

Marilyn Monroe made the pleated A-line dress a fashion staple in the '50s with her iconic photo standing atop a subway grate as her white, knife-pleated dress blew effortlessly toward her face. However, pleating became well-known some time before this. Ancient Egyptians used to pleat their garments by pouring eggs over linen and



allowing them to dry in the sun. At the time, pleats were seen as a symbol of power, a luxury reserved for kings and queens. Add in the low-maintenance structure to the rich history and you can easily see why today's designers have celebrated the versatile folds that exude an unmatched combo of elegance and ease by including them in their repertoire of styling tools.

Although we've ditched the egg-in-the-sun method, pleats still radiate a luxe look today. Issey Miyake is the mastermind that modernized pleats in the '90s with his Pleats Please collection. He used paper and heat to create the artistic folds, which paved the way for other designers to use the technique in their clothing. Pleating has since become a motif of elegance in the fashion world, and the intricate folds can be incorporated into one's wardrobe with surprising ease.

Practicality, functionality and wearability are key attributes

of pleated garments. The folds vary in size, shape, texture and movement, and the different combinations of these features radiate unique vibes that can fit any style and work in virtually any outfit. Adding a pleated garment can quickly transform your outfit from simple to chic. For example, swapping your basic flounce skirt for one that includes lightweight knife pleats will add an elegant minimalist feel to your look.

Collared shirts for the work day could be swapped with those that include fine accordion pleats along the sleeves or collar for added visual interest. An evening gown can be made haute with inverted pleats along the skirt. Also, mixing different modes of pleats is a bold, yet facile statement that could be done à la jackets and pants.

This spring, in lieu of stocking up on the usual airy flounces and ruffles, make yourself feel like royalty by changing the game and adding some pleats.