

# Boating with Missy

By Melissa Gervais

## Top Dressing



Since my first real job in the mid-eighties, I have always worked in an office. Back then, it was all about the power suit, the bigger the shoulders, the better. I remember my first significant purchase was an Oleg Cassini navy wool suit from Filene's Basement in Boston. I saved it for special meetings and woke up extra early to get ready with the big hair, long red nails, full makeup, and the tallest heels I could find. That was my routine for years.

When I started working in the marine industry, my routine changed drastically and my suits lost their power. I started wearing comfortable shoes, a ponytail, and logo shirts. Every once in a while, I would wear a skirt with heels, and inevitably, it would be the day someone called in sick and I would have to count inventory in the warehouse or load gear into a client's truck.

Jump ahead to 2020, and I find myself getting only half-dressed. It's the new mullet, but instead of front and back, it is business on the top and party on the bottom. I saw friends posting pictures of this phenomenon online, but I wasn't going public. This was a secret between me and my canine coworkers. Then, Anna Wintour tweeted a picture sitting at her desk wearing sweatpants. Excuse me, joggers. It immediately brought to mind the Seinfeld episode when George shows up at the apartment, and Jerry says, "You know the message you're sending out to the world with these sweatpants? You're telling the world, I give up. I can't compete in normal society. I'm miserable, so I might as well be comfortable." This got me thinking, "Had the pandemic turned a fashion faux-pas into a fashion must-have?"

I think I acquired my first pair of sweats as a gift-with-purchase when I signed up for a gym membership. Ironically, I didn't use either. However, years later, I realized that they were perfect for crawling around the engine room and cleaning the boat. They were inexpensive, stretchy, and didn't catch on boat parts. Maybe it was time to reinvest? I thought I would look online and see if I could find some nice ones for the office. If the editor of Vogue can wear them, why can't I? I googled WFH (work from home) joggers. Very quickly, I realized that fashion designers were cashing in on the fact that we were spending more time at home and had created entire collections to capitalize on our new way of life. Loungewear was now a wardrobe investment piece, and I wasn't sure if I could "add to cart."

The following week, I was getting ready for my regular Zoom meeting with the office. I had dried my hair, threw on some mascara, lip gloss, and a beautiful silk blouse. As people were popping up on the screen, I looked down at my WFH joggers and noticed that they had a few small holes from battery acid and an artistic splattering of Interlux blue bottom paint. No one had to know. My dogs will never have a Twitter account.

**Missy grew up boating with her family in the Gulf Islands. She works for a yacht services company based in Vancouver, B.C. and boats most weekends from April to October. A self-proclaimed weekend warrior, she enjoys blogging about everything cool for women who boat at [missygoesboating.com](http://missygoesboating.com).**