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## *Stress Purchase of the Week: The Perfect Muji Sleepwear*

How one fresh pair of PJs upgraded this writer's sleep aesthetic.

BY MELISSA HUNG | AUG 2, 2018



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Sometimes, when life feels hectic and harried, I like to wander the aisles of Muji, the Japanese brand of simple, unbranded household goods. Other retailers can be a mess, with merchandise askew and disorganized, but Muji has earned my appreciation for keeping its shelves consistently tidy.

White porcelain dishes and wooden serving bowls are stacked just so. Pens (their gel ones are my favorite) are arranged by color, a mini rainbow. Blouses and button-downs — in basic cuts, natural fibers, and earth tones — hang neatly on racks. There is no loud pop music blasting, no clashing colors vying for your attention. Instead, shelves of neutral-colored objects like notebooks, acrylic storage boxes, and lightweight travel bags that fold into their own pockets hint at making life a little bit better with their clean and carefully-considered designs. Aroma diffusers gently puff air with light citrus scents into the surroundings. I find it all quite calming.

I took myself to Muji recently with the excuse of acquiring more of their right angle socks, so named because the heels are knitted at a 90-degree angle instead of the typical 120. Perhaps this detail is the reason why their socks fit me better than any other brand. Even the tags on Muji clothing evoke a kind of harmony. They come with brief descriptions rendered in three lines, reminiscent of haiku. On a pair of right angle socks:

Fitting socks

Knitted at the right angle

To fit shape of heel.

Browsing the shelves, I came across a display of folded pajamas, each set neatly tied with string like an old-fashioned package. As I looked through the sets, limited in color palette to whites, grays, blues, and dusty pinks, I became aware of my pajama deficiency. My current sleepwear consisted of clothing that had been demoted from other uses. Growing up in a frugal immigrant family, we rarely threw anything away. Instead, we found other uses for them. And so, threadbare T-shirts that I no longer wore outside the home and lounge pants for my partner that I had cut too short in a failed hemming attempt had been repurposed as my random pajamas.

Sleep, I once thought with the energy and naivety of youth, was for wusses. I'd rather be awake, doing things. But as I've grown older, sleep has become sacred. In recent years I was diagnosed with a sleep disorder. How well I sleep each night directly impacts my ability to function throughout the day. Shouldn't I honor sleep's importance with a proper uniform?

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That the pajamas before me were Muji ones only made this idea more alluring. I ran my hand over a set and wondered: Will Muji pajamas remind me of the peace I feel in the store, inducing calm before I shut my eyes? Will they encourage me to better organize my life and adhere to the schedule I created —

and which I never follow — where I turn off all screens two hours before bedtime and spend an hour reading a book before I turn out the lights? Will they reduce the number of stress dreams I have where I'm running late to catch a flight at the airport?

I picked up a long sleeve set in a pink and white mini check pattern, decidedly different from my usual wardrobe of black, navy, and gray. The pink signaled a softness absent in the armor of my daily outfits. The tag read:

Seamless on the side.

Made with organic cotton

And smooth texture.

Seamless. Smooth. This was the life I aspired to. Twenty percent off too. I bought them.

Life since I've upgraded my pajamas has not markedly changed. I'm still up late on my computer or phone. I still feel behind schedule. But sometimes I catch sight of myself in the mirror in my matching pajama top and bottom. I look — and feel — a bit more pulled together as I head to one of the most vital places in my life: to bed.



*Melissa Hung is a writer whose essays and reported stories about culture, race, and immigration, have appeared in NPR, Vogue, and Catapult. Find her on Twitter.*

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