

WW2 Civilian Clothes Rationing.

Clothes rationing was introduced on 1st June 1941, the war made it almost impossible to import cloth and other materials from abroad and the clothing manufacturers in Britain had more important items to make such as uniforms, parachutes and other things needed for the battle against Germany.

Each man woman and child was issued with a clothing ration book, at the onset each person was allocated 66 coupons per year. However in 1942 this was dropped to 48 coupons. Utility or austerity clothing was introduced using the label CC41 .

The 66 coupons were the equivalent to 1 complete outfit per year.

Children however were allocated an extra 10 clothing coupons.

Clothing in small sizes had lower coupon values than adult size garments.

School uniforms were also affected by clothing rationing yet some schools still insisted on keeping the tradition, much to the dislike of parents as uniforms could take almost a full years child's entitlement.

Make do and mend was the government's motto with books being published, tips in magazines and newspapers, on the radio, and even in special classes which were run in most towns and city's. Use and re-use had to be done with two worn out dresses being made into one good one , different collars or detail being added to existing dresses and suits to make them look different, children's clothes from pillowcases and sheets, dresses from old curtains. Parachute silk was highly valued and mainly ended up as underwear. Wedding dresses were passed from bride to bride and used over and over again, some women just got married in what ever suit they had with perhaps a new posh hat for the occasion.

There were a few things which you did not need coupons for—Blackout material, which could be bleached and re-dyed to make a dress. Clogs—as they were supposed to be work wear, dungarees were the same, so became popular with women (usually up until that time being worn by men in factories or farm). Hats were never rationed nor put under restrictions as the government felt that this was a step too far and that women already had enough to put up with !! - purely a moral issue.....

Second hand clothes obviously did not need coupons and clothes “exchanges” became popular, where you would take something in (say a dress) and exchange it for another, making it look like you had more clothes than you actually did.

How coupons worked : For example a woman wants to buy a dress for herself , a pair of stockings and a pair of shoes.

Coupons required to be handed over to shop owner : Wool Dress 11, stockings 2, shoes 5.

Total 18, This is the equivalent of nearly a third of all her yearly allowance !!! So you can see how hard these restrictions were.(Don't forget you still had to pay for the clothes you didn't get them for free). You could make your own clothes- but coupons were still needed to buy cloth, wool etc.

Clothes rationing ended on 15th March 1949.

GOVERNMENT COUPON LIST AT ONSET OF CLOTHES RATIONING JUNE 1941.

Men and Boys	Adult	Child
Unlined mackintosh or cape	9	7
Other mackintoshes, or raincoat, or overcoat	16	11
Coat, or jacket, or blazer or like garment ..	13	8
Waistcoat, or pull-over, or cardigan, or jersey	5	3
Trousers (other than fustian or corduroy) ..	8	6
Fustian or corduroy trousers	5	5
Shorts	5	3
Overalls, or dungarees or like garment ..	6	4
Dressing-gown or bathing gown	8	6
Night-shirt or pair of pyjamas	8	6
Shirt, or combinations—woollen	8	6
Shirt, or combinations—other material ..	5	4
Pants, or vest, or bathing costume, or child's blouse	4	2
Pair of socks or stockings	3	1
Collar, or tie, or pair of cuffs	1	1
Two handkerchiefs	1	1
Scarf, or pair of gloves or mittens	2	2
Pair of slippers or goloshes	4	2
Pair of boots or shoes	7	3
Pair of leggings, gaiters or spats	3	2

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Women and Girls	Adult	Child
Lined mackintoshes, or coats (over 28 in. long)	14	11
Jacket, or short coat (under 28 in. in length)	11	8
Dress, or gown, or frock—woollen	11	8
Dress, or gown, or frock—other material ..	7	5
Gym tunic, or girl's skirt with bodice ..	8	6
Blouse, or sports shirt, or cardigan, or jumper	5	3
Skirt, or divided skirt	7	5
Overalls, or dungarees or like garment ..	6	4
Apron, or pinafore	3	2
Pyjamas	8	6
Nightdress	6	5
Petticoat, or slip, or combination, or camiknickers	4	3
Other undergarments, including corsets ..	3	2
Pair of stockings	2	1
Pair of socks (ankle length)	1	1
Collar, or tie, or pair of cuffs	1	1
Two handkerchiefs	1	1
Scarf, or pair of gloves or mittens, or muff	2	2
Pair of slippers, boots or shoes	5	3

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