

does this look stupid

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post-prom: what to do with your dress

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All right, so you've managed to *not* spill anything onto your dress at dinner, *not* reveal any extra body parts while dancing even if your dress was strapless, and *not* rip or tear any seams while getting out of the limo—*hopefully*. Now, the dress that you fretted over for weeks (or months if you're like me) is sitting in your closet, quite possibly to be forgotten until you've realized you don't fit into the dress anymore.

Instead of wasting your special dress on one night, you can choose from a variety of alternatives that can benefit others or just benefit yourself:

1. **Donate your dress.** There are millions of girls across the country that do not have the opportunity and financial resources to purchase a gown of their own for their special night; a plethora of local dress drive organizations have sprang up in every nook and cranny in order to help these girls have a wonderful prom. Hearst Corporation teamed up with these organizations in order to create donatemydress.org, where students like you can search for the dress drive organization in your area and easily drop off your dress. For example, The

Princess Project in my area (San Francisco bay) holds dress drives at local high-schools throughout the school-year. These organizations give these dresses for free to girls who would otherwise not be able to afford an outfit for prom, and usually provide shoes and accessories too! If you don't mind parting with your dress, donating your dress could truly make another girl's prom special.

2. **Use your dress as part of a future Halloween costume.** If it's a fantastic ball gown, you could easily dress up as classy pageant queen by adding a satin sash and a sparkling tiara. If it's a strapless cocktail dress, you could dress up as a character from *Hairspray* by adding a spray-heavy hair updo, formal evening gloves, and a strand of pearls.
3. **Transform your dress into a day dress.** If the dress is so gorgeous, why not wear it as much as you can? Cocktail dresses can easily be transformed into everyday wear for class or work with a classic oxford shirt underneath and a blazer on top. Over-the-top ball gowns can be cut down into slinky mini-dresses that can be worn day or night, to work or to parties. My philosophy when it comes to wearing dresses? Never be afraid to overdress! We could always add more glamour to our everyday lives in small doses such as wearing bombshell dresses to calculus class.
4. **Trade dresses with your girl friends.** If you and your friends are around the same size, why not share your dresses with one another? You may be surprised at how your best friend wears the same dress, and be inspired into trying a few new daring styles!

While many girls prefer to keep their dresses in their closet for memory's sake, there are so many fun and useful ways to use your dress after prom. One of my best friends reminded me of this fact in the midst of the prom dress and prom date search frenzy: Ten years from now, you **won't** remember how many shades of pink were on your dress—but you **will** remember kicking off those uncomfortable stiletto pumps and singing cheesy love songs at the top of your lungs with your best friends!