

Edited by
Kay Barron

the art of style

*Inspiration
from the world's
most stylish*

MY SIGNATURE PIECE
TAILORED PANTS

Dina Asher-Smith

From the running track to the runway,
Britain's fastest female extols the virtues
of a chic, sculptural pair of pants and
how they embody her personal power

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When she was just 19 years old, Dina Asher-Smith became the fastest British female sprinter in history when she ran 100m in 10.99 seconds. Last year, she smashed her own record with a 10.85-second sprint during her infamous European Championships double win. When you meet the 5ft 5in athlete in person – now aged 23 – what strikes you is that her mind and wit are as lightning quick as her legs. Gregarious and good-humored, she explains that her mental state is key to breaking records. “Power of mind is a big thing. Especially in sprinting, where everything comes down to like a hundredth of a second – which is literally like a curl of my hair – so there’s no time for self-doubt, you can’t be stressed about anything.” >

Occasion style

“I love shoes, so I like tailored pants with details that show them off, such as front slits on these red pants.”



Pants by Victoria Beckham, \$750; coat by Joseph, \$2,045; roll-neck by Pringle of Scotland, \$425; sandals by Jimmy Choo, \$895, at Net-A-Porter.com

“I love to *express* my mood with clothes. If I feel *happy*, I wear *bright* colors; if I need to be more *serious*, black or white”

To relax, Asher-Smith cuts back her social-media time and spends more of it with friends or doing the things she knows will make her happy. One being fashion – “I’m really into fashion, I think I’m quite creatively minded,” she says as she scrolls through albums on her phone dedicated to looks she loves by designers from Valentino and Alaïa to Halpern. The feeling is clearly mutual and the fashion world has fallen hard for Asher-Smith. This season, she sat front-row at Erdem, Emilia Wickstead and Balmain during London and Paris fashion weeks, and walked the runway for cutting-edge streetwear brand Off-White. For his SS19 show – entitled *Track & Field* – designer Virgil Abloh called upon Asher-Smith and seven other female Olympians to model his latest Off-White x Nike collaboration. “It was an amazing opportunity to get to walk in Virgil’s show and a really humbling experience. To think that we can affect a different world and be inspiring to an artist with something that you do every day is strange – you never normally think of yourself like that.”

As a Nike athlete, she spends most of her week head-to-toe in the brand’s running kit, but off the track, tailored pants are one of her go-tos. “I work really hard – I train six times a week – and I’m always in tight Lycra, so I’m comfortable in pants that are well-tailored and show off a nice silhouette... I love to express my mood with clothes. If I feel happy, I wear bright colors, or, if I need to look more serious, I’ll go for black or white.” Opting for a white, tailored suit to speak at a recent Goldman Sachs conference, the versatility of tailored pants appeals too: “What I really love is that they can also be quite casual. If you’re just going shopping, you can throw on a nice sweater and heels because the trousers are still quite a statement.”

Bags and shoes are Asher-Smith’s greatest indulgences – in fact, her 2018 wins were partly motivated by the Chloé Nile bag. “It was sort of a joke at the time,” she laughs. “I said I’d love to run a 10.8 – which, if you’re a world-class female sprinter, is a very solid time – and my mum said, if I did it, she’d buy me the Chloé bag I wanted. And then I did!”

Evening chic

“Tailored pants worn with a blazer create a versatile look, which you can wear with a roll-neck, or, for more drama, just throw on the jacket with nothing underneath.”



Pants by Michael Kors, \$1,295, at Net-A-Porter.com; blazer by Roberto Cavalli, \$5,928; shoes by Stuart Weitzman, \$398; necklace, \$147, and ring (right hand), \$118, both by Cornelia Webb; ring (left hand) by Charlotte Chesnais, \$792 (sold as set)



Pants by Ermanno Scervino, \$635; shirt by Nina Ricci, \$674; roll-neck (worn underneath) by Vince, \$160, at Net-A-Porter.com; shoes by Givenchy, \$930, at Net-A-Porter.com; rings by Charlotte Chesnais, \$792 (sold as set)

Day-to-night hero

“My style is quite practical. I love pants I can wear with my Nike Air Force 1s by day, but also dress up with heels if I need to.”

When it comes to shoes, she loves Malone Souliers, for its sculptural silhouettes, and Manolo Blahnik, for its classic beauty and comfort. “As a runner, I always notice shoes first. That’s always the most dramatic change for me because I spend most of my time in sneakers, so it’s nice to be able to get into some heels.”

As an Olympian, Asher-Smith’s relationship with her body is unique and refreshingly positive. “How my legs are going to look in a dress is never my primary concern, it’s more like: ‘I need to work on my right leg because my left is stronger and that imbalance could get me injured.’ I don’t think about having abs, I think about having a strong core so my back holds up in a race.” She views size fluctuations through an optimistic lens – if a dress zip that went up last week refuses to fasten, it’s because she’s gained muscle, and it will likely fit again as her regime changes. “[As athletes,] we see our bodies for what they can do rather than what they esthetically look like.”

Alongside her rigorous training schedule, Asher-Smith studied history at King’s College in London, giving her a natural inclination to contemplate fashion’s extraordinary chronicles. “I loved the Erdem show. The theme was about these two men who dressed up as women [in the 1860s] in hyper-feminine Victoriana, so I thought it was really artistic how Erdem did his show in the National Portrait Gallery in a room with portraits of stern male faces looking down [at the runway].” It’s surely no coincidence that this whip-smart sprinter is now making history herself.

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CAPSULE OFF-DUTY LOOK



Ring by Bvlgari, \$2,160

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Shoes by Nike, \$100, at Net-A-Porter.com