



Caryn Franklin's

How to Look Good

*Petite
& curvy*

Caryn's own personal
advice will help you wear your
clothes confidently forever

Main illustrations by Debra Parkinson

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DETAIL ILLUSTRATIONS BY
KIM CARBONARI



Introduction

Welcome to your own How to Look Good personalised style advice. You have chosen petite and curvaceous.

In the following pages I will show you how to choose clothes to suit your individual body shape. This is crucial for confidence. Knowing you have chosen clothes that showcase your body in the best possible light, you can relax and enjoy yourself, free to be yourself or the person you want to be.

In this book I want to share with you my styling tools. To do this clearly, I have broken down the book into many different sections. In fact I'm replicating the workshop I have given over the years for you to take part in in the comfort of your own home!

These are the styling tools I use as a professional stylist when I am working with ordinary women. Having seen these tools make such a difference over the years, I can honestly say that the skills you will acquire as you work through this book will make you think differently about clothes for the rest of your days.

I have been very careful to explain these tools concisely and clearly. They appear as bullet points for the simple reason that I want you to absorb them for immediate use when you are shopping and of course when you are dressing.

**DO YOU KNOW HOW TO READ CLOTHES?
HAVE A LOOK AT THIS DRAWING. IT CONTAINS SOME BASIC CLOTHING
FEATURES. DO YOU EVER THINK ABOUT THE FEATURES ON THE CLOTHES
YOU ARE BUYING? ALL WILL BE EXPLAINED LATER IN THE BOOK.**



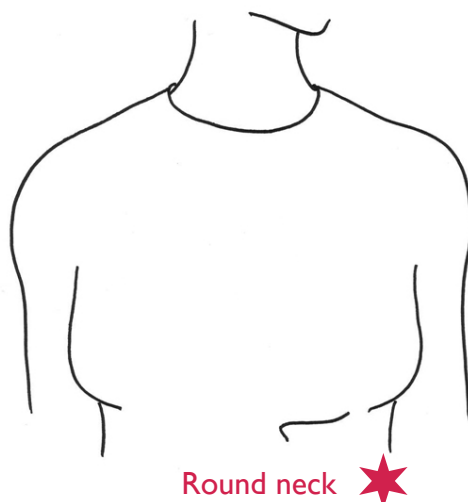
I've also included action plans in the order that you should carry them out for maximum effectiveness. There are three in the book; they are very specific and, if you follow them, you will have a much more organised approach to your image.

Throughout this e-book I will provide illustrations of the type of clothes you should prioritise. Because fashion changes so rapidly these days, I have stripped away information that is too trend oriented because I think it is more effective if I tell you what each aspect of your clothing will do for you. That way you can prioritise clothes with the features that suit you.

Finally, in working behind the scenes in the fashion industry, I have learned a lot about femininity and the way the industry views femininity. I want to pass this on to you, to empower you. Whenever you feel insecure about the way you look (as happens to all of us from time to time when changes surprise us) re-read these features to remind you of the real deal.

After you have read this book I know you will feel you can revolutionise your image with the knowledge of a stylist. Thinking about how clothes work and the qualities they will bring to your body is the best place to start. This is information that will last you for the rest of your life.

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO READ CLOTHES?
HERE ARE MORE CLOTHING FEATURES I WANT TO DISCUSS.
UNDERSTANDING HOW TO CHOOSE CLOTHES WITH FEATURES THAT
WILL FLATTER YOUR SHAPE IS CRUCIAL AND SOMETHING I WILL EXPLAIN
IN DETAIL AS WE GET FURTHER IN TO THE BOOK.



Round neck ★

NECKLINES

NECKLINES CAN BE AN EXCELLENT WAY OF ELONGATING YOUR NECK. THERE ARE MANY CLEVER TRICKS YOU CAN WORK WITH A WELL CHOSEN NECKLINE. A HIGH NECKLINE, FOR INSTANCE, HAS GREAT BENEFITS TO A SLENDER OR PETITE BODY. A LOW NECKLINE WILL ALWAYS WORK FOR FULLER SHAPES. FOR TOP-HEAVY SHAPES YOUR BEST EVER STYLING TOOL WILL BE THE NECKLINES YOU CHOOSE SO READ ON FOR MY TRIED AND TESTED GUIDE.

ROUND NECK

This is a softly rounded neck that often appears on t-shirts, shift dresses or fine knitwear.

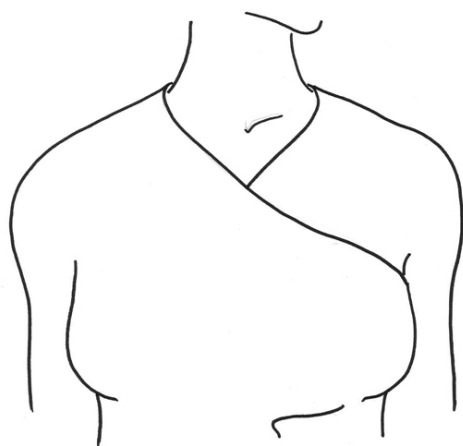
First of all

I have met so many women just like you who are looking to create an image that reflects who they are. One of the reasons it seems to be so difficult is that the things we feel about our bodies and our image is constantly manipulated by the media. We are encouraged to think about dieting, toning, looking younger, looking better and of course we are shown pictures of beautiful women looking effortlessly stunning. As a result many women feel at odds with their bodies and spend a lot of time focussing upon their imperfections.

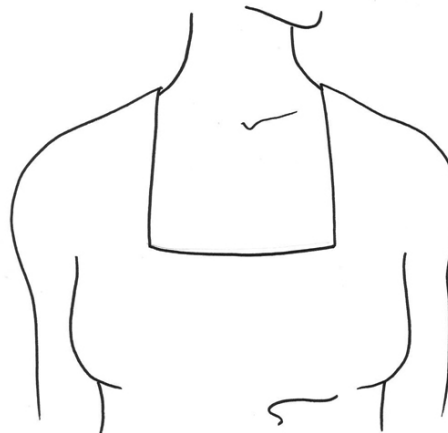
Your best travelling companion through this e-book will be your acceptance of your own body. Whatever its shape, it is healthy and it is yours. It is doing its best to support you through the day with a myriad of clever functions that you take for granted. Sadly many of us aren't in touch with this and forget that, before it is a clothes-horse, it is a sophisticated biological miracle! Clothes then are the icing on the cake. Use them to celebrate all that you can be to yourself and others!

Now then!

I believe that styling is all about knowing your body and understanding how to use clothes and accessories to flatter. As a professional stylist, my job is one part clothes know-how and two parts clothes counselling! We all have insecurities and comfort zones, which are there for a reason and clothes can work as a variety of things to one person – from camouflage or comfort blanket to corporate uniform.



Ballerina neck ★



Square neck ✓

BALLERINA NECK

This is a high wrap that generally has less depth than an ordinary v-neckline. You will find it in knitwear or tops.

SQUARE NECK

This can be found in tops, dresses and occasionally in knitwear.

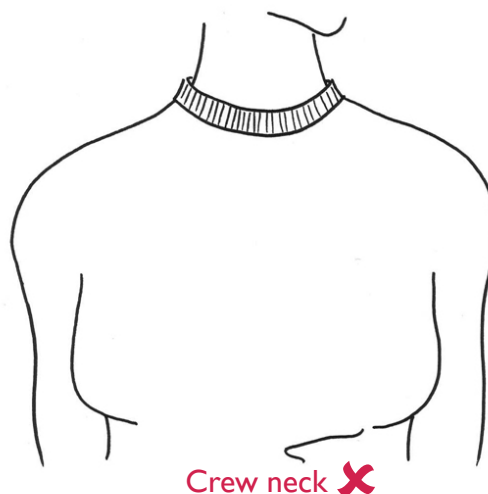
A horizontal line running across the top of the body will accentuate broadness and width.

Avoid if you have square shoulders.

If I were spending time with you, I would find out how you feel about your body and how you have chosen to dress. Then I would set about changing some of the visual boundaries you have cemented in place. I've often been told 'I don't do girly,' 'I'm too big to wear that' or 'I don't have the body for that.' These and many other rules we make for ourselves need to be gently challenged; further in the book you will see my responses to the things you tell me.

Many women I work with also say how frustrating it is that the fashion industry seems to change its ideas and designs so frequently. So just when you have found a style or colour that suits you, you can't be sure of finding it the next season when the new ideas arrive. Similarly, fashion magazines often talk in seasons - telling you one thing one season only to change their ideas the next. The fact is, fashion information changes every season. There is no other industry I can think of that puts out a different set of rules every six months. Imagine cookery writers telling you a brand new way to make a cake each season with completely different ingredients depending on which ingredients were seasonally approved. Or what about a gardening magazine that would recommend you change all the plants in your garden each season. It's that spooky!

Yet we receive the fashion industry into our lives on that very basis. Of course change is good and making changes that feel right can be liberating. Feeling like you are forced to make changes, however, is not fun.



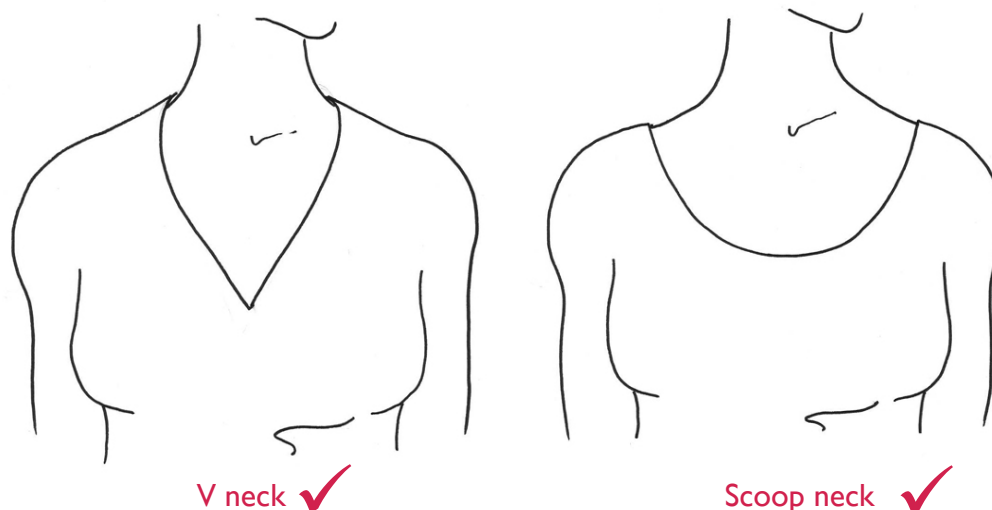
CREW NECK

This is a fitted neckline, which hugs the base of the neck. It is usually found on knitwear. A high neckline like this will always make a neck look shorter.

What I want to do is show you how to build a confident idea of what will work for you so that, although you read magazines and take in the ever changing fashion information, you can now always make the choices that are right for you, regardless of what is on the catwalk every few months. This is information that you can use for the rest of your days and step out forever more in the knowledge that you look fantastic.

So let's get down to business. I work with many different types of women. I haven't met one who doesn't have set ideas about her style or body. Some I may agree with and others I will attempt to change because they are based on outdated ideas she has about herself. These are some of the more common ones; perhaps there are some here you recognise?

*I don't do girly
I don't want to look like mutton dressed as lamb
I only wear trousers
I don't want anyone to see my tummy
I hate the tops of my arms
I only wear casual
I don't want to look like I've tried too hard*



V-NECK

This is an elegant neckline with a v- shaped drop. A high v-neck is often found in knitwear and a lower v-neck is found in Lycra tops, wrap tops or wrap dresses.

V-necks work well to create a sense of elongation from the neck to the chest. A v-neck is a great tool to create a more swan-like neck. It will also create a minimising shape around the bust.

SCOOP NECK

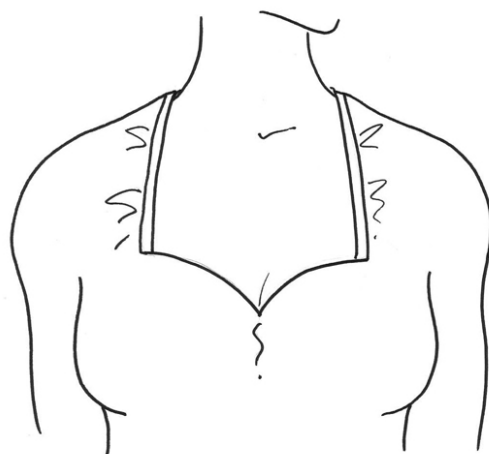
This is a low round shaped neckline that looks like a semi-circle. It is flattering to all shapes and will give an elegant neckline and more attention to the bustline whether or not there is cleavage.

These hard and fast rules can be obstructive. Do you really need them or are you just protecting yourself from the unknown? Changing your outfit to something you wouldn't normally wear can have a big emotional impact; perhaps it's this you feel the need to avoid.

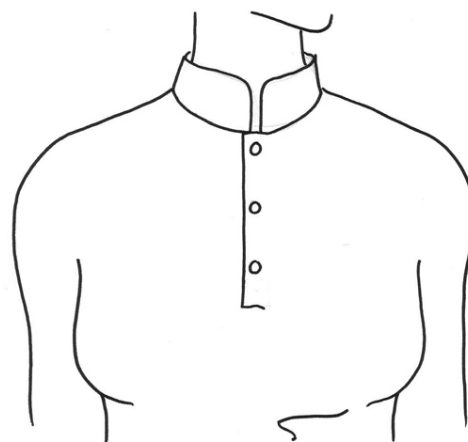
I don't do girly

If this means you prefer a dramatic look with more graphic fabrics and a more androgynous take on style from time to time - great! You have created a signature for yourself. I identify with this too. If, however, this means you feel uncomfortable in anything feminine like skirts or dresses and heels or even dainty tops, florals and pretty colours, then you are missing out on some fun.

You are not an attention seeking floozie by celebrating your femininity with some colour and sensuality. Try to move yourself out of your familiar comfort zone incrementally by focussing on a softer look. A skirt with flat strappy sandals and a t-shirt should be your first step. Give your legs and feet a little preparation before you try on a skirt; that way you can't fall back on excuses about your body not being suited to skirts. Once you have tried this and worn it a few times you will begin to graduate to the next item of clothing.



Sweetheart neck ✓



Mandarin neck ✗

SWEETHEART NECK

This is usually found in clothing that has no 'give' like cotton, satin or silk because the design must hold its shape. The shoulder will drop vertically then a dainty curved line runs over each breast.

This works wonderfully to feminise any top that it appears on. Short or full necks benefit from a sense of elongation.

MANDARIN NECK

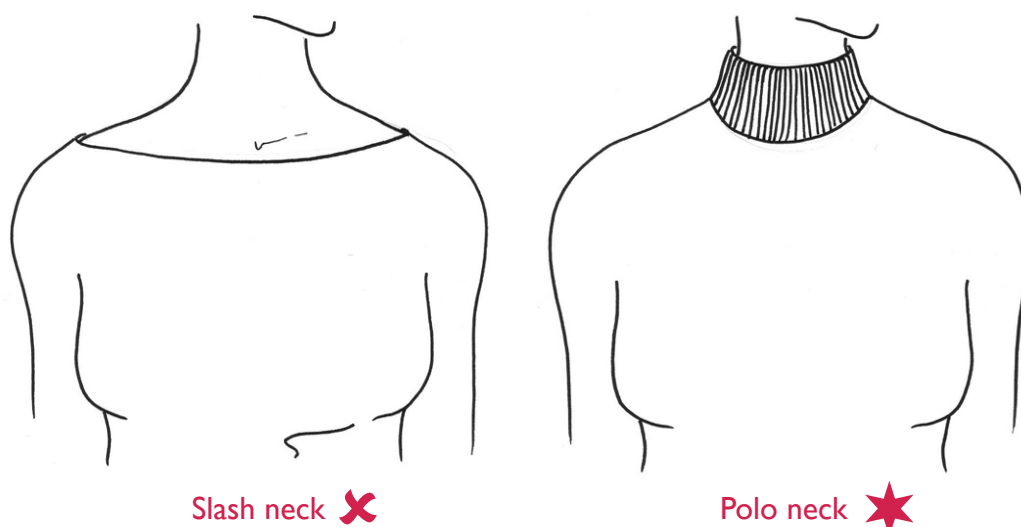
This is a high collar that dips at the centre and is always found on a garment that fastens through the middle. It has a very buttoned up almost strict feel and often appears as a silk garment.

I don't want to look like mutton dressed as lamb

If by that you mean you will avoid certain styles that show too much flesh, now that you are getting older, along with prioritising clothes that have a certain quality to them and look well made, then you have the right approach. If, however, you mean you don't want to wear anything colourful or playful and especially not anything trend oriented, then you are presupposing that getting older involves becoming invisible. There is nothing so effective as a woman who uses the right amount of a current trend to invigorate her look.

I only wear trousers.

You may have a job that makes trousers very necessary or you may believe your legs should never be allowed to see the light of day, in which case the pictorial skirt guide further down will make a big difference. If it's because you just don't understand what to put with skirts, I suggest that you have got caught in the 'unsuitable footwear' trap... What I mean by this is that, even if you think for a moment about not wearing trousers, you get stuck because you don't know what to put on your feet – since all your shoes work for trousers.

**SLASH NECK**

This is a neckline that appears to go straight across the body from shoulder to shoulder. It will widen the shoulder area and in some cases can shorten the appearance of the neck.

Especially good for small sloping shoulders.

Avoid if you have large or square shoulders.

POLO NECK

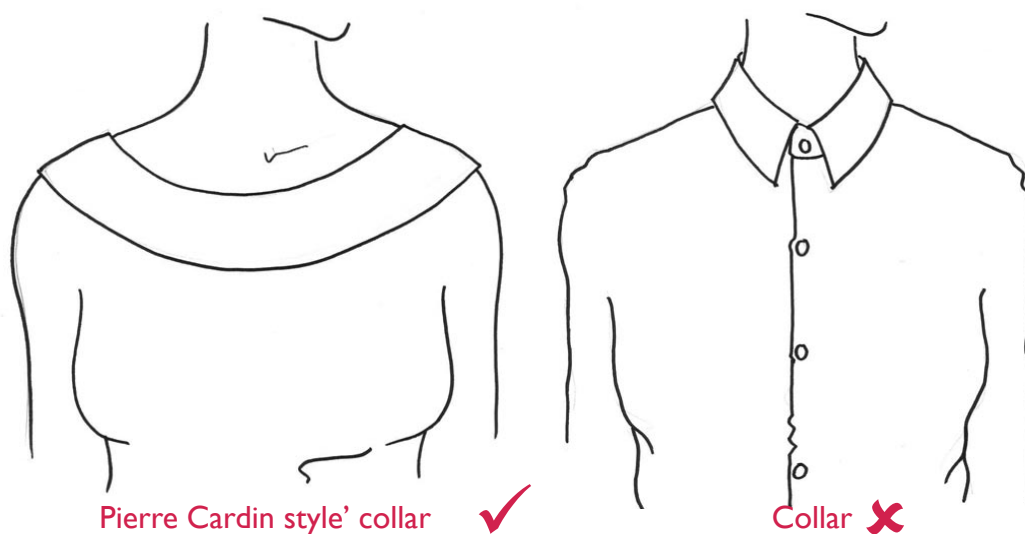
This is nearly always found in knitwear as a fine gauge piece of knitting.

Avoid if you have a short neck.

I don't want anyone to see my tummy/I hate the tops of my arms

These comments and many others mean that you just opt to cover the body up in layers of fabric and hope no one will see the shape you are underneath. It may be that you have spent a long time focussing on the thing you least like about your body and forgetting to focus instead on the things you do like about your body.

Make a list now of all your good points and let these be the things you draw attention to, while you use the effective tools outlined in this book to minimise or camouflage the things you don't like.



PIERRE CARDIN STYLE' COLLAR

This is a folded and stiff collar that sits around the collarbone. It has the appearance of making the neck seem elegantly slender because it is so much wider. It also creates width at the shoulder area.

COLLAR

There is a huge variety of collars to choose from, the most common being the straight collar that encloses the neck when it is done up. Other shapes included the rounded collar and the Peter Pan collar:

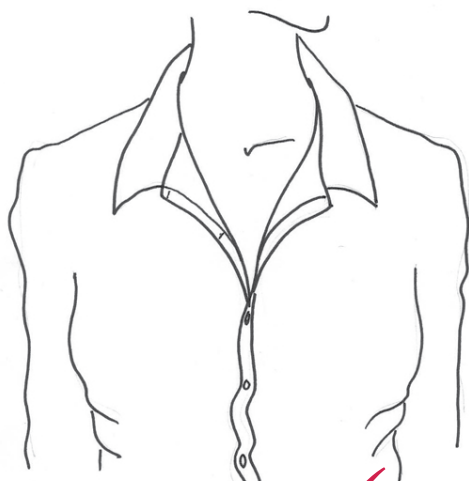
The small collar will always make the bust area underneath it appear larger.

I only wear casual

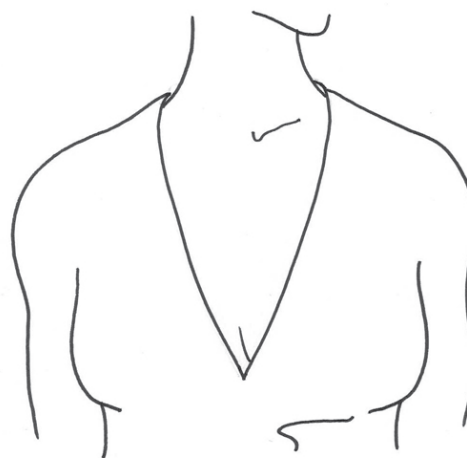
Is this because you have lost confidence in your ability to pull off a more structured look or is it to hide the fact that you just don't know what to choose to flatter your shape? Casual wear, great though it is for downtime, is usually shapeless and non-descript; is this how you see yourself? This book will show you how to choose clothes that have drama, femininity and structure and put them together!

I don't want to look like I've tried too hard

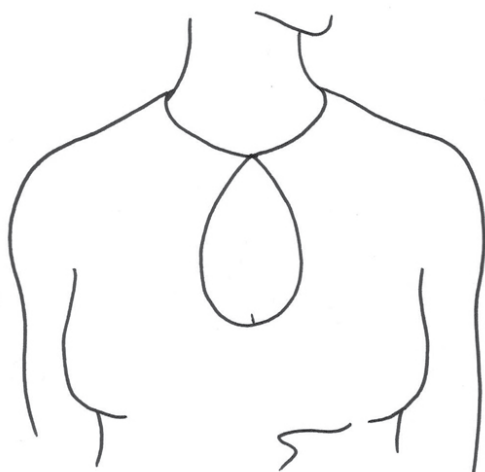
Some women put a lot of effort into their appearance but it still doesn't pay off because they haven't understood the basics. But you won't have that problem. The most important thing about your style choices from now on is that they will look effortless, so let's begin.



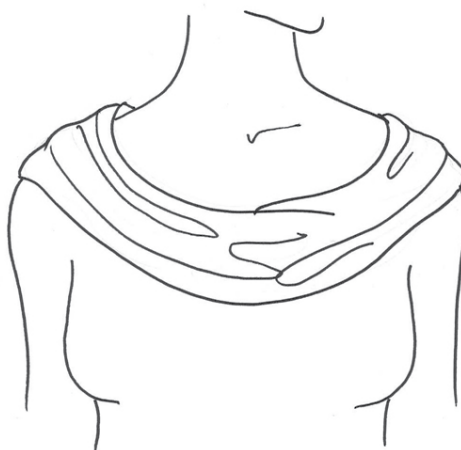
Shirt collar ✓



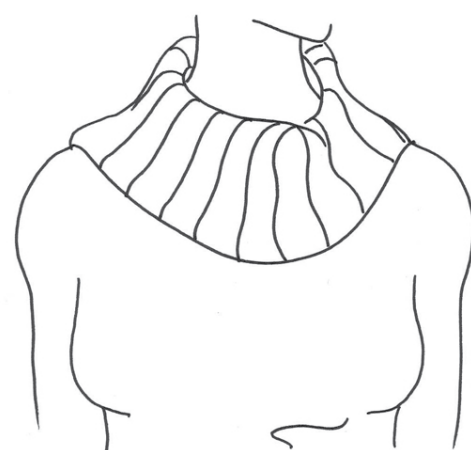
Plunge neckline ✗



Teardrop neckline ✓



Cowl neckline ✗



Large polo neck ✖

SHIRT COLLAR

This is worn undone to create a soft and blurred v-neckline. And there isn't a woman in the land who will not look good in a fitted shirt, which is sexily undone (how much depends on the situation and you).

Search for a good fit so that it can become a staple in your wardrobe.

PLUNGE NECKLINE

This neckline will have varying degrees of plunge from cleavage to ribcage. Obviously a good bra or great tone is crucial. The key is all in the depth of the

tone; never show so much breast that it becomes an eyeful. A plunge neckline requires an excellent bra but can also be carried off by wearing another layer underneath.

TEARDROP NECKLINE

This style is effectively like a high boat neck but has an extra teardrop shape cut out that may or may not show cleavage.

Often found in fitted evening tops or looser jersey style tops. This is a great top for all heights and shapes. Avoid if you have low slung breasts.

COWL NECKLINE

This is scoop neckline with an extra layer of fabric that hangs loosely over the bust to add volume. It will bulk up the bust area and draw the eye to it.

LARGE POLO NECK

This neckline always appears on a chunky piece of knitwear and can stand up fairly stiff around the neck in a wide circle.

The volume of fabric around the neck will work to make the neck seem smaller or daintier and because it is loose and low the neck itself will always look graceful.



Briefing

You are petite. This need not be your defining characteristic but it may be something that you are subconsciously much more influenced by than you realise when it comes to defining your look.

Further on in the book we will discuss your body shape in more detail and I have many tricks for flattering your individual silhouette, as you will see, but let me outline a few key things that will have influenced your style up to this point.

You sometimes wear oversized clothes that look like they don't quite fit you.

You feel you can never look authoritative enough.

You like colour and pattern but find it can make you look childlike and, because you want to avoid that, you stick to darks and plains.

Fashion confuses you. It might look all right on models but you can't work it in to your wardrobe.

I've worked with a lot of women who say they feel short and insignificant and have no idea of how to use clothes to create the illusion of height.

As you work your way through this book, you will learn how to pick clothes confidently but first let me empower you immediately with some key points.



Do's and Dont's

As you work your way through this book you will learn how to pick clothes confidently but first let me empower you immediately with some key points.

Don't

Wear clothes that are baggy and long. It is far better to have fewer clothes in your wardrobe that fit you well rather than many that don't.

Reach for bold primary colours, the sort that are often used in children's school uniform.

Mix fabric textures so that your body is full of busy eye catching materials.

Choose shapeless clothes or clothes that are too busy and fussy with too many details.

Wear your skirt lengths too long.

Rely upon the limited collections that shops carry.

Do

Make sure you get the fit you need, searching out the labels that cater to your size and, if this means still having to get them altered in length, then so be it. Many dry cleaners will do basic alterations on skirts, trousers and cuffs and this will make an enormous difference, not just to the look that others see, but also to your own perception of yourself.



Add colour to your wardrobe. But consider your choices so that the colours you choose have a level of sophistication. Any flat colour that looks as though it could have been used as part of a school uniform choice needs to be avoided – you will look like a schoolchild yourself in a primary or royal blue for instance. Seek out the more contemporary tone. Iced colours are better than pastels; rich opulent hues look mores sophisticated then washed out flat tones.

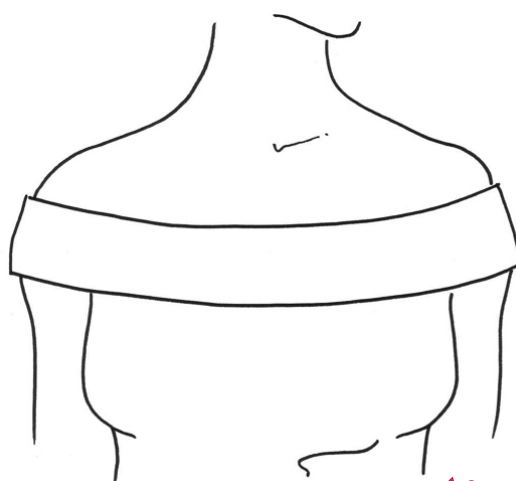
Consider fabrics and the qualities they have. And be aware that many garments are made of materials with sheens, metallic finishes and hand-made, uneven weaves. Too many different fabrics on your body will look indecisive and cluttered.

Choose clothes that have definition. Children's clothes are often cheaply made and are plain. Never wear a plain t-shirt, for instance, when you can wear a top that has a feature around the upper body to create focus and pick a neckline that will flatter your shoulders and bust line. Check the illustrations on neckline to see which shape is right for you and implement it now!

Stand in front of the mirror and check you are wearing your skirt length high enough. Lifting the hem an inch higher could make all the difference because it's about balance and, if your skirt is too long, it will immediately make your legs look shorter.

Do use our specially compiled 'petite' directory so that we can connect you with online retailers who offer you a great product to build a wardrobe full of stylish clothes.

These basics are crucial to keep in mind, apply them and all the other body shape tips you are about to receive to the illustrations of clothes I show you. Lets move on to 'Step one.'



Bardot style neckline X

Step One. Style over fashion

SHOULDERS

SHOULDER STYLES ARE ONLY AN ISSUE FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO FEEL YOU HAVE LARGE SHOULDERS AND WANT TO MINIMISE, OR, FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE SMALL OR SLOPING SHOULDERS WHERE YOU WANT TO CREATE THE EFFECT OF A SQUARE MORE IN PROPORTION SHAPE. FOR SQUARE OR LARGE SHOULDERS REMEMBER THE APPROVED DESIGNS WILL BE TWICE AS EFFECTIVE WHEN TEAMED WITH A SKIRT THAT HAS THE ABILITY TO WIDEN THE BOTTOM HALF OF THE BODY. THIS WILL GIVE YOUR BODY BALANCE AND EVEN UP YOUR PROPORTIONS.

BARDOT STYLE NECK

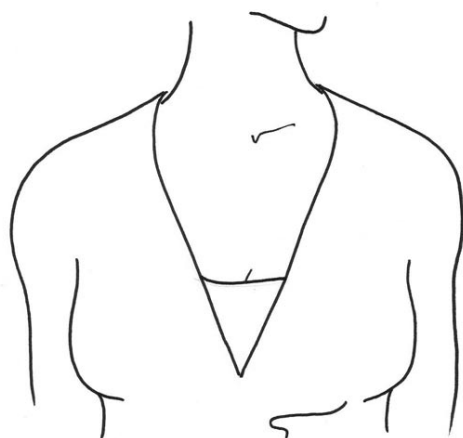
This top has the widest of all necklines and was popularised by the actress Brigitte Bardot. It often has a stretchy element to it, so that a ribbed band can hug the shoulders and not fall down. It is worn with nothing underneath for a very alluring look (strapless bra required or a bra with matching bra straps that are viewed for a contemporary feel). It is also seen with a contrasting vest underneath making it a whole lot more practical to wear for every day. This band will widen your shoulders and give your body a feeling of foreshortening.

My most important piece of advice to you is to celebrate your strengths and play down your weaknesses; this is done by being critical about what fashion has to offer each season and whether it will work for you.

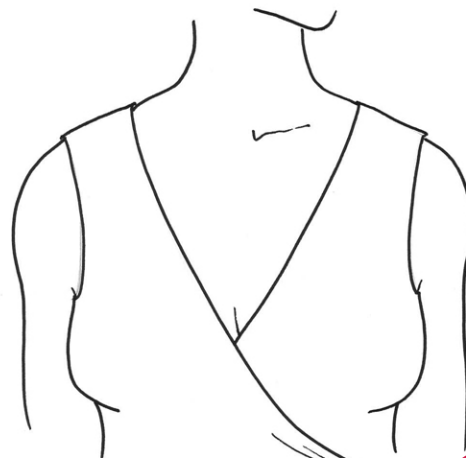
Unless you are very young, I feel very strongly that STYLISH should be your aim. You need to know what the trends are when you are buying clothes - of course this helps - but you don't need to look like a fashion spread. There are all kinds of debates about style and whether it can be bought or learned. Let's think...there are plenty of rich people with no style whatsoever so it can't be bought. And there are plenty of women with a limited budget who always seem to look good so it definitely isn't expensive.

Most telling is when someone has understood what suits them and wears clothing to suit their individual body shape and this is something you can learn once you are familiar with your body and able to select the styles you need to create the right balance for your body shape. Style is what other women will notice and admire about you so make that something that you can effortlessly achieve for yourself today.

If you are in doubt about that, here is my definition written for another book in this series that I hope will help you organise your thoughts.



Low v-neck ✓



Low wrap no sleeves ✓

LOW V-NECK

This style of top with sleeves covers all the shoulder area and with a deep v to reveal a brightly coloured vest top underneath creates an elegant neckline.

The small triangle shape suggests a small bosom.

Good for large or square shoulders. Main garment in a dark or neutral colour while smaller v-insert must be colourful.

A fashionable approach is adopted by someone who wants to be seen to be part of an invisible club called 'Hopelessly up to date.' They will talk in riddles about what is 'in' and 'out,' they see their clothes as 'must have' items and are always looking ahead to what is coming next. They can judge other women as harshly as they judge themselves for not having the latest bag and are often on waiting lists for various designer items. Confidence is something that is achieved once they have all the 'right' clothes on but next season everything is changed or thrown out, once they see the newest collections.

LOW WRAP NO SLEEVES

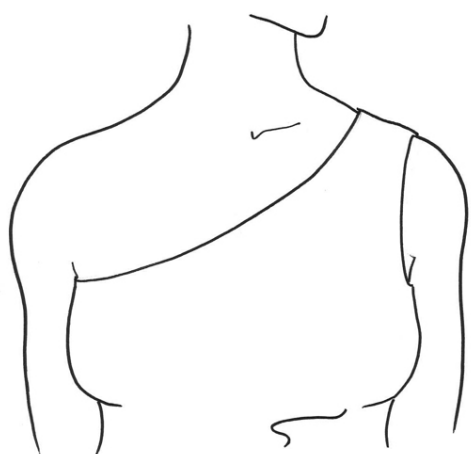
This shape with wide neckline and sleeves placed wide on the shoulders widens the area around the neckline and bust and reduces the amount of shoulder on show.

Good for large or square shoulders.

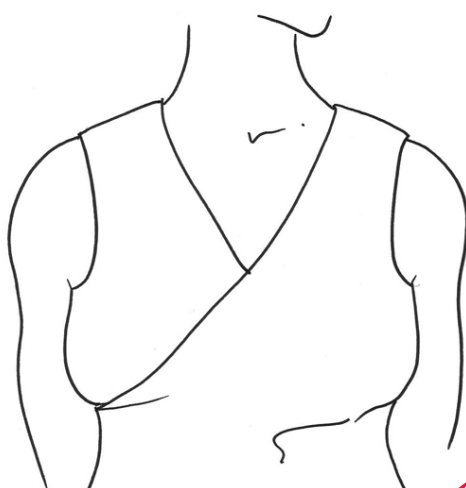
A stylish approach is taken by someone who has no need to be part of an exclusive club. They appreciate clothes as fine items of adornment that will enhance their day. They do not judge others and will willingly compliment another woman on her dress sense. They know what will suit them and don't need to be dictated to by the fashion world, although will just as happily clap hands with delight as the new styles hit the shops.

Confidence is something they already have, by enjoying who they are and what they have done with their lives. In their wardrobes will be a selection of clothes that fit well and have stood the test of time, as well as some high fashion items because they are fun to wear.

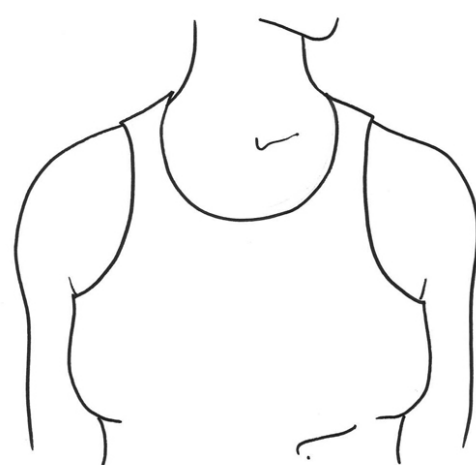
Which one are you aiming for?



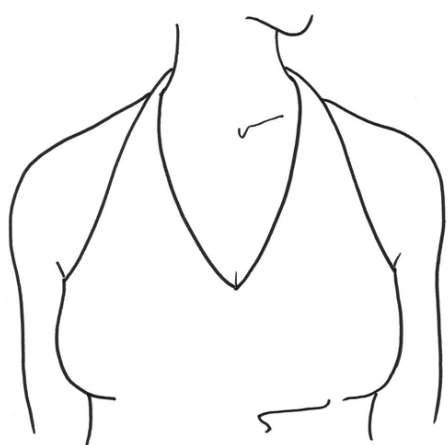
Asymmetric shoulder ✓



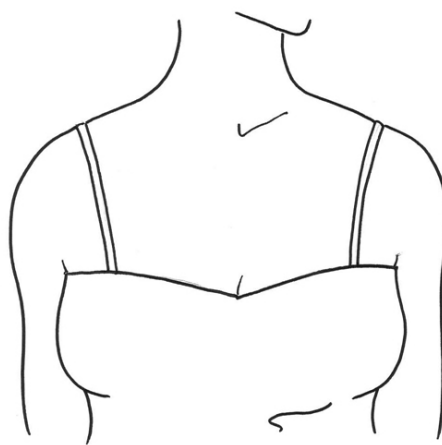
Wide strap vest top ✓



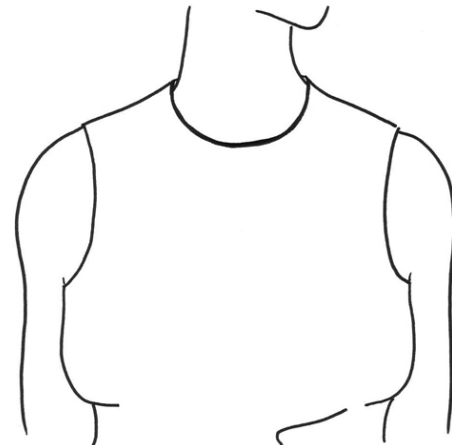
High neck vest ✗



Halter neck ✓



Spaghetti straps ✗



Sleeveless round neck ★

ASYMMETRIC SHOULDER

This comes in and out of fashion and usually appears on evening style garments. It suits all shoulder shapes and is a dramatic and chic statement for gowns and tops alike.

Especially good for large or square shoulders.

HALTER-NECK

Any halter-neck reveals a large amount of shoulder since it wraps close round the neck. It is featured on summer tops as well as more formal evening tops, dresses and gowns.

Great for small or sloping shoulders as it will create the effect of larger shoulders.

Avoid if you have large or square shoulders.

VEST TOP WITH WIDE STRAPS AND LOW OVAL NECKLINE

The neck area is widened with this design and the wide straps cover a larger area of shoulder. This is why this design is good for larger bodies in general.

Great if you have large or square shoulders.

SPAGHETTI STRAPS

These straps are just as they sound - thin, strand-like straps. They are often used on dainty dresses and are more for decoration than anything. A strapless bra is the only choice here as this dainty look is ruined with visible bra straps. You'd think that would be obvious but I've seen it so many times.

Great if you have small or sloping shoulders.

Avoid if you have large or square shoulders.

VEST TOP WITH NARROW STRAPS & HIGHER NECKLINE

The neck area is made smaller and the shoulder area is increased because the straps are pushed further towards the neck.

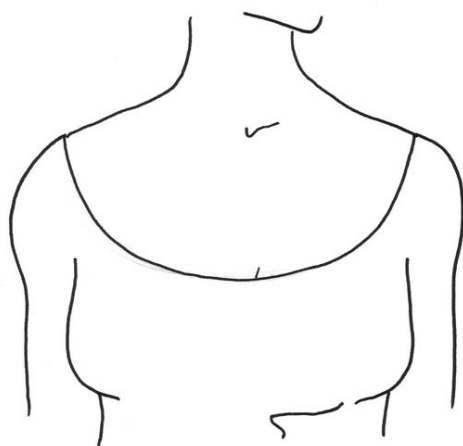
This sporty style will make the body seem larger and more muscular.

ROUND NECK AND SLEEVELESS

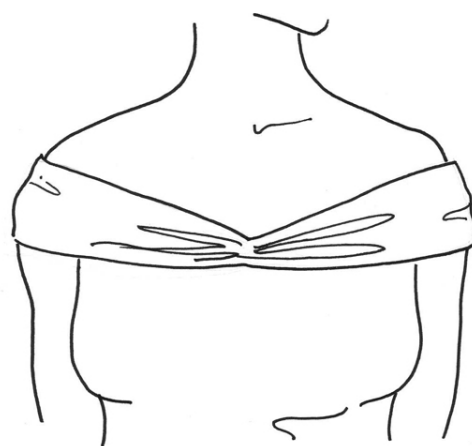
This could also be a v-neckline but the important part of the design is the coverage from the neck to the shoulder:

The wider this is, the less shoulder there is on show.

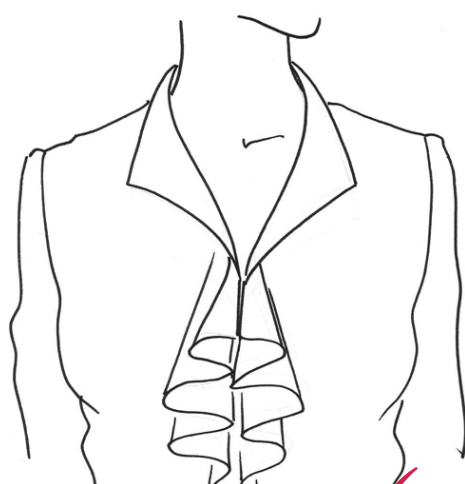
Good for large or square shoulders.



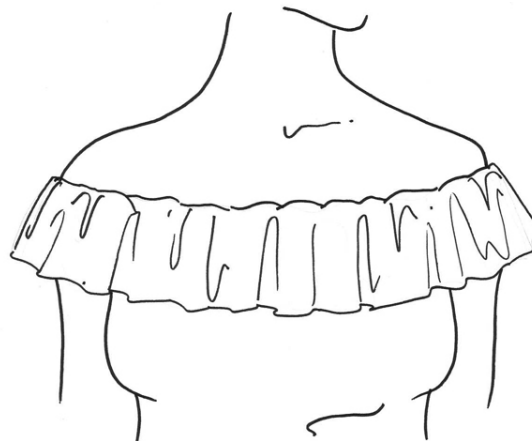
Wide scoop ★



Off the shoulder ★



Waterfall collar ✓



Gypsy ★

WIDE SCOOP

This neckline can work very well to create a subtle width across the shoulder area. If you find your bra straps are on show then wear a contrasting coloured vest underneath to conceal the straps and create a layered look.

Avoid if you have wide shoulders.

OFF THE SHOULDER

This neckline is usually seen on gowns and cocktail dresses and works very well because of the gentle v-shape to create a flattering effect for curvy upper bodies and standard shapes.

However, it still creates a horizontal line across the shoulder area.

Avoid if you have large or square shoulders.

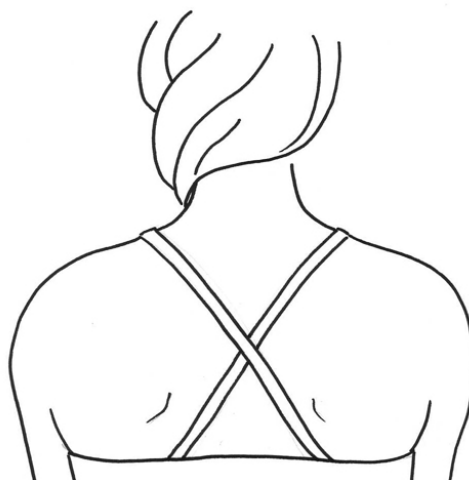
WATERFALL COLLAR

This is an elegant neckline or collar style that creates a vertical line through the body to create a streamlined and elongating effect. It is usually seen in formalwear. A generously proportioned ruffle will feminise large or square shoulders.

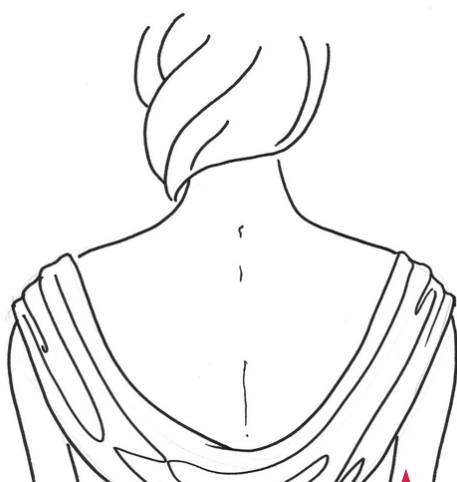
THE GYPSY

When soft ruffles are popular, the Gypsy off-the-shoulder top will appear. It is a great garment for feminising the shoulders and for this reason is the best choice if you are broad shouldered but like the idea of wearing styles that have an obvious horizontal feature.

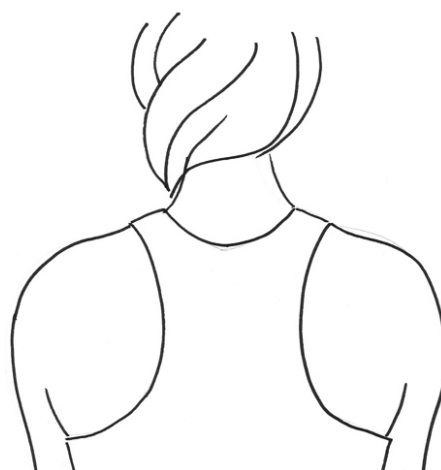
Good for large or square shoulders.



Back view cross over feature ★



Back view cowl ★



Back view of sports top or t-bar ✗

BACK VIEW CROSSOVER FEATURE

Often appears on special occasion dresses. The effect of these thin straps criss-crossing across the back is to make shoulders appear larger and therefore the waist smaller.

Great for small or sloping shoulders.

Avoid if you have large or square shoulders.

BACK VIEW COWL

The straps are placed wide apart and a gentle draping cowl feminises and softens the back; but depending on the design can also make your back appear wider.

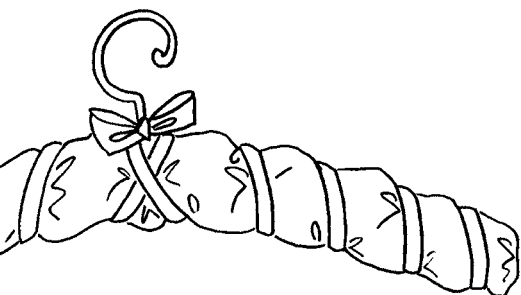
Great for small or sloping shoulders.

BACK VIEW OF SPORTS TOP OR T-BAR

The straps are designed to make the shoulders appear larger and therefore more sporty. It's a great shape to draw attention to shoulders and to make the upper torso seem more developed.

Great for small or sloping shoulders.

Avoid if you have large or square shoulders.



Style detective

'Just what is your style?'

Many women have no sense of what they would like their style to be when I ask this question. Moreover, they have no understanding of the style they currently inhabit. Just jot down a handful of words that represent you now – be as honest as you can bear. My guess is that amongst your descriptions will include the words 'practical,' 'thrifty,' 'comfortable,' maybe even 'bored,' 'scruffy' and 'bland.'

Style should begin and end with who you are and what you are about. Whether we like it or not people read our clothing, accessory and hair and make-up choices. Despite not uttering a single word about ourselves to others, we will have communicated volumes about ourselves through our clothes.

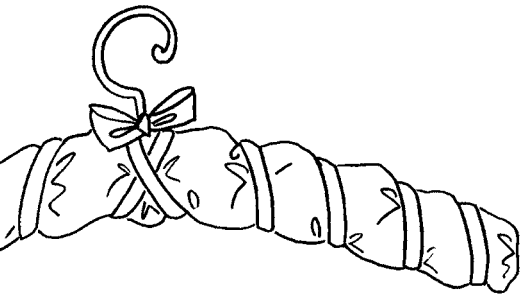
One woman I worked with had a fondness for drab lifeless colours, shapeless garments, no make-up on her face and unloved hair. She was amazed when I said I could see immediately that she had fallen out of love with herself. To her these clothes were just what she had always put on in the morning and she liked not having to think about them. I read her image as someone who didn't want to think about herself, who was uninterested in the woman she saw in the mirror.

Let's start with the simple basics; like whether your clothes appear to be cared for. Do they give off a look of quality and do they fit? On a deeper level ask yourself do your clothing choices flatter your body? Do they cleverly enhance your strengths and play down your weaknesses.

Do they give clues about your state of mind?

Yes, others will effortlessly make assumptions about your personality by reading your choices on colour, design and print as well as all the above (this includes potential friends, bosses, work colleagues and social acquaintances) – so will they be the right assumptions?

A stylish woman will always communicate a regard for herself and a pleasure in being. Size and age need have no bearing on how you present yourself - few things are more self-affirming than the act of dressing well (this is not to be confused with spending well). Someone who dresses well will not get caught in the trap of over spending or making expensive mistakes, even impulse purchasing. Once you begin



to use the tools I will lay out in this book you too will communicate radiance and a confidence that is very lovely to be around. Your wardrobe will soon be full of thoughtfully chosen clothes that will create the best possible statement about you!

Your own visual signature

1 Take a piece of card or paper the width of your wardrobe door (there is method here so read on) and fill it with aspirational images. Let's start with the women you admire style-wise.

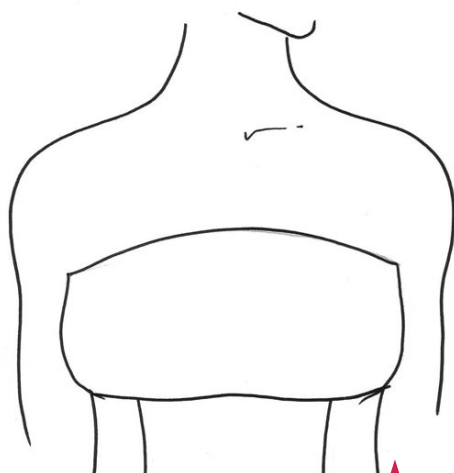
2 Then add shapes, colours and prints you like – they may be subtle or bold and modern or nostalgic. Just cut several swatches from your old magazines and arrange them attractively in the page. Don't let faddy trends influence you here; the object of this exercise is to create your own personal mood board.

3 Now add the words that you would like to represent you. These could be feelings or descriptions like 'glamorous,' 'colourful,' 'co-ordinated,' 'sassy,' 'smart' even 'sultry,' 'sophisticated,' 'vampish,' or just 'fun,' 'happy,' 'fresh-faced,' 'natural.' Stay realistic. Type these words on your computer and enlarge them so that they have a weight. Then cut out in strips and fix to the card. Don't move so far away from what is currently your style now, that your aspirational image becomes a mere fantasy and completely unachievable.

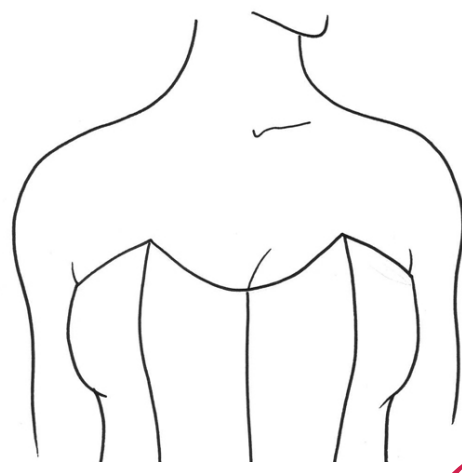
4 Now fix this paper to the inside of your wardrobe door and whenever you open your wardrobe you will be reminded of your own personal style signature.

By doing this you can begin to carry out your own wishes. After all, all stylists are surrounded by clothes, models and designers. The reason they seem to make such effortless choices is because they are thinking about image and inspiration for a large part of their day.

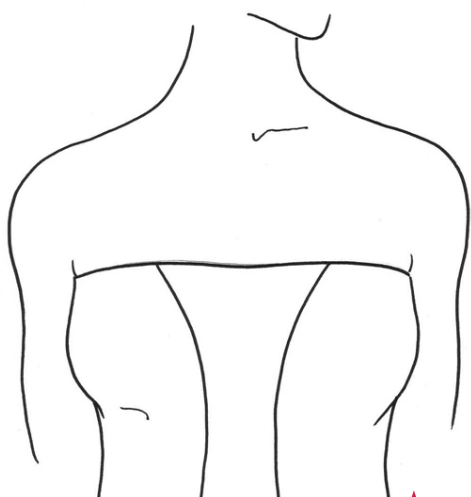
They get to see clothes in action on the catwalk, they experiment with clothes on shoots and they spend longer than most shopping for accessories or in the offices of PR's choosing clothes from the shoot they will work on next. I'm not advocating that you spend any longer than necessary on your image but give yourself an opportunity to be inspired when you open the wardrobe door in the morning!



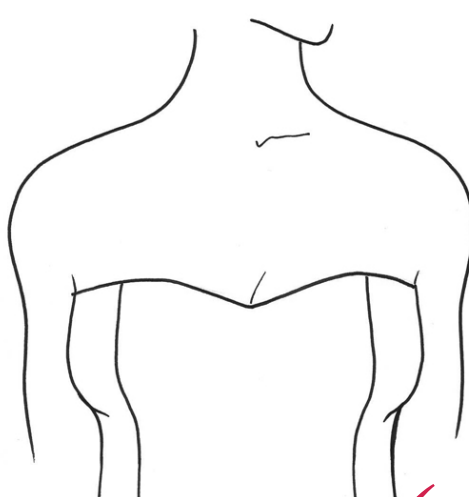
Curved strapless ★



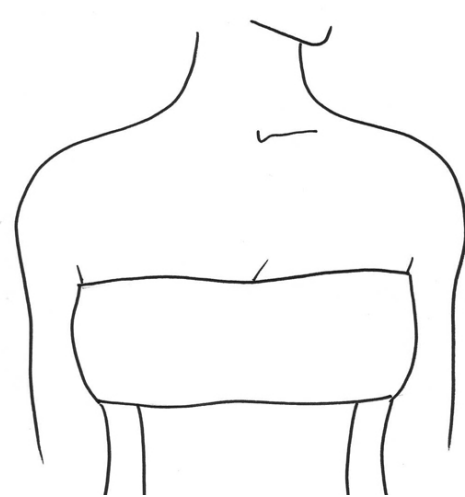
Period style strapless ✓



Standard strapless ★



Scalloped strapless ✓



Extra band around the bust ✗

STRAPLESS BODICES

THESE OFTEN APPEAR ON SPECIAL OCCASIONWEAR AND GOWNS AS WELL AS CORSET STYLE TOPS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT. THEY ARE PERFECT FOR LARGE SHOULDERS AND CURVY ARMS AS WELL AS STANDARD AND PETITE SHAPES. WHEN PROPERLY BONED ARE SENSATIONAL FOR CURVY VOLUPTUOUS BUSTS. THERE WILL BE MANY VARIATIONS BUT THESE FIVE DESIGNS REPRESENT MOST OF THE DESIGNS YOU WILL COME ACROSS

CURVED STRAPLESS

A design like this creates a larger area at the bust and because it does not follow a horizontal line to mirror the shoulder line will not exaggerate square shoulders. Choose a style like this if you have a

small bust and square shoulders. The curved line will create a visual distraction from the shoulders that are angular, bony and square. Avoid if you have small or sloping shoulders.

PERIOD STYLE STRAPLESS

This design has a gothic feel to it and often appears in vampish colours either as cocktail gowns or corset tops. This shape will minimise the bust area.

STANDARD STRAPLESS

This is a universally flattering shape with vertical seaming through the front of the body. The vertical seaming will always make the waist appear more streamlined.

Great for standard and narrow or sloped shoulders - the horizontal line will enhance the same line made by the shoulders.

SCALLOPED STRAPLESS

This design suggests softness and femininity. The scallop over the bust will create a minimising effect and will also soften the shoulders.

Perfect for large or square shoulders.

EXTRA BAND ACROSS THE BUST

This design adds volume at the bust as well as width, making the waist look smaller by comparison.

This is one of the best ways to create more width across the bust, making the body seem wider and/or larger.

Many bodices will have beading, sequins or other embellishment at this point. This also does the job of creating volume.

Caryn says...

Here's how to read clothes



Styling tools

Lets have a look at how some of the simplest styling tools work.

This illustration shows how long lean vertical lines will always elongate your body especially when clothes are all in the same colour grouping or tone.

See how the closed toe footwear elongates the leg. For extra lengthening effect, ensure your shoes are the same colour as your trousers. Conversely, if you wear a contrasting coloured pair of shoes you will shorten long legs.

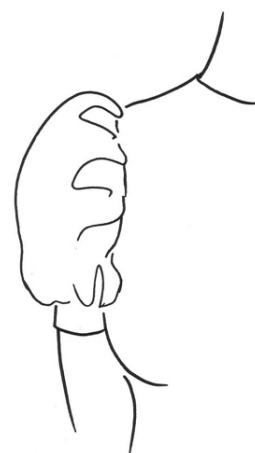
This drawing is an exaggerated look to show how the feature works illustrating...

- Shape of garments that make vertical lines in themselves
- Long length garments
- Seaming
- Panels of colour
- Zips, fastenings
- Garment layering - to reveal panels of colour through torso area

See how the eye travels up and down the body because there is no horizontal feature to distract it.



Batwing sleeve ★



Puffed sleeve ✓

Step Two. Remember your unique and individual

SLEEVES

A SLEEVE ALL ON ITS OWN CAN DO A GREAT DEAL FOR A FULL ARM, BUT FOR ANY SHAPED ARM, THE SLEEVE YOU CHOOSE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO HOW YOUR ARM APPEARS.

BATWING SLEEVE

This style usually appears in soft jersey fabrics or fine knitwear and is an interesting and forgiving shape.

It will disguise the shape of any arm but can foreshorten a body.

PUFFED SLEEVE

This is a great device for creating width and volume around the shoulder area. When worn in a soft jersey fabric it can work well for curvy arms by appearing larger in size than the piece of arm on show and therefore making the arm look smaller.

Avoid if you have large or square shoulders.

The steps I'm outlining here are important. But so is thinking of yourself as unique and therefore special. If you like a certain colour or want to dress in a certain way then go ahead and enjoy it. I don't subscribe to the idea that everyone should look the same. In fact, I feel strongly that a stylish approach allows for individuality, whereas a merely fashionable approach can often make everyone look as though they are wearing a uniform.

It is important that you feel you have a signature that out-lives any of the trends – these after all last a very short space of time. Your signature will be the thing that others can describe you by. It will influence the types of clothes you buy. After all we can learn that a certain print or colour is 'on trend' but it is how we incorporate it into our wardrobes that counts.

Start to take ownership of your look; don't hand it to the fashion industry to decide how you should appear. Here are two examples of what I mean:

The Ethnic look

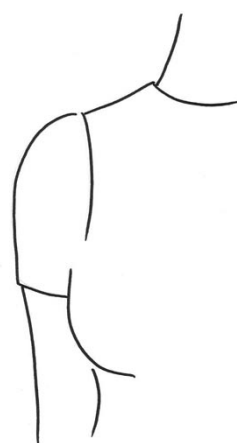
She usually has long hair; maybe it's plaited. She loves turquoise or amber jewellery and often has lots of silver bangles or rings. Her clothes are loose and feminine in earthy colours. She loves leather and crisp white blouses.



Capped sleeve ✗



Angel sleeve ✓



Fitted T-shirt ★

CAPPED SLEEVE

This design concentrates on the shoulder and top area of the arm. It can accentuate the size of this area and is a popular choice for those who enjoy the way their arm looks more athletic and toned when they wear it. Avoid if you have soft, round or large arms and shoulders.

ANGEL SLEEVE

This is a great sleeve for fuller softer arms. It will always work to make the arm look smaller and more feminine. The slash in the sleeve will blur the line and create a minimising effect on the arm. It will always work to make the arm look smaller and more feminine.

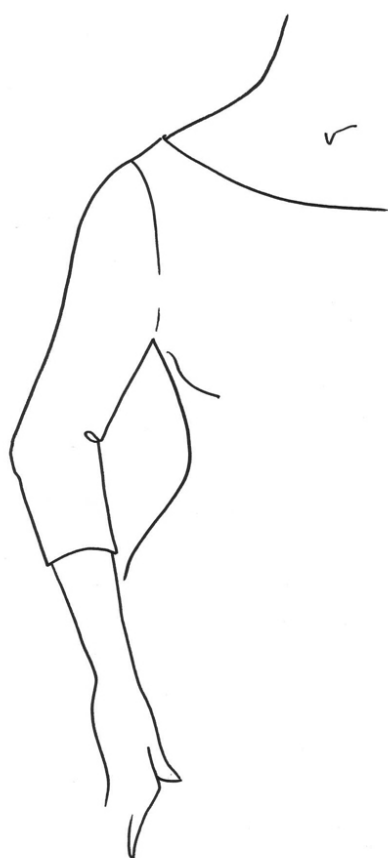
FITTED T-SHIRT

A hard horizontal line across the arm where it begins to widen is a way of looking muscular. The t-shirt was invented after all by the US Army as an undergarment.

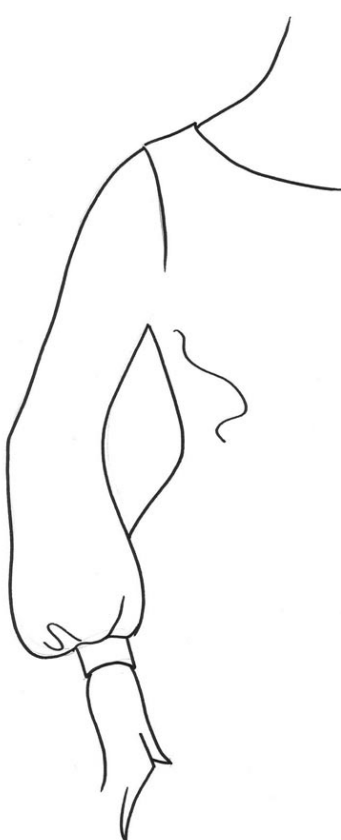
Urban Chic.

This a style that has tailoring at its heart. She will wear clothes that have a certain strictness to them as well as accentuating her shape. Her hair will be groomed, her accessories co-ordinated. Colours will be graphic – reds, greys, black.

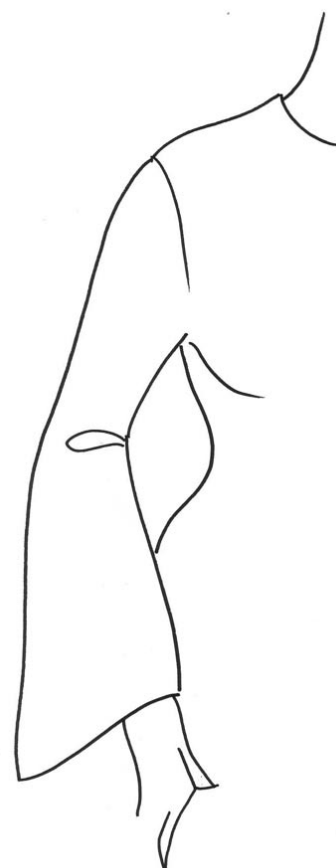
Both these women have retained their own unique style but both will buy clothes to accentuate and support their look each season, choosing styles and cuts that are relevant to them. Have you ever thought about what your look might be? To find out more move forward to Action Plan Number 1 'Style Detective.'



3/4 Length or cropped sleeves ✓



Bell shaped sleeve ★



Bell-bottom sleeve ✗

3/4 LENGTH OR CROPPED SLEEVES

This length sleeve works perfectly to make limbs look longer and, when designed with a wide flare, will be one of the most flattering shapes for curvy arms and wrists.

BELL SHAPED SLEEVE

A sleeve like this will come in and out of fashion and is most often seen on formal or special occasionwear blouses. It works well to widen the bottom part of the arm and will give balance to the top part.

BELL-BOTTOM SLEEVE

A long and wide sleeve will work to balance the top of the arm.

A long wide sleeve can foreshorten the arm.

However, the benefits of balancing the top part of the arm by creating more volume at the wrist and forearm are also important. As a general rule a curvier arm needs a wider flare at the bottom.



Raglan Sleeve ✗



Extended cuff feature ★



Open slash sleeve ✓

RAGLAN SLEEVE

This design is more to do with the way that the sleeve fits into the shoulder area because it is not a conventional sleeve casing. It is often used in sporting clothing because it allows for more give across the back. It also enhances the shoulder area, especially if it appears as a two-tone design (where the sleeve is a contrasting colour from the body).

This shape will always bulk up the shoulder area.

Avoid if you have large or square shoulders.

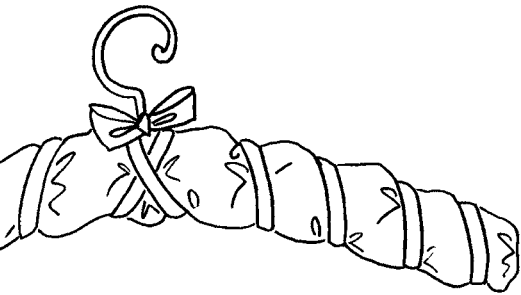
EXTENDED CUFF FEATURE

A dressy shirt, blouse or top can use this feature and it is a great one to reduce the appearance of a long slender arm, especially if there is some gathering into the cuff that creates width around the forearm.

OPEN SLASH SLEEVE

This sleeve is slashed from the shoulder to the wrist and held by the wristband but there are other designs too like a slash just at the top of the arm or several slashes that are caught at various points along the way.

This is a perfect sleeve for concealing the shape of the arm, leaving a slither of skin on show and a long vertical line.



Be your own wardrobe mistress

We'd all like a larger wardrobe right?

The fact that there never seems to be enough space just serves to encourage us to treat our clothes badly. In any wardrobe (and I've overhauled a few in my time), I can guarantee I will find garments that are badly hung or squashed into tight spaces. There will be hangers poking through knitwear; clothes on the floor of the wardrobe or returned to the rail dirty. And I always find plenty of clothes that aren't even the right size. Most women only wear about a third of their wardrobe, the rest is closet clutter.

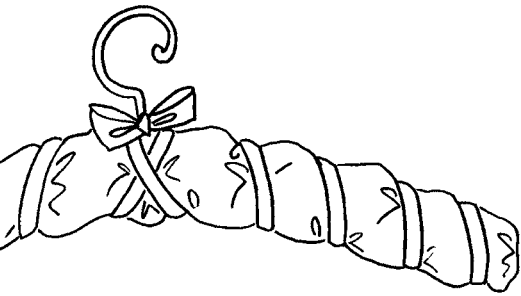
Closet clutter and clothes that are past it - read that as worn out or out of date - are no good to you. A good stylist knows what she has on her rails at any time and knows what is available to work with. Spot a stylish woman in the street and you can be sure that she will have an organised wardrobe at her disposal. This is very easily achieved when you adopt the mindset of a stylist and think of clothes as tools.

A carpenter will keep a toolbox tidy so that she can find the tool she needs to carry out the job well; why don't you take that approach to your clothes from now on?

Personal Vintage

If you have any clothes remaining that are well cut and fit you beautifully, perhaps they spent some money on them and they have classic appeal BUT don't fit in with your current looks then save them as 'personal vintage.' Personal vintage will allow you to bring these clothes back out in a few years when the catwalks revisit these looks.

I have always done this...when trouser shapes change significantly from skinny to flare and back again, I can recycle my own designer styles and not have to re purchase something I already had once.



Try this practical approach.

1 Start by splitting your wardrobe into two seasons and remove all the garments that are seasonally unsuitable. There is after all no point fighting your way through a sea of sweaters you won't wear for at least three months. Or trying to extricate your strappy sandals from a pile of winter boots. Fold and pack these items away clean in storage (moths are attracted to food stains or perspiration, in fact this is a feast for them).

2 Now put the stored clothes and accessories in the loft, under the bed or just generally out of the way – not only will it keep them in better condition and ready for the correct season – but you'll have a better idea when you do unpack them of whether you want to keep them all.

3 Now let's look at what you have left in your wardrobe. Put to one side the items that you don't wear for one reason or another and now let's arrange on the rail the remaining garments.

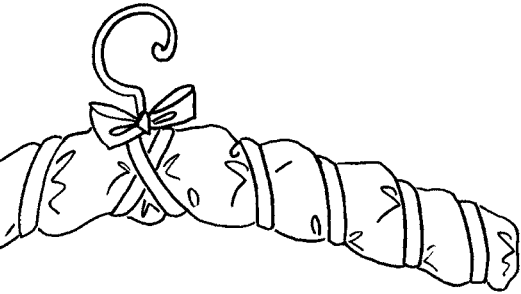
4 Take all metal and plastic hangers out of the equation and replace with wooden ones. These will keep your clothes in better shape.

5 Now group all your trousers together and hang; then group skirts and hang; now jackets and hang. Notice how many combinations you can get from mixing the top halves with both sets of bottom halves.

6 Now add blouses on hangers and then on to the shelf place folded Lycra tops and knitwear. Split these last two groups into light and dark if you can.

7 Finally store dresses on wooden hangers and place next to the blouses.

8 Now place all seasonal shoes at the bottom of your wardrobe along with a box for your belts, scarves, corsages and other accessories. Bags can sit on top of the box or in a shelf space if you have one.



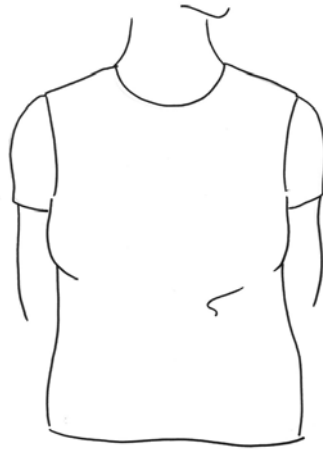
Assessing your wardrobe

This is your working wardrobe. See how easy it is to create a variety of looks with all the items that are in front of you, partly because you can see what you have immediately and partly because the garments themselves will now give you ideas and inspiration as they suggest combinations.

Let's now look at the clothes on your bed that you don't wear. Be honest with yourself here and voice out loud why you don't wear them. Hearing yourself say things like 'I'm waiting to shrink back into it.' Or 'I keep thinking that one day it will look right on me.' Or most typically 'It was a bargain and I'll find a use for it somehow,' will help you to let go of them. Often women keep a variety of sizes in their wardrobe in case they either lose or gain weight. In my experience, it's important to store the clothes that aren't your current size so that you are styling with only the clothes that you know will fit you. Give away the rest.

If you have anything left from this pile that you do want to keep, put it in your closet and review next season. This practice should be kept up twice a year and, as you buy new clothes, you can make space in your wardrobe for them by removing old worn out items.

To create a new mindset for you, choose a mantra – my personal one is 'every day is a best underwear day' – that communicates to me the joy of feeling my best all the time rather than saving my efforts for some special (fantasy) day. Start using your clothes to support you in your quest to look and feel great everyday. If we think about the carpenter and her toolbox for just a moment, we realise that she strives to turn in good work everyday using the correct tools.... so should you!



Classic T-shirt style ★

Step Three. Know your body symmetry

TOPS

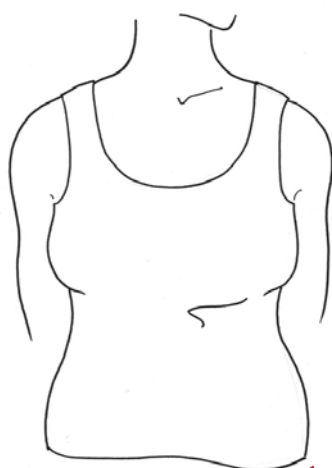
TOPS ARE AS MUCH A TASTE AND STYLE THING AS THEY ARE A FIT ISSUE AND, WITH FASHION CHANGING THE CUTS EVERY SEASON, THERE ARE ALWAYS NEW SHAPES TO TRY. HERE IS A GROUPING OF THE CLASSIC SHAPES WHICH, WHEN PUT TOGETHER WITH THE INFORMATION YOU ALREADY HAVE ON NECK LINE, SHOULDER AND SLEEVE DETAIL WILL CREATE A BODY SHAPE REFERENCE WHATEVER THE STYLES. LENGTH IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER HERE AND THIS WILL BE FLAGGED UP WHERE RELEVANT.

CLASSIC T-SHIRT STYLE

This shape usually has a little Lycra to help it stretch or it is a loose weave cotton so we can stretch it over our heads. It has become a utility garment of modern day times and is useful for casual wear.

Never heard of that phrase? Well join me now on an image adventure.

You are petite height and curvaceous and you are all in proportion. That means you have even body symmetry and that is excellent news. What you don't have to do then is work extra hard to even up your top half with your bottom half or visa versa. With such a gorgeous shape that is in proportion there isn't so much work for you to achieve body symmetry. But perhaps you find certain garments don't fit or your arms or ankles are fuller than you'd like; maybe you feel you are all bosom and hip or you would love to know how to create the illusion of height and the elegance that goes with it. Whatever your interests I want you to enjoy your beautiful healthy body from this day on and to show off your curves to their very best; you can create a great silhouette by defining your waist.



Classic vest



The Kimono top



Step Four. Clothing design in general

CLASSIC VEST

The vest has just that bit more shape to it and so is a more flattering garment for summer. It is also a very useful garment to wear under another top like a camisole or a wide scoop to give bra straps coverage and a contrasting colour for a layered look.

THE KIMONO TOP

This casual style top has large square sleeves and can be loosely fitted to the body under the bust and around the waist. The extra volume around the arms will minimise the bust while the fabric at the tummy will cover roundness. A top like this will usually have bold print and its general width can create a foreshortening effect.

There is always so much choice but don't be confused by the amount of retailers out there.

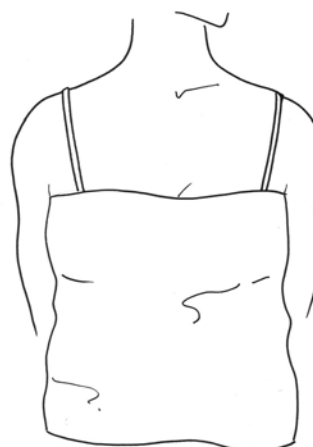
You will consistently find that just a few actually give you the fit you need and that one retailer's size 12 is another's size 14. That is because there isn't standardised sizing. So stick with a label or shop that fits you best because fit is everything. The cheapest of garments can look sensational if it fits the body beautifully and the most expensive outfit will only create a negative impact if it is badly fitted.

OK, with the above in mind, your mission is to achieve sophistication at all times because sophistication suggests adult elegance and petite women are often seen to be 'girly,' not womanly. It may be that you have resorted to teen clothes because you find they fit you. There's nothing wrong with that – so many teen clothes can pass for adult looks but just be aware of the garment finish. Teen clothes are aimed at girls with low incomes and are not always very carefully made. If you are a fan of teen clothes, mix them with adult styles that have more quality.

Petite curvaceous women often feel 'boxy' in casual clothes; this is because the average T-shirt has no shape to it and falls from the bust to the hips without giving the waist any definition. You need clothes that give you shape and definition at all times! Take these ideas with you on your next shopping trip.



Blouson dropped waisted ✕



Camisole ✕

BLOUSON DROPPED WAISTED

This top can have any type of neckline, what's important here is the soft gathered fabric around the tummy area and the low waisted band. This can gently mask the shape of your whole upper torso and so blurs the line between bust and tummy.

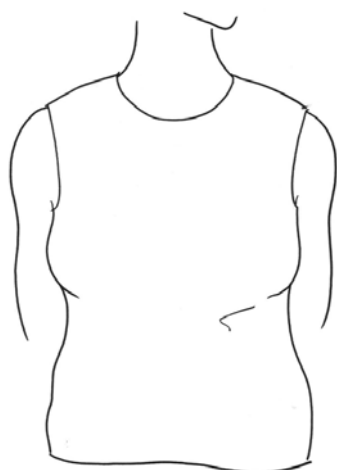
CAMISOLE

This is a top that normally appears in flimsy or lightweight fabrics. It gives little or no shape to curves but is good for slender frames. Worn either braless or with a good strapless bra it can look very demure and was a key look with jeans not so long ago.

Avoid if you have large or square shoulders.

Do

- Choose clothes that give your body definition. Clothes with gentle structure like blouses will work for you as well as looser bohemian styles that are shaped and fitted to the top of your body. Now is a fantastic time to shop because so many clothes are sold as separates so you can buy individual pieces to suit your shape.
- Do look for clothes that offer a waist therefore accentuating bosom and hips and making the most of your curves. An absolute must for you is the wrap dress because it is adjustable and allows for you to fit it to your body. Wrap tops are also fantastic for the same reason. Any clothes that have a tie under the bust so that the waist is defined will also work well for you. Wear a Lycra vest underneath for added security.
- Many curvy women still wish they had a fuller bosom. If this is you, then look for tops that create extra volume and therefore enhance the top part of your body. Choose anything with frills, ruching or loose fabric gathers at the front. What you are doing is creating an illusion of fullness.
- Choose v-necks that lengthen necks and create a flattering line for the bosom. This will minimise a full bust if this is what you need.
- Wear a correctly fitted smooth and seamless bra, making sure that straps do not cut into flesh creating lumps and bumps. It is crucial that you take time to get the correct fit – bosoms that point down or spread outwards are very ageing. It is especially crucial for petite shapes to lift breasts; this will immediately give you an extra illusion of height. Celebrate your beautiful shape with a balconet bra – these give great shape and support. In our directory you will find companies that offer larger cup sized bras.



Classic tank ★



Camisole with peplum ✗

CLASSIC TANK

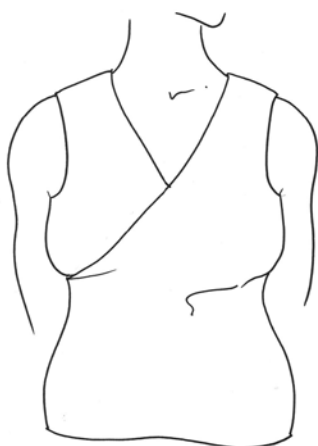
The classic tank style is a great solution if you have large or square shoulders and will minimise this area very effectively. Especially good for square or athletic shoulders.

- Apply the same thought to briefs. A VPL or any other line will make your curvy bottom seem as though it is asking for more attention. My favourite lingerie item is the g-string for that very reason. You can get great performance underwear from places like Marks and Spencer with control and smoothing panels

CAMISOLE WITH PEPLUM

All of the above counts here but the important thing about this top is its extended length. Any top with a peplum or loose layer like this is perfect for covering round tummies.

- Wear large chunky knits that wrap your body seductively. Three quarter length cardis that have a belt feature will enable you to draw the garment close to your body, accentuating your waist.
- If you want to play down full shoulders and arms, wear wide shoulder straps, sweetheart necklines or three-quarter length sleeves with a flare.
- Trousers and skirts can create the illusion of length to give the look of sophistication. If you are curvy and in proportion, enjoy your body in the knowledge that any shape of trouser or skirt will suit. If you have a slight pear shape to your hips or fullness in the thighs then choose trousers and skirts with a slight flare from the hips so that your bottom is not your widest point.
- Enjoy jeans because they give your thighs a smooth and toned appearance and a curvy bottom looks fantastic in good quality jeans. You may find, however, that you struggle with waists always being too large. This is where the lower cut at the hip or low-rise waist will really benefit you. Every woman finds jeans buying time consuming so visit a store where there are loads of brands to try (each will offer slightly different cut); then you can keep going until you find the best fit and cut for you.



Wrap top ✓



Fitted shirt ★

WRAP TOP

This is a flattering shape that wraps the body and creates definition. It usually appears as all in one with no need of fastening.

- Wear a low or medium heel under your trousers. I say this because, with few exceptions, high heels are just plain uncomfortable and sophisticated cool is not to be found on the face of someone whose feet are in distress.

FITTED SHIRT.

This is a classic that is adapted to suit every body shape and is flattering to both curvy and slender alike (your favourite retailers will have taken your body type into account when they design this classic). Petite retailers will always offer shorter lengths for instance and tall retailers will add extra length and cuff detail.

- Cropped trousers are a fantastic visual aid to leg elongation as are skirts that hover around the knee, leaving almost yards of leg on show. An A-line knee-length skirt will flatter full calves. Team with a low sling back. (Shoes with ankle straps always shorten the leg).
- Wear a shoe that matches tonally with your skirt or trouser for extra lengthening effect.

Don't

- Wear boxy shapes like t-shirts or polo shirts that hide your bust and hips and make your body look bulky and square.
- Wear generally oversized or baggy clothes even if there is a trend for it. You will just look like you are waiting to grow into yours and they will bulk your torso out.
- Choose tops with high round necks that make your bosoms look large and low slung.
- Wear thin Lycra that is too closely fitted to the body; fleshy areas around the body can look lumpy or roll-like.
- Wear lacy bras under smooth fabrics like jersey because your bosoms will look mottled and noticeable.

Wear tops that blouson round the waist and settle on the hips. You will lose your waist and your body will have no shape. This has got to be the most unflattering shape for you!



Horizontals

This picture illustrates how horizontal lines can create width and a foreshortening effect. The look itself is exaggerated with many horizontal features in the clothing to make the point. See how the eye travels across the body wherever there is a horizontal line.

Horizontals are effectively used as visual punctuation on tall bodies but must be used more sparingly on shorter and curvy bodies.

They can, however, be great tools to create width at a certain part of the body to give balance.

Horizontal lines are made by:

- Creating a colour break (a change of colour)
- Belts
- Seaming
- Print
- Garment layering to create horizontal slabs of colour
- Features on clothes like smocking, yokes, panelling ribbing, shirring, fabric bands

Caryn says...

See your clothes

in a different light

Caryn says...

a horizontal

line above the bust

will amplify

shape



Smock top ✗



Empire line ✓

Fashion tip
If you half shut your eyes, you can see where the focus is for many garments. This will help you to decide more easily

SMOCK TOP

This is a top with a lot of fabric in it. It is recognisable by the flat yoke that reaches from the neckline to the rise of the bust, where it is joined to a full or gathered effect fabric. In general it will widen the shoulders and blur any definition between bust and tummy.

It is also good for creating volume around the whole of the upper body.

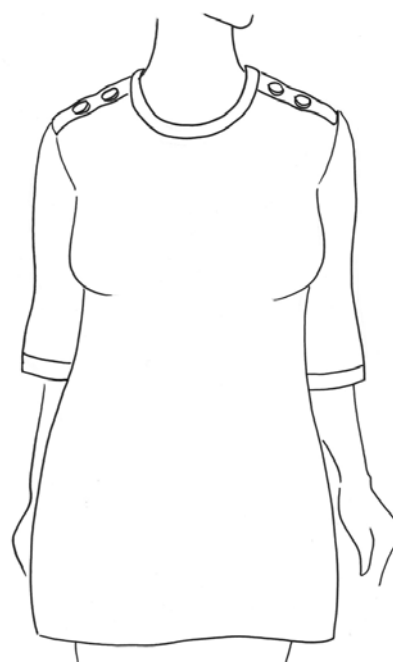
EMPIRE LINE

This shape has enjoyed spectacular popularity in recent seasons because it is a very flattering and easy to wear shape. The difference between empire and smock is that the fabric is fitted over the bust and pulled close to the body just under the bust where it then falls away and flares over the tummy without defining the shape.

It is a great garment for creating definition around the bust and disguising the tummy.



Dropped waist or long line camisole ✗



Tunic ✓

DROPPED WAIST OR LONG LINE CAMISOLE

Tops that have a dropped waist are a joy to wear because the waist and tummy is not on show and for many of us that means the chance to breath out and relax.

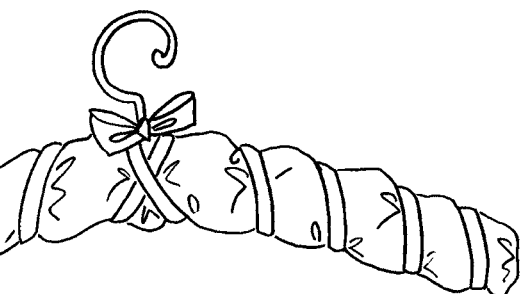
However, the dropped waist draws the eye line downwards, creating some foreshortening.

TUNIC

This is one of the most popular shapes of recent times, creating a loose layer over the whole of the upper body and covering waistline and tummy. The advantages to this type of top are numerous.

But choosing the right style of tunic depends on the features it has. The neckline is crucial; an all over pattern is neutral, while dominant decoration at the bottom of the tunic draws the eye away from the upper body. Similarly dominant and eye-catching embellishment at the top of the tunic focuses the attention at the bust.

The length of garment works best for you when it is not settled on the widest part of your hips. Also the shorter your legs, the shorter the tunic top needs to be to avoid visually foreshortening your legs.



Uniforms

How many uniforms do you have?

We all wear uniforms to some extent. In my own wardrobe I have a dozen that have served me well. When I know what I am doing with my day I then pick from one of the following uniforms; this narrows down my potential for time wasting.

'Fashion Expert' at work clothes

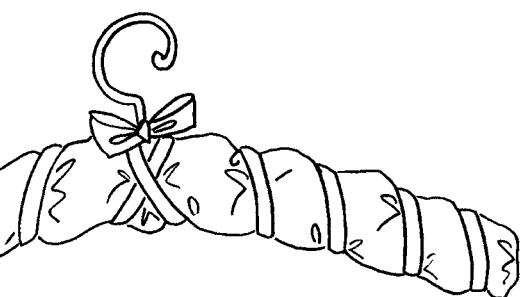
These are mostly black clothes because the days can be long; there may be meetings and appointments or styling behind the scenes for TV or magazines. I often have my hair scraped back so that it is held in place all day long and looks chic. For meetings, especially, I may need to look a little stern. I'm usually pitching ideas and I need to look efficient and authoritative.

TV and Stage clothes

Well you'd think they'd be the same but they are not. Television requires brightly coloured, larger than life clothes. I used to try and get away with black after all it was the way I dressed but, when I looked at the piece I'd filmed later, I looked too stern and sombre. I often buy clothes for TV that I wouldn't wear in an ordinary day because they look too attention seeking. Clothes also need to look new on TV so, even if I do like something, I don't often wear it for real life. I'm very frugal and I buy from designer friends at wholesale. I also prioritise designer sales. Shoes are important here. If I'm on stage my shoes will be level with many people's eye line. I always wear stage shoes, which have 'showy heels,' that look and feel great for a few hours max!

Mum clothes/Writing in the office clothes

This is my jeans and trainers or boots look with a few loose tops over polo necks in the winter. I like tops that cover tummies so that when I'm sitting down at my desk I don't have to hold my tummy in. I wear jeans with a bit of Lycra in them because sitting at my desk all day can be uncomfortable in restrictive fabrics. I always write up until the last moment then I rush off to collect my youngest from school. I like striding out in my trainers (currently red and pink Gola's), it's the perfect antidote to being cooped up at my desk.



Funky downtime with friends clothes

These are the women I dress for. I want them to think I am well put together and effortlessly stylish. Amongst them I have writers, designers, other TV presenters, PR's and magazine publishers as well as other mums from school. I probably put the most amount of effort into this look. But it's not about labels, it's about individuality. I take pleasure in mixing things up and wearing designer items I have loved for years, like my favourite Betty Jackson designs with some high street labels and something I have just bought from a second hand shop. It's all about looking and feeling good isn't it? I love the way my friends dress too and I'm inspired by their individuality - often we will exchange details.

Being in the Country clothes

Bright colours or funky designs just look very attention seeking and out of place in the country. I spend as much time as I can there to unwind. It's about as far from fashion as you can get and if I have driven up from London in my London clothes – they can feel strangely out of place. Heels and pointy boots just don't work on stony and uneven paths.

Gardening clothes

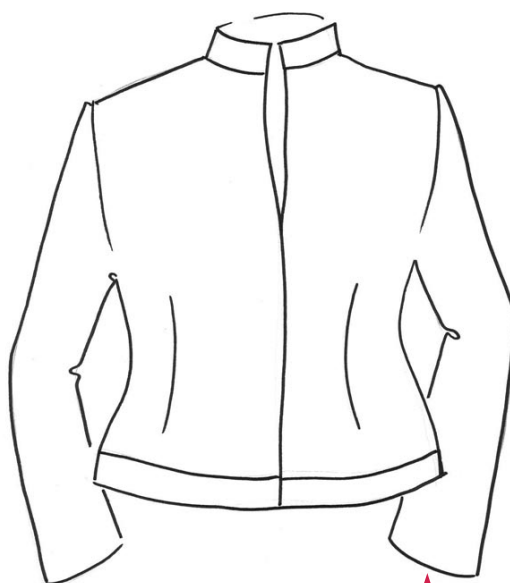
Of course I wear old muddy clothes that have seen a lot of action. Gardening is my favourite hobby (my hands are never manicured because gardening just ruins them). I love wiping my filthy hands down my clothes and then popping into the garden centre still messy and wild with my Wellington boots on. I know I am recognised and get some strange looks because I am always muddy or dirty. Gardening shouldn't be any other way!

Special Occasion clothes

Because I don't do girly, I know where every woman who tells me the same is coming from. For evening wear I love monochrome and tailored designs – because there is something sexy about a well cut waistcoat with cleavage and beautifully cut trousers. Hey it worked when Yves St Laurent launched it all those years ago and it's still a classic now. I love shoes too so I indulge myself with classic designs from Georgina Goodman (heels always) that last and last.

Slipping into these clothes helps me to focus on the role in hand. I am dressed for it and I need think no more about what I am wearing. Instead I concentrate on what I am doing.

How many different uniforms have you got?



Fitted streamlined jacket ★

Step Five. Colour

JACKET SHAPES
THIS SECTION GIVES YOU AN
INSIGHT INTO THOSE
ALL-IMPORTANT OUTER LAYERS. BY
THEIR VERY NATURE JACKETS ARE
TAILORED TO SOME DEGREE AND
HAVE BELT, POCKET AND COLLAR
FEATURES. (I'VE DONE A SEPARATE
COLLAR GUIDE OVERLEAF). I WILL
ALSO BE TALKING ABOUT LENGTHS
HERE NOT JUST FOR JACKETS
BUT COATS TOO SINCE THE SAME
STYLES APPEAR WITH
EXTRA LENGTH.

FITTED STREAMLINED JACKET

The fitted streamlined jacket comes in a variety of styles but is identifiable by its lack of features and undefined waist. It is a classic style and often in a soft leather or glazed gabardine fabrics.

There is so much to be said about colour that I'm keeping it as simple as possible.

Colour has the ability to draw the eye to wherever it is placed. It can also be a helpful tool in playing up or down certain parts of your body. So use colour with the knowledge that a dark colour minimises and narrows the part of the body it covers and bright or light colour accentuates or draws attention to the part of the body it covers.

Firstly, choose colour to suit your skin tone. If you are pale find a tonal match in your favourite colour. What I'm saying here is that you can wear any colour you damn well please but it must be tonally compatible to your skin and hair. Let's take blue for instance - there is a huge selection of tones from baby blue to peacock blue and midnight blue. Discount the primary version immediately. Primary colours suit very few skin tones over five years old.

Then apply this basic rule: If you are pale, choose a blue that is not pigment intense. If you are mid-tone, choose a blue with a medium amount of pigment and, if you are dark, you can go all the way. Put simply this means that pale skins can wear lights but not brights (rich colour will make you look washed out). Mid-tones can wear lights or brights that are not too rich and not too pale and dark skins can wear brights but not lights (a pale colour can often look faded and washed out unable to offer any complimentary glow to dark skin).



Single breasted jacket ✓

SINGLE-BREASTED JACKET

This is a universally flattering jacket and will always make an appearance on the catwalk (details slightly changed each season of course). Quite often it is fastened by only one or two buttons and has a fitted waist and small pockets at the hips. All important is the fit and the proportion on your body. It must hang from your shoulders with no warping across the body.

This style is also found in coats where the waist is featured and the fabric falls from the hip into a gentle flare. Again this is a universally flattering style.

There is plenty more to say on colour but one other helpful tip is take the garment you want to buy to a mirror in daylight (electric light will not help you at all). Then hold the colour right up under your chin and take a good look. It will reflect under your chin, under your nose and under your eyebrows - does this add a wonderful glow to your skin or does it look awful though you don't know why?

This method works so efficiently because colour gives off reflected light and throws it onto your skin. I, for instance, do not choose to wear much yellow and green because I have very yellow skin so I cool my skin down with blues and bluey pinks.

Try this in your bedroom with your clothes now and you'll see what I mean!

Do

- As a petite height with an apple shape figure you may enjoy keeping within one colour grouping to create the feeling of extra height and elongation. Pick a tone that suits your skin tone and then create an outfit from colours in similar tones, for instance, pink and lilac or beige and cream.
- A belt in a darker tone will define your waist and make it appear smaller. A belt in a lighter colour will make your waist seem larger as well as offering that all important definition. Keep it in the same colour grouping.
- Match your shoes and bag tonally to your clothes to continue the line and elongate your body.



Fitted detail jacket



FITTED DETAIL JACKET

This is a much more sporting shape with features like collar and cuff detail. It will appear in denim, cord, leather and a variety of lightweight but weather proofed fabrics.

The extra pockets will add volume to the upper body and can make it appear bulkier.

This style in coat form can look cluttered.

- Enjoy colour; you can place it at various points on your body to draw the eye or use it all over. Put bright colour at the top third of your body to create the illusion of height.
- If you like a colour but it doesn't suit your skin tone, wear it as a skirt or trousers; that way it is not close enough to your face to create reflected light. Make sure there is strong detail at the top of your body to raise the eye.
- To create a narrowing effect, wear a panel of colour through the middle portion of your body.
- Wear light or bright colour at the top of your body and dark colour at the bottom for the most flattering results (unless you are verging on being top heavy).

Don't

- Cut yourself in half with colour. Two different colours on a petite shape will give you a rather child-like look and also make you look shorter.
- Put it on the bottom part of your body with out eyecatching detail at the top of the body because it will foreshorten you.



Double breasted jacket ★



The trench style wrap ✓



The cropped jacket ★

DOUBLE BREASTED JACKET

This style has a sporting feel and appears in many different cuts. Recent military fashion for coats and jackets have featured the double breasted cut and it also appears when women's suiting takes on a more androgynous or mannish feel. Buttons may also be exaggerated in size and lapels large. This style in coat form will usually be long.

The noticeable double-breasted feature can be used to widen the upper body.

THE TRENCH STYLE WRAP JACKET

The jacket may fasten with subtle buttons or it may just wrap over. The crucial feature is the belted waist. As with the single breasted jacket, this is a great way to define the upper body and is again universally flattering.

This style is also found in coats where the waist is featured and the fabric falls from the hip into a gentle flare. Again this is a universally flattering style.

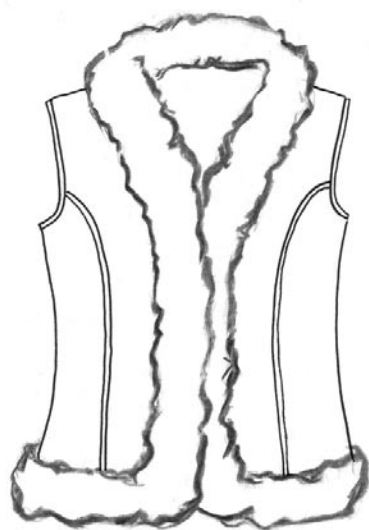
THE CROPPED JACKET

Think Coco Chanel classic; think hemline just below the waist. This jacket is designed to change the proportions of a body making the lower body look streamlined. It often appears in soft feminine pastel tweeds or wool mixes.

This style will create volume around the upper body.

This style in coat form is straight with no definition at the waist and has a Jackie Kennedy classic retro charm.

Avoid if you are tall or top-heavy in jacket and coat form.



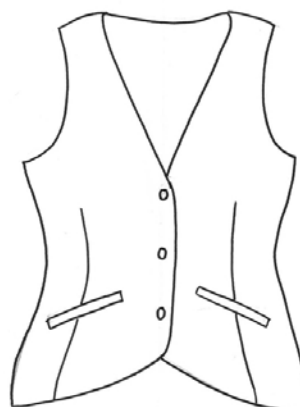
Gilet ✓



Bolero ★



Cropped 50's style jacket ✓



Waistcoat ✓

GILET

This is a great shaped garment, which has appeared as a padded design and more recently a sheepskin item. It has no fastening and sits over other layers to give a practical warmth to any clothing.

The strong vertical trim feature can help to elongate the body.

BOLERO

The overwhelming feature of this jacket is its hemline, which ends at high rib cage. Catwalks can sometimes feature this cut heavily over a fitted jersey top and trousers. It is very lengthening but can also focus interest around the bust.

CROPPED 50'S STYLE JACKET

Cropped sleeved jackets with cropped hemlines work very well over dresses. They often have one or two button

fastening at the collarbone or a tie fastening and fall open. In lightweight fabrics they are a summer design that appears on the catwalk for time to time and because of the roomy cut will always make the body look dainty within.

WAISTCOAT

The waistcoat is one of my favourite garments because it can give shape to the upper body. It works just as well with jeans as it does with more formal clothes.



Long low breaks ✗



Wide lapels ✓

LAPELS AND COLLARS

CRUCIAL FEATURES ON JACKETS; LAPELS CAN WIDEN OR STREAMLINE THE BODY AS WELL AS FORESHORTEN OR LENGTHEN. UNDERSTANDING WHICH LAPELS YOU CAN CHOOSE TO FLATTER YOUR SHAPE IS EASY.

LONG LOW BREAKS

This type of collar reveals whatever you are wearing underneath so plan to make a deliberate colour or garment statement. Often the waistline of the garment will be less pronounced.

This shape will take the eye lower down the body.

WIDE LAPELS

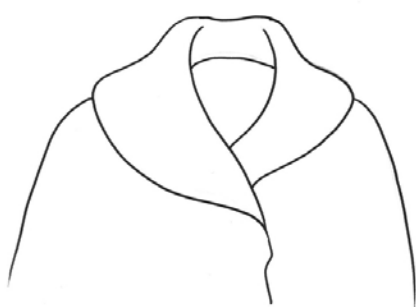
These are instantly balancing for larger bodies. The expanse of lapel looks generous and luxurious.

Good for wide shoulders.

Caryn says... collars will balance your body.

Slight busts need small collars

Fuller chests need more fabric



Shawl collar ✓



High break collar ✗



Standard break collar ✓

SHAWL COLLAR

This is a thick wide luxurious looking collar and often appears on knitwear or special occasionwear jackets and luxurious coats.

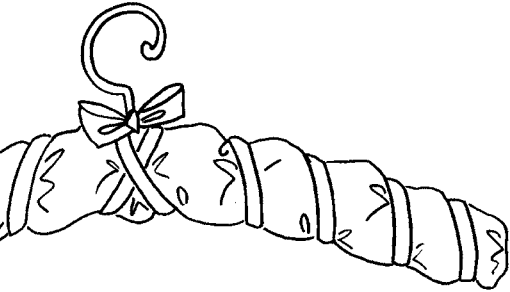
HIGH BREAK COLLAR

This style of collar can often be found in coats, frock coats and suit jackets. It has a feeling of being strict and pared down.

It will raise the eye to the bust area.

STANDARD BREAK COLLAR

This style of collar is universally flattering which is why it appears with such regularity. Included on most jackets, frock coats and coats because of its proportions, it will always give your upper body a streamlined and neat look.



Create a stunning wardrobe on a budget

Now that you have worked out who you are and you've played 'closet detective,' there is one more project for you to enjoy.

This is a longer-term project, however, and not something you can do immediately because it takes a mental shift to adjust your shopping habits and a few seasons to make those changes take effect. This project is called Creating the Perfect Capsule Wardrobe on a Budget.

Think about your newly organised wardrobe. It is beautifully ordered now and you know where everything is. Congratulations.

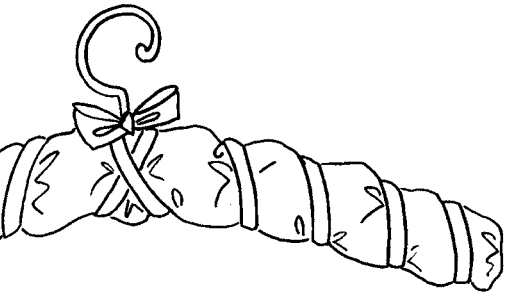
Let's get you thinking like a professional stylist now. Clothes fall into different groups and once you see your clothes in this way they will automatically help you to know what should go together and when to make changes.

Group one – fashion

Garments in this section are in and out of the shops in a season. They are directly influenced by what has come off the catwalk and are very trend-oriented. Clothes in this group are about change and novelty – they can be extreme, eye catching or brightly coloured. These are the clothes you can experiment with. Perhaps a particular print trend takes your fancy and, although you wouldn't normally be attracted to such a combination, if it appeals for whatever reason – go ahead treat yourself.

Spend only a small amount of money on clothes in this group. They can be as high fashion as you like but fashions change quickly so these clothes need to be worn to death during the season. You will tire of them that way and they of you (cheap clothes are not made to last) – at the end of the season donate them.

Look for: statement tops, playful accessories, the latest wrap, colourful shoes and dresses.



It's important to remember here that this fashion group sometimes offers a look that is suited to a certain body shape or has a particular offer that is just right for you. If this applies one season, then buy up the more classic garments within the look - it won't be there next season.

Group two - clothes

These garments are usually less trend-oriented and will last across a couple of seasons. Every woman will have her own favourite garments that she has found work best for her body.

Spend a little more on these items. You need more quality (good fabrics, linings, trimmings) because you want the garment to last over a few seasons or more.

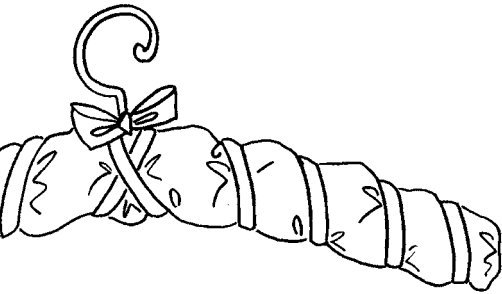
Look for: denim skirts and other flattering shapes that have a more classic feel, jeans styles, lightweight jackets, fitted shirts and shaped sweaters.

Group three - capsule classics

These are the garments that every woman needs in her wardrobe, which can be dressed up or accessorised with the arrival of each new trend (using clothes from the fashion section). They are classic styles so they don't date and they fit the body well, giving an air of sophisticated grooming.

Spend what you can afford but buy these clothes as sale items to get the best value for your money. Get used to planning shopping trips in the sale times and shop with a list of exactly what you need. Don't impulse buy anything in the sale because it is drastically reduced in price, unless it happens to be exactly what you were looking for in the first place!

If your body shape is not well enough catered for by mainstream shops, then look for a good dressmaker to make up the clothes that will be in your wardrobe for a long time. It is cheaper than you think if you balance the cost against years of pleasure, confidence and knowledge that you can always rely upon these garments to showcase your body beautifully. Trousers are crucial for fit, as is a tailored jacket. Once the dressmaker has your measurements, you can wait for fabric sales and store cloth ready to make into a garment to fit.



Look for: the perfect (classically cut and beautifully fitted) pair of black trousers, a classic jacket and skirt, a fitted and classically cut coat (a Trench coat is always a good option). A classic pair of leather riding boots or a beautiful leather handbag, cashmere knitwear and so on (these are all things I have bought at a snip during the sales). Stick to neutral colours for these items because colour dates quickly too.

Group four - basics

These are the T-shirts, slacks, loose knitwear, comfortable fleeces etc, which need not be dictated to by trend unless you want them to be. Save time and money by shopping online or in catalogues for these items since fit is less of an issue.

Final points

Whenever you buy new items, clear out anything old so that your wardrobe does not slowly grow to overfull. Donate to second hand stores or to friends (I have three sisters and so I'm often passing things on for someone else to get some enjoyment from). The only reason to hold on to something is if it will age beautifully – like a beautifully crafted handbag for instance. Highstreet designs certainly do not age well because they are not made to last.

This way you can create a wardrobe where the classic capsule and basics are in place and the fashionable items are updated seasonally and inexpensively. If you are ever in doubt remind yourself that it is always better to have a few beautifully fitted garments that showcase you in the very best way possible than lots of ill-fitting garments in a wardrobe.

Step Six. Print and pattern

PRINT

IF YOU ARE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH PRINT, BELIEVING THAT IT IS UNFLATTERING, UNLESS YOU ARE MODEL SHAPED, IT IS BECAUSE YOU MAY HAVE CHOSEN THE WRONG SIZE PRINT IN THE PAST OR PLACED IT ON A PART OF YOUR BODY THAT IS NOT FLATTERING. IN ACTUAL FACT IT IS AN EXCELLENT TOOL AND, IF YOUR WARDROBE IS DEVOID OF PRINT, YOU ARE MISSING OUT ON AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO BALANCE YOUR BODY SYMMETRY. THERE ARE TWO THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN YOU ARE WORKING WITH PRINT. THE SIZE AND ALSO THE DIRECTION OF THE PRINT AS WELL AS WHERE YOU PLACE THE PRINT.

Print and pattern (like colour) serves to draw the eye to wherever it is used.

Do

- Wear prints that are a medium sized. This is because you need to balance your body. If you are choosing a patterned dress, for example, go for something that has a boldness in either shape and or colour but prioritise a print on a vertical line. Print that seems to run on a horizontal line will widen you, making you appear shorter.
- Choose print to draw the eye to parts of the body you want others to focus on.
- A print that appears to run on the diagonal line will create a flattering and feminine finish but still have a narrowing effect.

Don't

- Choose tiny print designs. Placed around curvy hips and breasts, they will accentuate these areas and make you seem strangely large.
- Wear too much attention seeking print in formal situations like work for instance – you already have a very noticeable body and, whereas an angular shaped woman might wear a highly patterned dress to create some feeling of enhanced femininity, you don't need to.



SMALL ALL OVER THE BODY PRINT

When a print is used all over the body it has the ability to create visual harmony and when balanced by neutral accessories and outer garments will give a sophisticated and confident finish.

The size of the print here is crucial. See how this relatively small print gives a body volume by making it look bigger than it is.

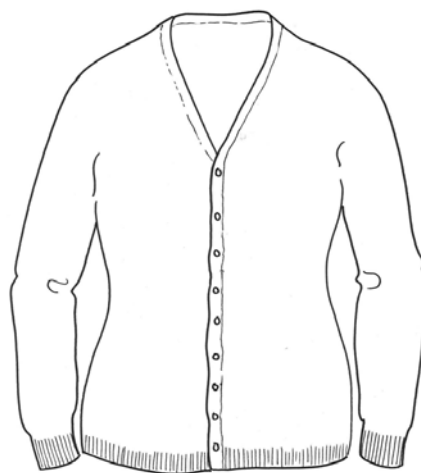
WEIGHT OF PRINT

When you are working with print be sure to choose the right weight of print for you. See how the print size chosen here balances this body, whereas the smaller print overleaf makes the same body look larger.

PLACEMENT OF PRINT

Pay attention to where you place print on your body. This larger sized print is a great illustration of the way a big bold print can make the body look smaller. But there are two features at play here. See how the print (and indeed any print regardless of its size) creates focus and interest where it is placed. In this instance at the top of this body drawing our eye away from the bottom half. This tool works just as well in reverse. Just place dark solid colour in the area you want to minimise and bright bold print on the part of the body you want to add volume to.

Start experimenting with print; it's a great tool to play with.



Classic V-neck fine knit cardi ★



Formal knitted cardigan ✓

CARDIGANS
WITH NEW KNITWEAR MACHINES
AND TECHNIQUES CARDIGANS
ARE REVVED UP OUTER LAYERS
THAT COME IN ALL SHAPES AND
SIZES WITH PLENTY OF CATWALK
TOUCHES. THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN CARDIGANS AND
JACKETS IS THE SENSUALITY
FACTOR. SOFT, TACTILE, FINE
FINISHES OR CHUNKY KNITS AND
SLUBBED OR MEATY YARNS CREATE
THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A
GARMENT TO HAVE MUCH MORE
PERSONALITY THAN A JACKET.
READ ON FOR THE RIGHT
ONES FOR YOU

CLASSIC V-NECK FINE KNIT CARDIGAN

Again the shape is so classic that it is interchangeable with the style above but for one thing. The neckline. This will always be more flattering for elongating the neck.

Consider breaking up the hard horizontal line that the fastened garment makes across the hip or stomach area by undoing the last few buttons. This stops the body looking as though it has been cut in half.

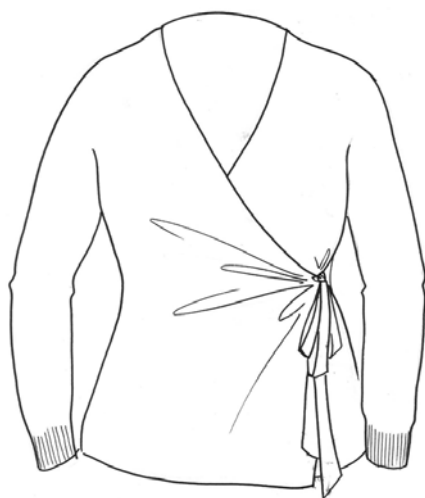
FORMAL KNITTED CARDIGAN

This is really a soft version of the jacket and works very well for more formal settings. The office or interview situations where you want to give an approachable air are two good uses. It is usually fastened at the top with one or two feature buttons and is made of heavy and dense wool so that it keeps its shape. Good for all shapes.

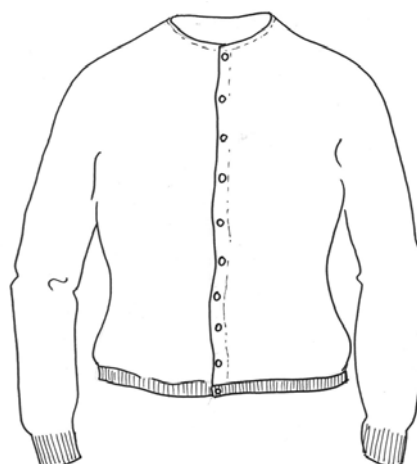
Especially good for large or square shoulders because it has a softening effect.

OBLONG CARDIGAN ✓

This style has become very popular in recent seasons. It rarely fastens and hangs either side of the body with the uneven hem reaching the mid thigh and obscuring part of it, to create a minimising effect. The strong vertical lines it makes up and down your body will also elongate your frame—the taller you are the longer the hemline needs to be. Chunky or fine and floaty, you can wear the oblong cardigan all season round.



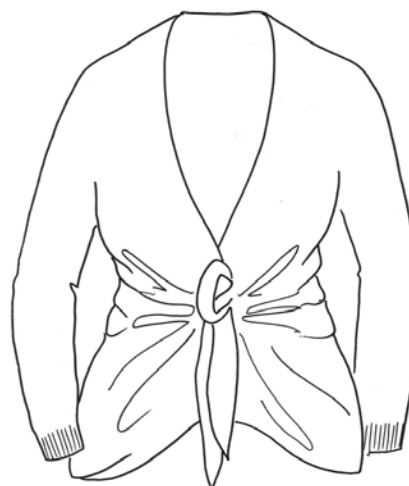
Wrap cardigan ✓



Classic scoop necked fine knit cardigan ★



Cropped cardigan ✓



Tie front cardigan ✓

WRAP CARDIGAN

A wrap cardigan allows you to create the definition you want underneath the bust and around the ribs and tummy.

CLASSIC SCOOP NECKED FINE KNIT CARDIGAN

This will have a single breasted fastening with a thin line of buttons through the centre of the body. Fittings will range from loose fit to fitted. This is a classic traditional garment that works well in every wardrobe.

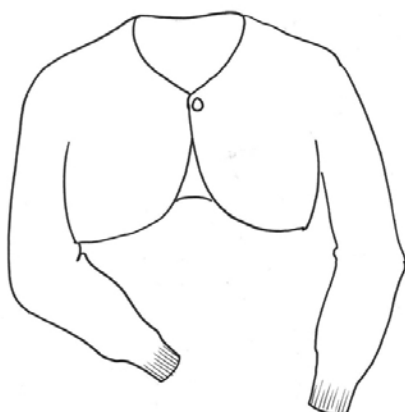
CROPPED CARDIGAN

This style is similar to the cropped jacket we've already featured. In a knitted form, however, it can be more playful and a bit more sensual. It needs to be simple with not too much detail to work. Small pocket and dainty fastenings are just right. It will change the proportions of the body if you have even body symmetry, making the legs appear longer.

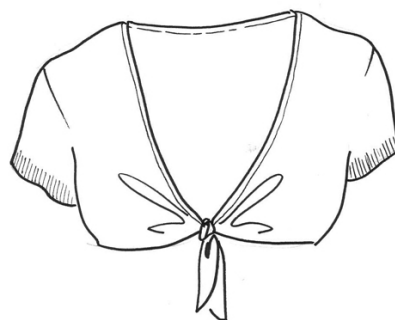
Because it is not fitted it is more flattering for a slender shape.

TIE FRONT CARDIGAN

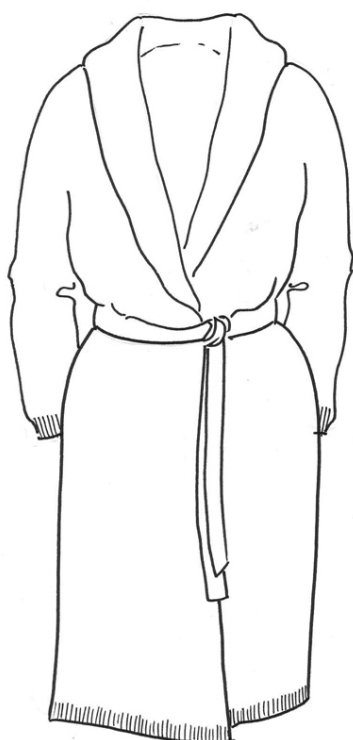
Love these styles because they are universally flattering. The trick is the tie fastening which pulls in the waist and creates definition for the body. There isn't a shape they don't suit.



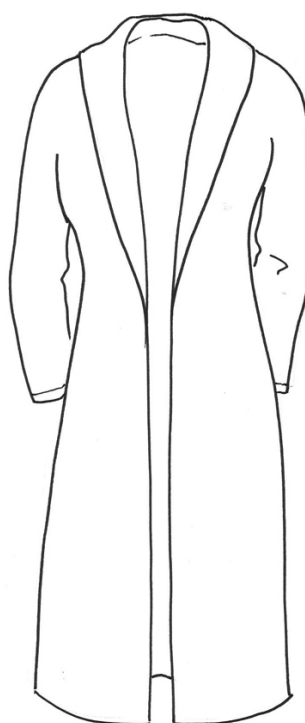
Bolero cardigan ✗



Bolero tie cardigan ✓



Shawl neck wrap cardigan with tie ★



Long line cardigan ✓

BOLERO CARDIGAN

These have been very popular in recent seasons and work as a great outer layer over summer dresses or evening style dresses.

They can come in fine or medium weight yarns and will change the proportion of the body significantly, drawing the eye up to the top of the body.

A useful garment for creating more volume around the bust and suggesting the illusion of long legs.

BOLERO TIE CARDIGAN

You often see these styles in the summer and they're different from the plain bolero cardigan I've just featured because they tie under the bust giving much better definition to curves.

SHAWL NECK WRAP CARDIGAN WITH TIE

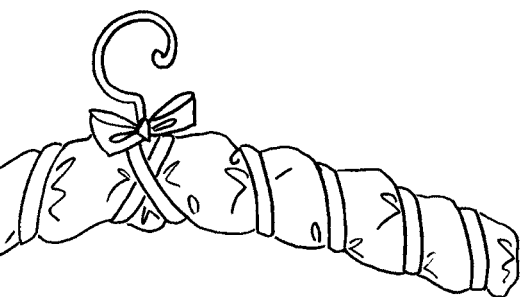
This is a classic piece of knitwear and usually appears in heavy, chunky yarn to give the whole look of the garment a luxurious feel but can also appear in medium weight yarns. It makes any wearer look instantly chic and works just

as well with jeans as it does with more formal choices.

When the waist is defined in this way, hips and bust become more prominent.

LONG LINE CARDIGAN

This is a great shape cardigan that allows the wearer to leave open. It may appear with a knitted waterfall style collar or a soft shawl collar as pictured. It creates elongation through the torso and is a very versatile garment.



Shop like Caryn

Because I have worked with clothes for so many years, I have a different approach to choosing clothes for myself. It's a mind set that I want you to start to explore because it will help you to organise your style more easily.

The reason I can be so confident that this new approach to choosing clothes will work for you is because I know how much easier my life is now.

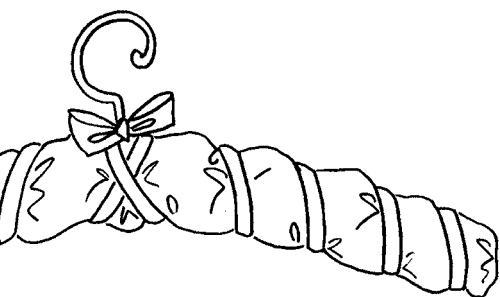
But to take you back, I remember shopping when I was in my late teens on a limited budget and I know how disheartening it is to feel you can't find the right clothes to suit you.

In my case it was because I was unconfident about my body and it's changing shape - suddenly I had curves and all the things I had relied upon to see me through before looked strange now that my body had in my eyes 'puffed up.' For a while I blamed my body. I punished it by trying to go without food so that it would return to 'normal,' and I spent longer looking in the mirror. I think I was trying to find the old me. It was hard to accept the new me especially when she didn't measure up to my standards and society's standards of a thin and symmetrically proportioned body.

I trawled the shops looking for the 'right top' or the 'best jeans,' these were clothes that would make me feel better about myself. I never found them of course and I felt disheartened after every shopping trip and I felt unattractive.

From the letters I get I know that many women feel that same discomfort about their bodies when they go shopping. Being used to seeing so many fashion images where the clothes seem to fit the models so beautifully, we then become our own worst critics at the mirror as we scan our bodies.

Because we invest in clothes with the ability to make us feel better, more attractive, thinner, shapelier and many other unachievable things besides, we are often looking for an emotional fix when we buy clothes. When we don't find that comfort or high, we think we have failed.



If you can remove the emotional stuff and assess your body practically and apply the styling tools you have learned, then you can make big changes to your look.

For many years I have bought clothes because they suit my skin tone and body shape and show me in the best light. I don't have to love them! I just know they work best on my shape. When I look in the mirror I am checking for fit and compatibility. Turn your thinking around to take a more unemotional view and I promise you it will be more effective.

Caryn's top shopping tips.

- Don't browse or surf without purpose. Only visit the shops when you have identified a gap in your wardrobe or an item you need.
- Give yourself a budget and visit only the shops where you know you get a good fit.
- Wear clothes that are easy to take off and on so that it is easy to keep on visiting the changing room.
- Take wipes – we all get hot and bothered when we are trying on clothes, especially in hot weather.
- Some clothes have a lot of hanger appeal like pretty feminine flouncy clothes but they can disappoint. Do not prioritise pretty things on the hanger – look at the garment carefully for the features you know will suit your body shape before you consider trying on.
- Never buy anything intending to slim into it.
- Use the sizing as a guide only. I had exactly this with a client recently where the smaller dress did not fit but she was in raptures. When I insisted she try the larger dress – which fitted beautifully – she was not so happy and couldn't see the truth in the mirror. It has to be all about fit, not the size. Cut out the label at home later if this helps.
- Whenever you find yourself getting ready to buy something, think about how it will work with the rest of your wardrobe, what else you will wear it with and where you see yourself wearing it. If you can't envisage either, then consider this a big alarm bell and don't buy.
- Set yourself a time limit and if you haven't found what you are looking for when it has expired stop. Find out when new stock arrives and reschedule.



Step Seven. Accessories

ACCESSORIES

ACCESSORIES ARE THE EXTRAS THAT WILL GIVE YOUR LOOK POLISH. IT IS ALWAYS BETTER TO GO FOR ONE OR TWO STATEMENT PIECES THAT WILL DRAW THE EYE TO WHERE THEY ARE PLACED TO GIVE OFF A CONFIDENT AND CONSIDERED FINISH. WHEN YOU GET DRESSED STAND BACK AND READ THE LOOK YOU HAVE CREATED THEN CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ACCESSORIES WILL GIVE YOU BETTER BALANCE.

It's time to look at those important finishing touches.

Trends will always come and go. One season there will be mini-clutch bags and the next large floppy holdalls. Just think of the way that sunglasses morph from huge Jackie O style windscreens to minimal and frameless slivers of shade. Once you understand how to balance your body, you'll always make quick easy choices.

Do

- Choose shapes that are in proportion with your body. Go for a medium to large structured handbag (Grace Kelly style is perfect). Actually, it's this simple. I always advise pregnant women to buy a huge bag so that it competes for attention with their stomach.
- Do balance things like bags, eye-wear, jewellery and belts. Make sure they are of a similar weight e.g. medium to large pieces of statement jewellery together with medium to large belts and medium to large size glasses.
- Where the colour of glasses and sunglasses is concerned, apply the pigment rule (as outlined in the colour section) by matching the tone of the frame or coloured lenses to your own skin and hair tone. For instance, if you are blonde try amber or rose-coloured frames, if you are dark, you can go for bolder tones.
- Consider colour because, if you choose a bright or noticeable design, the eye will always be drawn to the point you place it on your body. It follows then that, if you fall in love with a neon hipster belt, you will be drawing attention to your hips and to a point below your waist which will foreshorten you.



Structured bag/Kelly style bag ✓

BAG SHAPES

I'VE TALKED ABOUT THE SIZE OF ACCESSORIES IN RELATION TO YOUR BODY SHAPE SO, WHEN CHOOSING A BAG, MAKE SURE YOU HOLD IT UP TO YOURSELF IN THE MIRROR; THIS WILL BE ONE OF THE EASIEST WAYS TO SEE WHETHER IT IS IN PROPORTION WITH YOUR SHAPE. OF COURSE A PAGE WITH ANYTHING ABOUT BAGS ON IT COULD BE A VERY LONG ONE (SINCE WE ALL HAVE OUR FAVOURITES) BUT I'VE INCLUDED THE MOST CLASSIC SHAPES FOR YOU TO HUNT DOWN. THAT WAY YOU CAN BEGIN TO BUILD UP A WARDROBE OF BAGS IN DIFFERENT COLOURS TO COMPLEMENT YOUR CLOTHES.

STRUCTURED BAG/KELLY STYLE BAG

This is a bag that has a hard frame and looks perfect for more formal usage like office or a special occasion. Originally named after Grace Kelly by its makers Hermes, it has inspired many copies. It comes in many colours and designs but it is the square corners that are the key part of the design. A bag like this one needs co-ordinating with formal feminine shoes too.

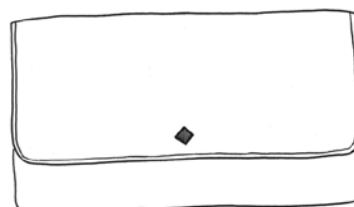
- Choose shoes that have a chunky heel or a wedge to create shapely calves and elegant ankles. For wide feet a pointed toe creates a feeling of narrowness. Investigate calf-high boots; these will create a longer looking leg when worn with a skirt.

Don't

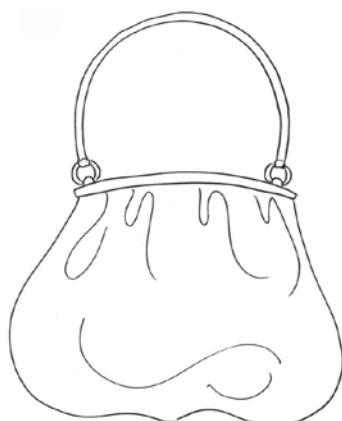
- Choose tiny accessories like slither thin belts, small bags etc. or your breast and hips will look larger by contrast.
- Wear thin chains either as necklaces or bracelets or tiny rings and miniature studs in your ears - again these will serve to make you look larger than you are.
- Wear small sunglasses or small brooches – unless you like the fact that your bosoms will look huge by contrast.
- Wear thin strappy shoes with paper soles and pencil thin heels (unless again you are liberating the siren in you)!
- Choose ankle straps – these will make your legs look shorter.



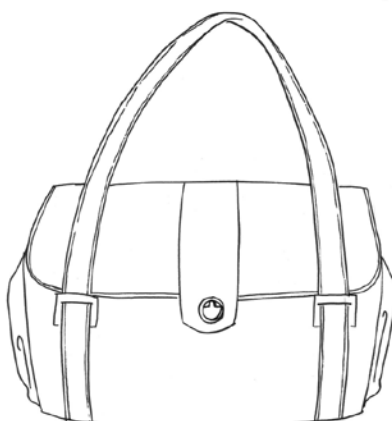
Saddlebag style ✓



Oblong clutch ✓



Pouch bag ✗



Soft structured bag with flap ✓



Soft structured bowling bag ★

SADDLEBAG STYLE

This bag has more softness to it. It is a popular shape since being chosen by John Galliano at Dior to represent the 'house' look. It is usually in leather and needs a thought out approach. Shoes or boots need to work with it because it is a dominant shape.

OBLONG CLUTCH

If you are choosing an evening bag then the oblong clutch is a great shape. Easy to hold, it has a flattering effect and work well with eveningwear or fitted 50's inspired summer dresses. Sometimes clutches can be eye catching in themselves because they are bright, shiny and jewel-like so match carefully to other accessories.

POUCH BAG

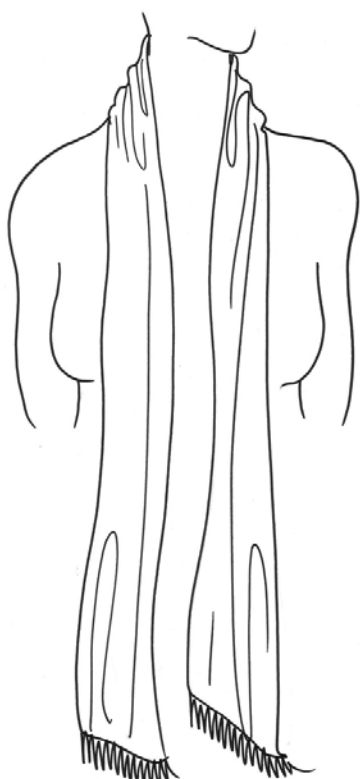
This is a soft and squashy shape that has enjoyed popularity on the catwalk. It can be fabric, plain, patterned or leather. It has a fleshy feel to it and shouldn't be over stuffed. It can be very eye catching, almost like a novelty touch and doesn't need to be matched to your shoes.

SOFT STRUCTURED BAG WITH FLAP

This style of bag is less harsh than the structured Kelly bag style. It is more versatile for both occasion and office dressing as well as more informal settings. It adapts well to colours and pastel colours and is great for summer.

SOFT STRUCTURED BOWLING BAG

Muccia Prada introduced the bowling bag shape but it has already become popular amongst image conscious women. It often appears with extra pockets, flaps and side zips and has a young sporty feel.



Long loose oblong ✓



Long Wraparound ✓



Long loose looped scarf ✓

SCARVES

SCARVES ARE TOOLS FOR YOUR CREATIVITY. THEY ARE A HELPFUL AND PRACTICAL ACCESSORY THAT WILL ADD COLOUR OR PATTERN TO YOUR LOOK. BECAUSE THEY DRAW THE EYE, HOWEVER, NEUTRAL COLOURED SCARVES CAN BE JUST AS EFFECTIVE AS STYLING TOOLS BUT LESS ATTENTION SEEKING. THIS IS SOMETHING TO HAVE A PLAY IN THE MIRROR WITH SO THAT YOU CAN DECIDE UPON YOUR OWN APPROACH.

LONG LOOSE OBLONG

This scarf when used as a contrasting colour or pattern will take the eye up and down the body to create long lean lines to elongate you and streamline your upper body. It is an excellent device.

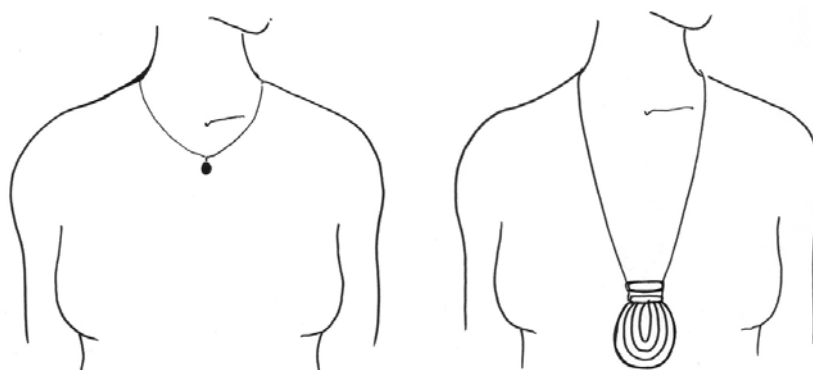
LONG WRAPAROUND

A scarf that is circled round the neck many times will make a neck look more slender and shoulders smaller.

Avoid if you have small or sloping shoulders.

LONG LOOSE LOOPED SCARF

When a scarf is looped it draws the eye to wherever the loop is placed. It is a great device for adding volume at the chest and a useful foreshortening device.



The necklace pendant and neckline ★

Drop pendant ✗

JEWELLERY

COSTUME JEWELLERY IS JUST ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO SHOW OTHERS YOUR CONFIDENT APPROACH TO STYLING. IT CAN ALSO CREATE A DOMINANT NECKLINE THAT FLATTERS YOUR SHAPE WHEN YOU WEAR OVER A POLO-NECK JUMPER OR ON BARE FLESH.

THE NECKLACE PENDANT AND NECKLINE

Beware the necklace that does battle with the clothing neckline you have chosen; this will end up looking cluttered, fussy and indecisive - the two need to be separate.

As a general rule, delicate jewellery needs to be against the flesh, whereas costume jewellery can look just as good against clothing.

DROP PENDANT

A longer pendant will always distort the length of the neckline and the upper torso. This style of pendant can make any plain top look very glamorous. Don't add it to a busy top with lots going on down the front however.

Great - an invaluable tool for working with a tall body or a long upper torso.

Good also for large or square shoulders.

Avoid if you are petite or have narrow or sloping shoulders.



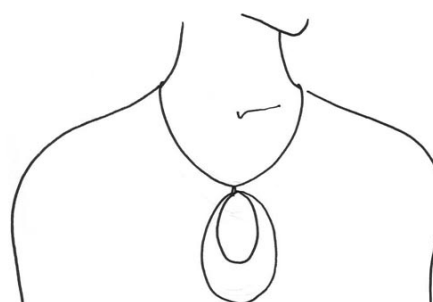
The choker ★



Large beads ✓



Strings of chains ★



Large pendant ✓

THE CHOKER

This is a great piece of jewellery that gives slender necks some glamour and coverage. It can be worn with a high collar or just as well with a strapless gown.

Avoid if you have a short neck or large or square shoulders.

LARGE BEADS

The larger your body is, the larger you

need your jewellery pieces to be. This may be stating the obvious but a well balanced necklace will make your neck look more slender.

STRINGS OF CHAINS

The overall effect here is to create an accessories look with more volume to flatter a larger or taller body. Make sure you balance the size and height of your body by adding or taking away individual chains.

LARGE PENDANT

A large pendant looks stunning and will always help you to make a dramatic impact. The actual size of the pendant must be in proportion with your body to create the best effect.



A pointed toe ✓



A round toe ✓



Strap across the instep ✓

CALVES AND ANKLES
IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS AND EVEN FOOTWEAR CAN HELP TO CREATE ELONGATION OR FORESHORTENING. THIS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IF YOU HAVE THICK ANKLES OR CURVY CALF MUSCLES. CHECK YOUR OWN FOOTWEAR CUPBOARD FOR SHOES THAT ARE UNFLATTERING AND REPLACE THEM WHEN YOU CAN.

A POINTED TOE

The pointed toe is the style that offers the best tool to create a longer looking leg especially when worn as a court or sling back style as shown here. For this reason court style shoes tend to be used to create drama for evening or formalwear. And when you bring colour into it, you can exaggerate the length even further so replicate the colour of your skirt or trouser for added length. Never choose this style to match your skin tone, however, as it will make your foot look enormous!

Great for curvy calves and thick ankles.

A ROUND TOE

A round toe is fashionable from time to time and when worn as a court style

or slingback style with no extra straps can look elegant on most legs. This can appear as a casual flat shoe (ballerina pump) or a heel. It will give you good leg elongation when worn as a heel.

Prioritise a round toe if you have large feet, as this will immediately foreshorten them.

STRAP ACROSS THE INSTEP

Shoes like these can have any sized heel. The appearance of them is practical and they make great work shoes. You can begin to see how the leg looks immediately shorter. It is that simple. It also begins to focus the eye on the ankle.

Great for larger feet. Avoid if you have thick ankles.



Ankle strap ✗



Ankle ties or Gladiator styles ✗



Open toed strappy shoes ✓



The platform ✓



The peep toe ✓

ANKLE STRAP

This style begins to shorten the leg and draw attention to the calf, making it seem wider than it is. It also makes the foot seem larger than it is if the design is flat at the heel.

Avoid if you have short legs.

Avoid if you have thick ankles or curvy calf muscles.

ANKLE TIES OR GLADIATOR STYLE

Any style of shoe that has straps travelling up the leg from the shoe can create a foreshortening effect on the leg to make it look wider and shorter

OPEN TOED STRAPPY SHOES

These will always be a popular choice and can appear as a simple sandal style as illustrated here or as a much more glamorous evening shoe with a heel. It looks frivolous and fun so avoid in situations where you want to create some authority like work. You will no doubt be seeing the effect of the horizontal lines in shortening the foot, now that you have absorbed so many of the tools in this book.

Choose thicker straps if you have larger feet.

THE PLATFORM

This style can sometimes appear as a small built up area of the sole or it can be a very large and chunky feature of the shoe.

Choose a platform to balance your ankle and calf in the knowledge that a thick chunky shoe can make legs look more streamlined.

THE PEEPTOE

This is a universally flattering style because it helps to make all feet look smaller. It also tidies up the toes and because not everywoman has good looking feet allows for the best of both worlds. It is also very adaptable for both formal and fun looks..



Low ankle length boot ✗



High ankle length boot ✓



The shoe boot ✗

BOOTS

THERE ARE NOW A HUGE VARIETY OF STYLES. BOOTS ARE NO LONGER JUST USED FOR COLD WEATHER SINCE THE CATWALK SAW THE POTENTIAL OF THEM TO LENGTHEN THE LEG AND ADD WARMTH AND GLAMOUR AT THE SAME TIME. CLEVER SELECTION OF BOOTS CAN FLATTER YOUR LEGS TOO.

LOW ANKLE LENGTH BOOT

This style is usually worn with high fashion garments like pencil skirts and culottes.

HIGH ANKLE LENGTH BOOTS

These boots are perfect for a clean line under trousers and should never be worn with skirts or short, cropped trousers.

Under trousers they suit all body shapes.

THE SHOE BOOT

The shoe boot is a fashion style that has become popular and will foreshorten your leg if worn with a skirt. Experiment with matching hosiery and skirt to get it looking right. It does work very well with trousers that feature the shoe as a fashion statement.

Caryn says... If you struggle to get
the width around your calf duoboots.com
offer narrow & wide fits



Fitted knee high boot ✓



Mid calf boots ✓



Knee high boots with a cuff ✗

FITTED KNEE HIGH BOOT

The fitted boot is a classic style and suits most legs and body shapes. The heel will change according to fashion whims, ranging from thin to chunky, but the effect on the body as a whole is just the same.

This will be your most versatile buy and can work with a structured skirt, culottes, formal cropped trousers and jeans.

MID CALF BOOTS

Often mid calf boots give an urban and practical finish, especially if they are flat, but this calf length works just as well when it appears with a heel too. Wear under skirts.

Boots that cut across the calf at its widest point will add bulk to the leg.

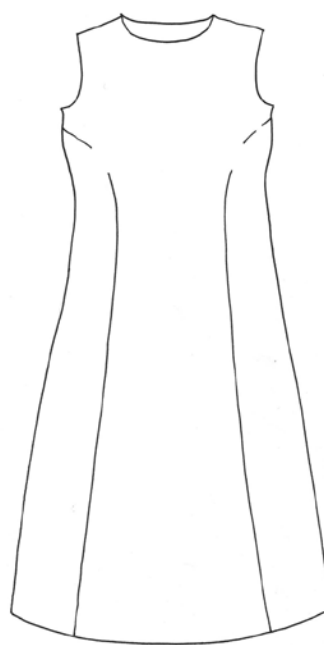
KNEE HIGH BOOTS WITH A CUFF

This style of boot in leather or suede can be worn over slim line jeans and trousers or under a skirt, which has some structure.

The cuff works to widen the leg and so foreshorten it slightly too.



Empire line ✓



Shift dress ✗

DRESSES

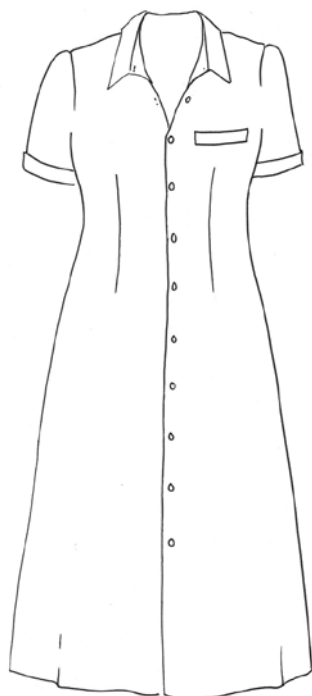
DRESSES AND DRESS DESIGNS ARE IN AND OUT OF FASHION. SOMETIMES THE NAMES OF THE DRESSES THEMSELVES CAN BE CONFUSING. HERE IS A QUICK GUIDE TO ALL THE BASIC SHAPES. REMEMBER NECKLINES, SLEEVE DESIGNS AND HEM LENGTHS ARE ALL EXTRAS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING THE RIGHT SHAPE FOR YOU.

EMPIRE LINE

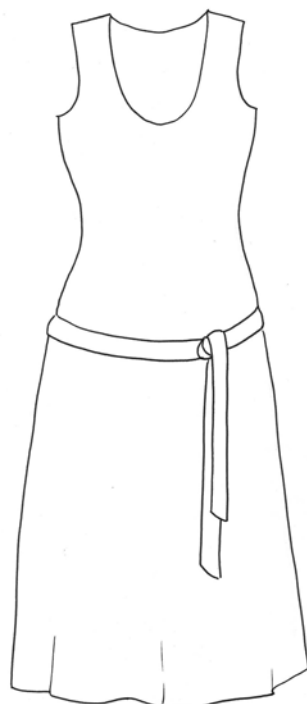
This style is very distinct because it is fitted from the shoulder and over the bust to pull in under the bust at the ribcage. As a summer dress with lightweight fabric it appears with a gathered and flared look. It can also be fitted to the body to make a more column like shape and appears as a formal style or in a longer gown.

SHIFT DRESS

This is a short dress that has a sixties feel to it. It is often in stiffer fabrics like starched or treated cotton so it does not mould to the body. Fashion dictates how it is worn, sometimes over trousers, sometimes as a modern look on its own. Not a particularly flattering shape, however, unless you are model like.



Shirt dress ✓



Dropped waist dress ✗



Wrap dress ✓

SHIRT DRESS

A lovely classic style of dress with a central fastening through the middle of the body. Will always work well in office settings and casual settings depending on your choice of colour and accessories.

This is universally flattering style because it is gently fitted to the body.

The vertical line, which runs subtly through the centre of the body, will elongate the body.

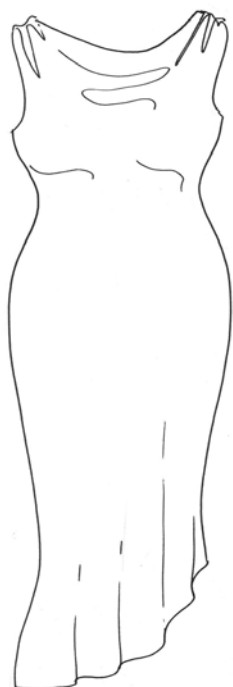
DROPPED WAIST DRESS

Changing the proportions of the waist, as this dress does, will always create a longer leaner line through the centre of the body. But placing the waist so much lower down the body take the eyeline downwards.

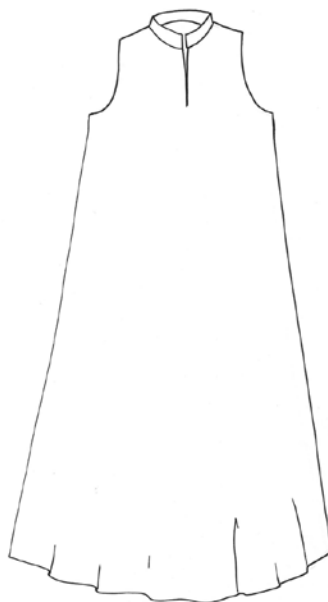
Dresses appear as casual jersey style affairs or can be very dressy flapper style designs. There is also the low neck and the low waisted wrap style too.

WRAP DRESS

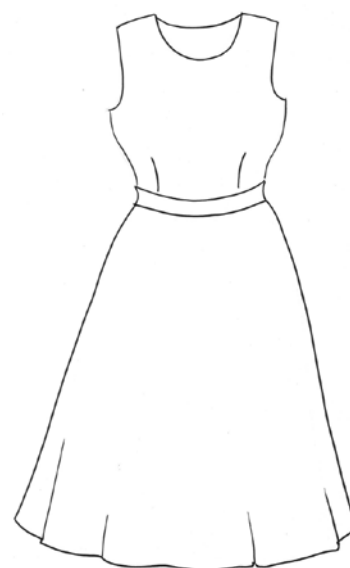
This has become a classic style, worn both in the office situation because it can look very ordered and authoritative, but also casual and dressy too. Made in a figure hugging fabric like jersey, it is very flattering for most body shapes because of the definition it gives to the upper torso.



Bias cut dress ✓



Tunic dress ✗



Waisted dress ✓

BIAS CUT DRESS

Any dress that is cut on the bias has stretch within the fabric and will wrap around the hips gently. This dress is very pared down and doesn't feature any pockets or collar detail because it is so lightweight and diaphanous. It appears as a day dress as well as an evening dress and is a very sensual style.

TUNIC DRESS.

The Tunic dress, like the shift dress, is pretty unforgiving and does not mould itself to the body's form. It appears as a catwalk garment that is adapted for those who like an 'on trend look.' It is always pared down and has a strict slightly androgynous look.

This makes it good for formal and working situations.

WAISTED DRESS

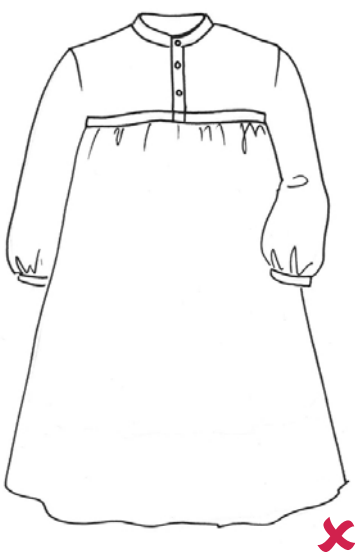
A classic style of dress that will adapt each season to the catwalks trends; it is fitted to the upper body and then flares out from the waist. This style draws the eye straight to the waist, which is enhanced because the skirt kicks out. More exaggerated shapes have appeared as cocktail dresses and it is often seen as a strapless shape for special occasion wear.

Suitable for all heights.



BLOUSON STYLE DRESS.

This is a loose fitting dress that may be strapless as shown here or it may have sleeves (depending on how designers have used it for their collections). The feature is the elasticised waist that blouses out around the upper torso. This adds volume to the top part of the body.



THE SMOCK DRESS

This (like the top) has a fitted yoke that eases into a gathered effect across the cleavage. It will always add volume to this area. It is usually found in casual and summer clothes.

Step Eight. What would you look like taller?

I have been giving tips along the way that talk about lengthening or foreshortening the body.

So, just to recap, it's all about where you draw the eye. Understanding how to use detail on clothes, jewellery, colour, pattern and print can give you that effortless sophistication that no one else can put their finger on. Take the eye to the top third of your body by using any feature I have just mentioned. That way others will read the top part of you which creates the illusion of height.

Do

- Wear tops with embroidery, beading or pattern at the shoulders and neckline.
- Wear shaped clothing like trousers and jackets in one colour.
- Add detail to the top of your head: hair accessories, sunglasses perched on top of your head or a hairstyle with a high crown all work well.

Don't

- Wear a skirt with all the detail at the hemline.
- Place brooches too low down the body.
- Wear long pendants that take the eye to the waist.

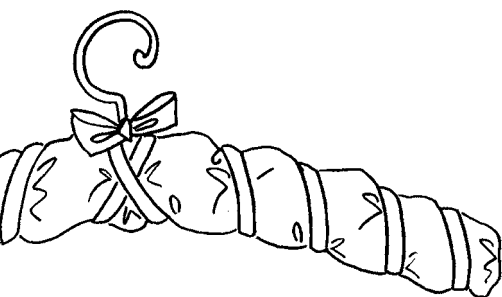


Step Nine. Subtle lines

All clothes create subtle horizontal and vertical lines.

I'm not talking about stripy prints but vertical seams, pleats, piping and horizontal yokes, waistbands and hemlines. Lines that run lengthways down your body create an illusion of slimness and height. Lines that run widthways across your body create the illusion of width and shortening. So, put simply, your ideal scenario would be to use subtle lengthening and narrowing details through your middle. Shirts with vertical stripes or vertical seams; cardigans with central fastening and tops with a central vertical panel feature, like a vertical frill down the middle, will all work very well. A great tool for you is a long fabric scarf (the sequinned ones have been popular for this but look for a current equivalent) that will loosely hang from your neck creating a wonderful vertical line down your torso and to your hip. You can also use longer jackets very successfully to draw a vertical line revealing a vertical panel of body underneath.

You can make the choice, however, about what and how you wear everything because what I have given you in this book are tools not rules!



Are models happier with their bodies?

It looks like models have a wonderful life doesn't it?

We see these creatures beautifully made up and adorned in the most exquisite designer clothes, photographed in the most sophisticated settings. It's possible to believe that they really are living that life, feeling fulfilled and content. The fact is, most feel just like you and I. When the shoot is over they must return to their real lives. Yes they have bad days and good days; they have the same worries about how to pay the bills and what they will do next to earn money. Relationships too are just as complex and challenging. Security, honesty and respect don't become any easier to find just because you model clothes for a living. In short these women have the same struggles as you and I with one tiny difference. Every day, at each casting they will hear about all their imperfections.

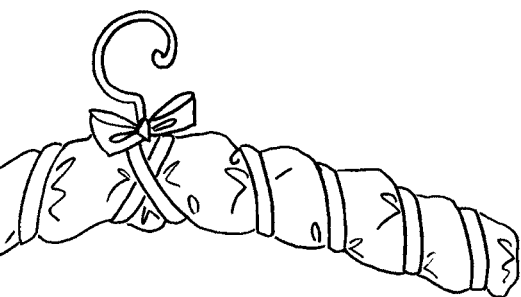
From morning to night, clients will tell them what is wrong with the way they look and why they don't want them for the job. They too will begin to see their short neck or thick ankles as an obstruction to their happiness.

In a recent survey by a top British magazine where 5000 women were interviewed, 70% were unhappy with the way their bodies looked. Nearly 50% were on diets and many were using laxatives or even fasting.

I know too from the letters you write to me that many of you feel life would be better if your bodies were slimmer, curvier, more toned, lighter weight etc.

Our relationships with ourselves can be very confusing and it is easy to fantasise when we look at the pictures, since all models appear happy or confident in the photographs – that their physical perfection is the key to their happiness. Remember they are being paid to smile and all the clothes they are wearing are pinned at the back to look as though they actually fit perfectly.

Being happy with who you are and creating relationships based on honesty and respect is the key to your happiness. Clothes will not help you do this but, knowing that you have chosen designs and shapes to help you look your very best, will leave you free to concentrate on the more important things in life.



I often list these points when I am giving presentations. So here they are for you:

1 There is no such thing as a perfect, effortless body. Every grown woman has cellulite, a round tummy and uneven breasts, even models. We just forget to remind ourselves of this against the media backdrop of post adolescent femininity so provocatively packaged in those airbrushed adverts.

2 The catwalk is a strange place. Hailing a cab, running for a bus and sitting down are all things we do during our day but I have yet to see a fully styled model capable of performing these actions safely on a runway.

3 The beautiful woman who earns her living in front of the camera is tragically preoccupied with her own minor imperfections since she is judged daily on her ability to portray a rigid feminine ideal. For one client her ankles will be too fat or her eyes too close, for another her legs will be too stubby or her teeth too gappy. She will have been made so miserable to earn the job that only the thought of the resultant wages brings a fleeting smile to her face.

4 Of course red carpet film stars wear intricate support underwear that looks like a flesh coloured sports kit under their thin silk dresses. If you knew you were going to be assessed, judged, weighed up, postmortemed, condemned and crucified for choosing an unflattering party frock by the world's fashion press, so would you.

5 Designers don't all get together in a room and decide to make women feel insecure about their bodies. It only looks that way.

6 The word 'Outsize' should be taken out and shot for transgressions against womankind. This is an appalling term, which all by itself has traumatised generations of curvy women. Size 16 is the national British average size.

7 You are not more attractive because you are in pain - high heels, tight clothes and hair that looks like it is nailed to the scalp may be what appears to work in a fashion photograph but these images take moments to capture. All models remove their make up, hair accessories and other fashion accoutrements immediately after the shoot and step into dog-eared trainers and comfy jeans. That's what I wear to write pieces like this and, despite the latest trend information in all your favourite magazines, so can you, whenever you want!



Flared skirt



SKIRT SHAPES

SKIRTS ARE QUITE SIMPLY THE EASIEST GARMENTS OF ALL TO WEAR. UNLIKE TROUSERS THAT HAVE A COMPLICATED FITTING ROUND THE CROTCH AND HIPS, THEY USE FEWER MEASUREMENTS AND CAN FIT THE BODY MORE EASILY. THE TWO MAIN CONSIDERATIONS ARE WAISTLINE - DOES IT FIT NEATLY AROUND YOUR MIDDLE AND HEMLINE? IS IT SITTING AT THE RIGHT LENGTH FOR YOUR LEGS? ALL ARE DRAWN AS KNEE LENGTH BUT SHOULD BE ADAPTED TO SUIT YOUR OWN LEG SHAPE AND HEIGHT AS SHOWN FURTHER ON. REMEMBER ALSO THAT NONE ARE SHOWN WITH PATTERNS OR COLOURS. APPLY THE INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION YOU HAVE IN THIS BOOK ON COLOUR AND PATTERN TO GET THE MOST FLATTERING LOOK.

FLARED SKIRT

The interpretation of the flare will be down to you. Some can be noticeably flared and some more subtle bordering on an A-line style skirt. This will be your most versatile choice of skirt simply because it hides any hip or bottom shape and focuses on the waist.

Step Ten. We've come to the end of your workshop

This is all the information I cover in my workshop and I'm delighted to have passed it on to you.

With the new styling tools you now have, I hope you can begin to embody and embrace the style that you want. Changing your image can take a little time so don't be too hard on yourself if you can't immediately switch your wardrobe over. But recognising that every clothing purchase you make from now on is a step towards the 'new and stylishly attired you,' is the first step.

I hope that I have helped you to understand how your image is a special relationship you can have with yourself for years to come. Don't let the fashion industry spoil that relationship by making you feel confused about what suits you. By all means, keep yourself up to date effortlessly by reading through our trends reports.

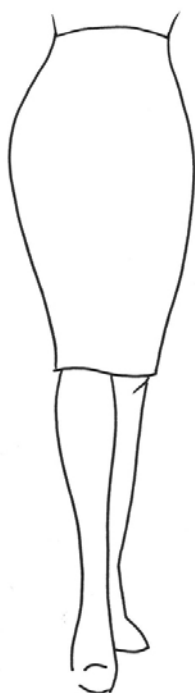
There's high street trends posted seasonally on the site but remember to apply all your styling tools to the looks you see to decide which bits of these fashionable looks are right for you. And don't forget to use our shopping mall so you can track down the clothes you want – remember there are plenty of specialist fit companies as well as all your favourite labels. These are entered under your own body shape.

Check out our online recommendations and take note of the capsule wardrobe recommendations we make each season in our monthly newsletter.

Caryn says... Online shopping is a great

way to effortlessly research the right

styles for you. Visit the stores to get the fit



Pencil skirt



Yoke and flared skirt



Handkerchief hemline



PENCIL SKIRT

This classic style elongates legs because it is tapered at the back; there needs to be a small vent to allow you to take large enough steps to walk. It will work best with a heel to give the feet a tapered look.

YOKE AND FLARED SKIRT.

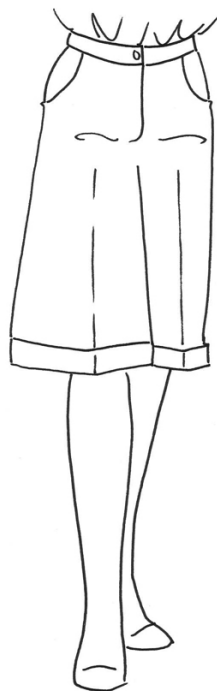
This style of skirt is fitted to the hips and then flared from the hips. It has the appearance of lowering the waist.

HANDKERCHIEF HEMLINE

This skirt will always look edgy or quirky because of the uneven effect around the hemline. For it to work well the focus must be on the legs (and shoes or boots). It therefore takes the eyeline to the lower half of the body. A great style to reduce fullness in ankles and calves to create more shape and femininity.



Circle skirt



Culottes' style skirt



Bias cut skirt



CIRCLE SKIRT

This is a shape that is dictated by fashion and will appear from time to time. The interpretation of the volume of the circle will be up to you - it often has the appearance of a puffed look. An extreme version will always look more like a catwalk look, whereas a more commercial version will be subtle and more flattering.

CULOTTES' STYLE SKIRT

This style of skirt will often appear as a smart tailored style and is very comfortable and flattering to wear when teamed with a well-cut jacket or pared down shirt or top.

BIAS CUT SKIRT

This style of skirt looks sensual and feminine.

It can appear as a summer skirt or an evening style and, because it is cut on the bias of the fabric, will have plenty of give.



Tiered skirt ★



Vertical ruffled skirt ✓



Wrap front skirt ✓

TIERED SKIRT

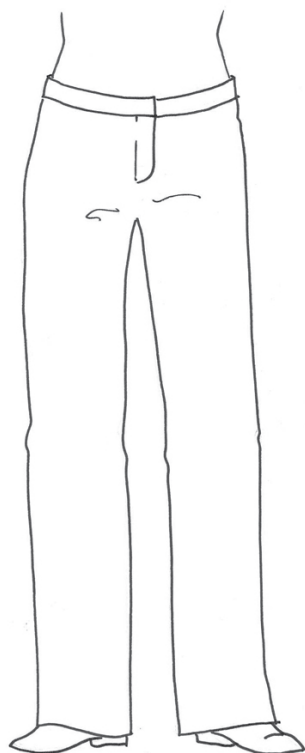
A tiered skirt has a gypsy feel to it and is often seen as a versatile summer or casual wear look. I've seen it look just as good in cord or denim too. Because of the horizontal lines it has a widening effect.

VERTICAL RUFFLED SKIRT

This style of skirt has the same feminine appeal as the tiered skirt but a much longer line and therefore creates a more streamlining and lengthening effect.

WRAP FRONT SKIRT

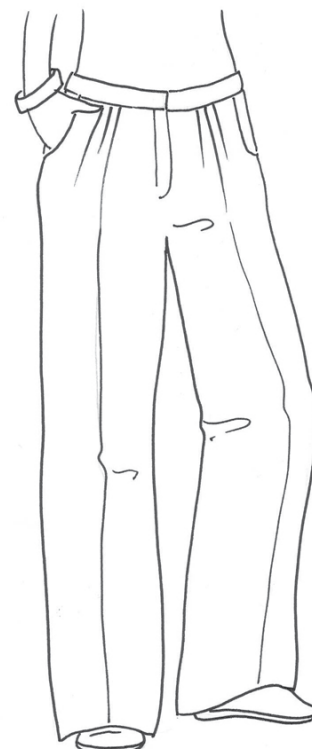
This style of skirt has a classic appeal and can appear as a tailored skirt with a pared-down feel; or in a softer fabric will work well as a more casual look. It is usually fitted to the body around the waist and hips and has a straight silhouette from the hips to the knees. Because of the vertical line through the body it will always make the legs appear longer.



Fly front, straight leg ✗



Flared trousers ✓



Pleated front trousers ✗

TROUSERS

TROUSERS ARE WONDERFUL GARMENTS THAT JUST ADAPT THEMSELVES TO WHATEVER THE TREND OR THE OCCASION REQUIRES. IT IS FOR THAT REASON THAT WE SEE A LARGE VARIETY OF SHAPES. A WELL CUT AND FITTED PAIR OF TROUSERS CAN BE THE BEST ADDITION TO YOUR WARDROBE BUT A PAIR THAT DOES NOT FLATTER YOUR SHAPE WILL SABOTAGE YOUR STYLE MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN ANY OTHER ITEM.

FIT IS ALSO CRUCIAL BECAUSE, WARPED OR BAGGY CROTCHES ARE NOT ONLY UNSTYLISH, THEY DRAW THE EYE RIGHT TO THE POINT. FINALLY A WORD ABOUT HEMLINES. HEELS NEED MORE LENGTH THAN FLATS TO GIVE A LONGER LEG. NEVER WEAR THE SAME PAIR OF TROUSERS WITH YOUR FLATS AND HEELS, JUST HAVE MORE THAN ONE PAIR OF TROUSERS IF YOU LIKE TO ALTERNATE BETWEEN HEELS.

FLY FRONT, STRAIGHT LEG

This style of trouser is copied from the Italian cut of man's trouser and is masculine in feel with a straight leg. It will often have a lower waistband too just like the men's version.

FLARED TROUSERS

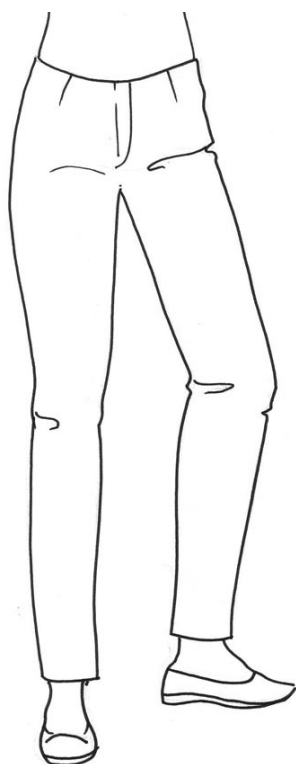
This design of trouser is the most flattering for a woman's body because it is cut to flatter curves, the wide flared hem line will always balance curvy thighs and add volume to slender ones. Make

sure you spend time getting the fit right. This style can disguise the shape of legs and thighs with excellent results.

PLEATED FRONT TROUSERS

This style can look mannish and shapeless unless worn with care. The area round the tummy is cut to give space around the tummy area and pocket area and give a bit of an Annie Hall effect when worn with other loose fitting clothing.

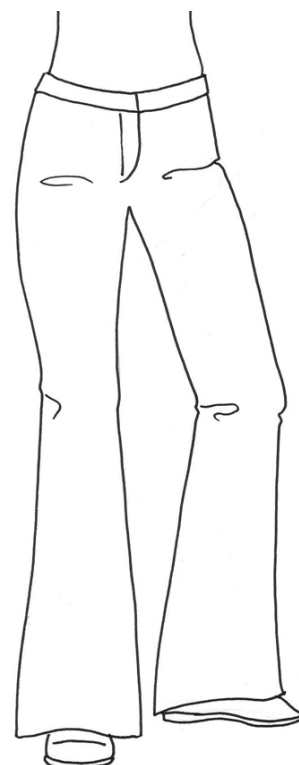
*Caryn says... Trousers look great
under tunics and long tops too*



Tapered leg trouser ★



Hareem pants ★



Bootleg cut trouser ✓

TAPERED LEG TROUSERS

This style of trouser fits the legs, thighs and bottom very closely. It rarely works (unless you have model proportions) without a cleverly styled longer length top.

HAREEM PANTS.

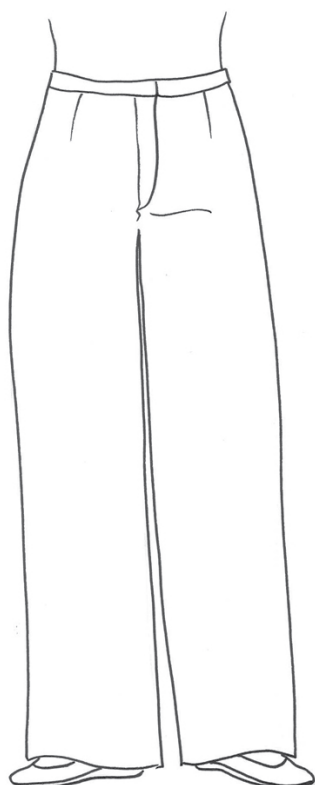
This style enjoys popularity from time to time because designers like to ring the changes. It is a soft voluminous shape that disguises the appearance of thighs and bottom whatever your shape. A fitted waist is a must to create a flattering shape at the tummy. Hems are either cuffed or gathered anchoring the fabric round the leg, however, the length may vary from below knee to ankle but will always place the focus on footwear.

It is worth experimenting with cut and shape here because this garment can be extreme with a dropped crotch and acres of fabric or quite subtle, taking the form of a pair of soft cuffed slouch pants.

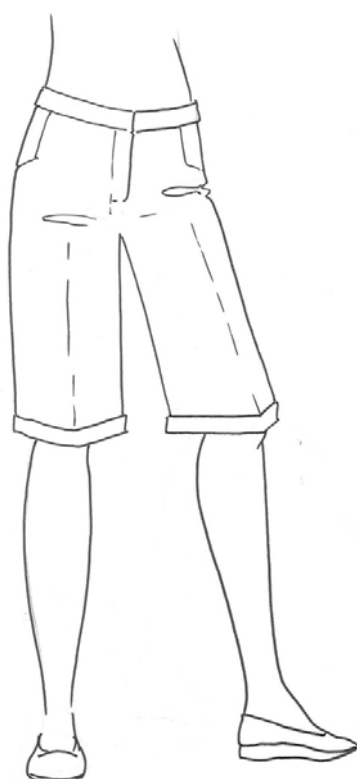
It is important to note though that with a baggy lower half your top must be fitted to create definition.

BOOTLEG CUT TROUSER

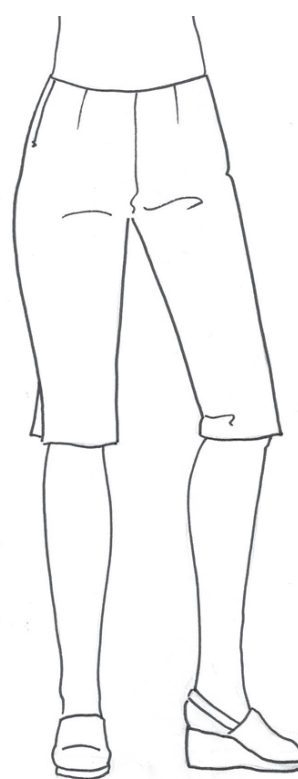
This is a subtly flattering style that is wider at the bottom of the leg than the top. It will be fitted more closely to the thigh than the flared trousers and is a good general all rounder for any shape when styled with the right top.



Palazzo pants ✗



Knee length shorts ✓



Capri pants ✓



Cropped trousers ✓

Caryn says...

Cropped styles

look great with

a small heel or

wedge

PALAZZO PANT

This is a wide loose fitting style of trouser that usually appears free of too much detail in linen, cotton or other lightweight fabrics - anything heavier and it would look like you have tree trunk legs. Because of the width of this design it will create a foreshortening.

KNEE LENGTH SHORTS

Shorts have enjoyed a great deal of popularity as a formal item teamed with feminine footwear. However, unlike the skirt of the same length (which is more forgiving), the tailored short is all about the legs.

Be very aware of your choice of hosiery and shoes to make this a stylish statement.

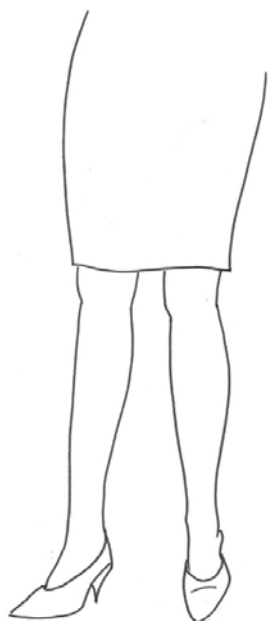
CAPRI PANTS.

This style is fitted to the leg and cropped just above the calf. It will be free of too much detail as it needs to hug the body; pockets for instance will be tiny.

CROPPED TROUSERS

This is a very flattering cut with a classy choice of footwear and works well in formal situations to show that you have a stylish confidence. The hemline should be level with the lower calf not the widest part. Shop around for the right fit for you.

NB If you choose a boot make sure it is higher up the leg than the hem of the trouser so that the line is smooth. Never wear the boot slightly lower than the hemline - it's very very messy.



Above the knee ✓



On the knee ✓

SKIRT LENGTH

THE LENGTH OF THE SKIRT YOU CHOOSE WILL WORK WITH ALL YOUR TOPS TO CREATE THE RIGHT BALANCE FOR YOUR BODY. ONCE YOU HAVE THE LENGTHS THAT FLATTER YOUR SHAPE FIXED IN YOUR HEAD USE THEM AS A GUIDE RATHER THAN A RULE BECAUSE THE DESIGN AND WIDTH OF THE SKIRT WILL IMPACT ON THE FINISHED RESULT TOO. IT GOES WITH OUT SAYING THAT THERE ARE LOTS OF HIGHER SKIRT LENGTHS, WHICH ARE PERFECT FOR TEENS, AND THOSE MODEL-LIKE PINS BUT IN THIS SECTION I AM DISCUSSING THE CLASSIC LENGTHS WE MOST OFTEN HAVE IN OUR WARDROBES.

ABOVE THE KNEE

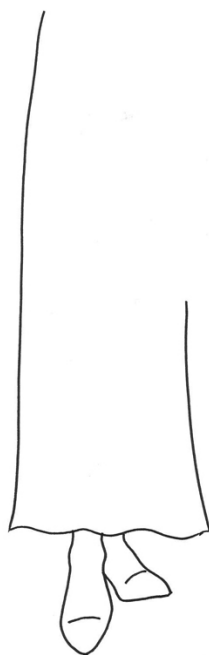
A straight or pencil skirt will normally have an above the knee option so if you are tempted by this length ask yourself, can your knees stand up to it?

ON THE KNEE

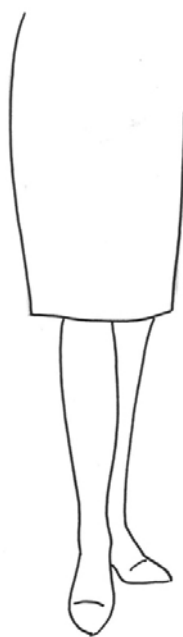
On the knee hem length looks modern and chic. The skirt may be cut a little wider to give a flattering loose fit.

This hem length will draw attention to the shape of your calves.

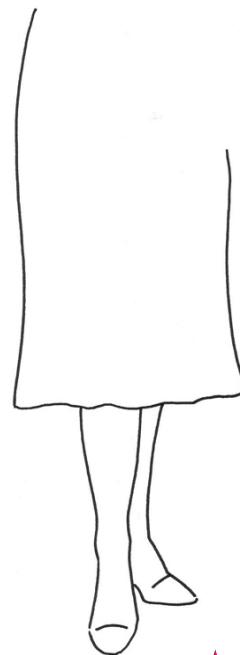
Caryn says... Bare legs need good even skin tone. I use Sally Hanson leg foundation spray



Ankle length ★



Below the knee ✓



Mid calf ★

ANKLE LENGTH

This length cuts across a much narrower part of the leg and so is a natural choice to minimise curvy calves or legs.

BELOW THE KNEE

This is the easiest length to wear for all body shapes and can flatter slender and curvy legs alike.

This hemline length focuses less on the shape of your calves and is therefore less attention seeking.

MID CALF

This is an interesting length; notice how the hemline cuts across the widest part of the calf - accentuating the width of the leg.

It can make slender legs look wider and by the same token curvy legs will look wider too.



THE TUNIC AND LEGGINGS.

Another way to wear a higher hemline is by adding leggings to the tunic shape. The leggings provide a thick coverage and are far less attention seeking than bare legs or tights. Flat shoes also make it practical but heels are also a good choice to elongate the leg for a younger look.

Caryn says...

leggings

& skinny jeans are

now a classic staple

to wear under tunics



Finally

I've enjoyed working with you and I'm excited to think that as a result of this book you are on your way to a life long enjoyment of clothes, fashion and your body. I want you to enjoy your body and celebrate who you are. The tips above will all help you to create a stylish sophisticated exterior but, as we all know, true gorgeousness lives inside

Best Wishes
Caryn Franklin ♡

P.S. We hope you have enjoyed your e-book and find the information useful. We would welcome your feedback on either your e-book or the website, to help us further improve our service to our readers. Please be assured we will not use your name or comments on our site without your permission.

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Thanks!

HAVE YOU FOUND THIS BOOK USEFUL? WOULD YOU LIKE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT DRESSING WELL AND STYLING CREATIVELY IF YOU ARE OVER 40? I HAVE WRITTEN ANOTHER E-BOOK. "AGELESS STYLE" IS AIMED AT YOU WITH EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LOOKING GOOD AT 40, 50 AND BEYOND.

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