



## **Q&A WITH CRITICAL CARE NURSE KATI KLEBER**

*Critical care nurse, and author of “Becoming Nursey: From Code Blues to Code Browns, How to Care for Your Patients and Yourself,” Kati Kleber, BSN, RN knows just how important it is for nurses to feel their best while on the job. Here she shares her tips for remaining focused and fashion-forward while at work. For more information on Kati, check out [www.nurseeyeroll.com](http://www.nurseeyeroll.com).*

### ***What are the top five items every nurse needs to have when they arrive for work?***

A good click pen, a Sharpie, comfortable shoes, a stethoscope, and scrubs you feel like a rock star in.

### ***We’ve all seen nurses use their scrubs to show their individuality. What advice can you give to nurses who want to be fashionable, but need to adhere to hospital protocols?***

There’s a lot you can still do even if you are required to wear a specific color of scrubs at work. You can go for a more feminine or athletic look, or a simple/minimalist or technical/pocket-heavy look. You can even add accessories.

You can switch up your style of scrubs to match your mood or current trend. I also like to use different kinds of jackets to individualize my look and mix things up.



And if you can use different colors and patterns, the sky is the limit! You can mix and match tops and pants, use certain colors for certain moods and holidays, and add accessories. Sometimes patients are at a loss as to what to talk to you about, and different designs and colors can be a conversation starter or just lighten up someone’s day! Whenever I worked at a hospital in which we could wear whatever scrubs we preferred, patients always commented on my yellow set of scrubs because they said it really brightened up their day.

### ***How does comfort, fit and fashion play into your preference for scrubs?***

I have to wear my scrubs for 13 hours a day and talk to tons of people, so I like to feel good about the way I look. I think this is especially important when you’re in a career in which you are caring for everyone else all day and you are the last priority. It’s important to take time to care for yourself and promote a healthy self image while you’re at work.

My work dress code limits me to wearing two specific colors at work, so I’m locked into that. I love slim-fit scrubs that have a yoga waistband. Nurses do a lot of bending during a shift. It is annoying to have to constantly adjust my scrubs so my lower back/upper backside isn’t exposed! I see it every single day. Right before we are about to bend over to plug something in, everyone hoists up their pants to make sure they don’t expose themselves. But if your pants are long enough and fit snug (not tight) around your waist and move with you, you don’t have to worry about that. That’s a big deal for me.

I also love to feel good in my scrubs. Taking a few extra minutes to get ready and ensure I feel like I look good changes my whole mood for the day.

### ***What tips would you give new nurses on selecting their first set of scrubs?***

Fabric makes a big difference. You spend so much time in scrubs that you want to be comfortable, and trust me, the cheap ones aren't.

I also now look for antimicrobial scrubs. I like the idea that my scrubs provide an inhospitable environment for bacteria on the surface of the scrubs. The peace of mind it provides is invaluable.

A good waistband is essential. It doesn't look very good if you're pulling your pants up all shift.

Make sure you get the appropriate length for your pants. I will pay more money for scrubs that come in size tall, and would do the same if I needed short. I feel self-conscious if pants are too short – they look ridiculous. But if they're too long, they drag on the floor and that's pretty gross.

Buy scrubs that fit well and make you feel good when you wear them – even if they're more expensive. Everything is expensive if you don't use it.

***We know that all scrubs are not created equally. How do the scrubs you wear help you thrive in the workplace?***

They're light – I feel like I can move quickly. I can run at the drop of a hat (or at the sound of a bed alarm or code!) and not feel like I'm falling out of my scrubs, that they're riding up, or everything in my pockets is falling out.

They're antimicrobial – I want fewer bacteria on my scrubs.

They actually fit – they're long enough in both the torso and pants. I'm not constantly adjusting them all through my shift. And that doesn't look good or feel good.

I feel really good in them – I love to feel like I look good. It's important to be confident in yourself, especially as a nurse because you can spend a lot of your day advocating for patients and telling people things they don't want to hear. For me, every little bit helps in the confidence game.

They accent my figure the way I want them to and I don't feel like a big blob of boxy scrubs just trudging through another shift. It's amazing how big of an impact that can have on you. And when you're in a field where you're caring for everyone else all day, it's nice to be able to feel good about the way you look all day. We can look and feel good in our work uniforms and individualize them, all while looking professional and reducing and inhibiting bacteria on the surface of our scrubs.