/NBCU PHOTO BANK; SCOTT GRIES/TLC; TODD SEERKIRCHER/TLC; SCOTT GRIES/TLC (2)