

STYLE YOUR SHAPE

*A STRESS FREE GUIDE TO KNOWING WHAT
TO BUY AND WHAT TO LEAVE BEHIND*



BY
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Style Your Shape

The Stress Free Guide To Knowing What To Buy & What To Leave Behind

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INTRODUCTION

A Note To You!

If I can do it, anyone can!

In 1999 I had our first daughter, Flo. In 2001 I had our son, Freddie. In 2008 I had our second daughter, Matilda. Those 9 years of being pregnant, of breastfeeding, of bringing up a young family, of running a home and working as a lawyer left little time for anything else...including knowing how to dress in a way which flattered my shape and which made me feel fabulous every day.

This was all pre-blogging, pre-Instagram and pre-Pinterest, so I relied on the odd monthly magazine, which only seemed to contain clothes way beyond my budget and which bore little relation to my lifestyle, and a few very old style books for inspiration - one of which I'd chosen as a prize when I was still at school. The passion was always there!

I was frustrated. My identity and my lifestyle had changed beyond all recognition after children. I had left my corporate identity behind but I had no idea where to start in knowing how to dress not only for my new stay at home role but also for my post-baby body.

I never understood which "bits" I should draw attention to (I didn't particularly like any of them!) and I failed to appreciate that by applying a few simple concepts, I could know in an instant if a piece of clothing would work for my shape.

A few hapless and hopeless shopping trips later, with a bunch of purchases which frankly did nothing for me, and I resigned myself to jeans and long sleeved tees.

Fast forward to 2009 and I took myself in hand and booked myself on a styling course. Combining my passion for style, along with my new found styling skills, I created my styling business - with me as my first client!

This book is the result of over 10 years of working with hundreds of clients and of defining and refining the styling process. In this book you will find ALL that you need to know, so that you can style your shape effortlessly everyday.

And that doesn't mean following a prescriptive set of "rules". No way! That's not what this book is about AT ALL. It's about giving you CHOICE.

This book will give you the knowledge, the skills, the mindset, the confidence and the self belief to apply what you learn in a way that works for you and which makes you happy. Because that's what really matters to me at the end of the day. That you are happy.

Although this book is largely about how to style your shape, confidence is also a huge factor when it comes to styling yourself – so I felt it important to include a little about that too.

When people say "Oh, you're so lucky, you can wear anything!" then you know that you've hit the sweet spot. It's something that people say to me all the time. But if only they knew!

The truth is, I am a master of disguise. I am the Queen of distraction and attraction, of colour placement and of using illusion to create confusion to the eye to create the look that I desire.

Seriously, if "Mum of 3 from Birmingham" can figure this out, ANYONE can!

So let's make a start!

CHAPTER 1

Style Confidence

Over the years I have worked with 100s of women and a common theme that comes through is that they feel that they've lost their sense of style. Whilst they used to put outfits together based on what they liked, and not worry about what others thought, they're now constantly worrying that they look stupid, or that they look like mutton dressed as lamb. Rather than expressing their personality through their clothes, they use them as something to hide behind; blending in with the world so that the world never knows who they really are.

For many women this feeling has restricted their social life to staying at home, or only going round to friend's houses.

The rules on what to wear are so fluid now compared to how they used to be. There are no real "dress codes" any more so pretty much everything is up for grabs, which in one way is refreshing but in another way, it creates a huge amount of stress because the floor is wide open.

That's why it's so important to be confident in your own choices, irrespective of what others around you are doing or saying. When you have the confidence to wear what you love, without giving a second thought as to what others may think, that's when you've hit one of the other style sweet spots!

The only people who look and feel as if they have got it right are those who make their own rules according to their own needs of style and comfort. They have fun with their clothes, they mix things up. They try, and abandon, looks and finally they settle on a style (or several styles) that work for them.

They don't get it "right" the first time (and frankly where is the fun in that?!) but like so many things that we do in life, those periods of trial and experimentation are all part of the journey. They love what they wear and they do not give a second thought to what anyone else thinks about their outfits. It's not even on their radar!

So my advice is this: You cannot look outside of yourself for validation that what you are wearing works for you. Getting to the stage where you do not place any weight on what others think about your outfits will be liberating.

No-one's view on what you choose to wear is better than your own. If your style ends up being a reflection of the views of others around you, where does that leave you? This is why it's really important for you to identify what you like. Think about it for a minute – what makes you comfortable and happy? What prints, colours and accessories reflect your personality and which clothes best suit your lifestyle?

Over To You!

The first place to start improving your style confidence is to work out exactly what type of clothes you actually love. What colours, what shapes, what styles are you naturally drawn to. And if you're thinking "Beth, I have no idea" then we're going to take some action and find out.

I'd like you to buy a stack of magazines, or look on Pinterest and pull together (literally or metaphorically) things that you are drawn to. They can be from any season, any print, any shape and any colour. Lay them out and try to identify some themes. What can you see transpiring or is an eclectic mix? Keep them in one place and keep adding to them over the next 14-21 days.

What happens when you start to discover what you love...

This is what my student, Dawn, said about life before learning about style confidence.

"I knew that my style confidence was at an all time low and I wore things that were "safe" and which no-one would object to. I was miserable but I had no idea how to start to improve things. I would constantly worry what people thought and feel like I'd made bad choices. I would hide away from going to events, just in case I walked into a room and felt that I'd got it "all wrong."

But what happened when she started to identify what she loved by spending time pulling images together?

“When I started to pull together images of everything that I loved, I realised how important it was for me to dress for myself. There’s no way that you can please everyone with what you wear anyway, so what’s the point in worrying? Working out what I was naturally drawn to really helped me to focus on what made me happy, which is so important when it comes to style confidence. If I love it, that’s all that matters!”

So what changed for Dawn? How was she finally able to get to a stage that she wasn’t influenced by the thoughts of others?

She realised that what she thought and felt was just as important as what anyone else thought. Whose clothes are they anyway? Whose life is it? And who is better “qualified” to decide what clothes to wear, than the person wearing them?

The most important point I want you to think about is about taking action. Nothing ever changes if we don’t take action to change it. So start doing something for you. Right now.

When you take steps to improve your style confidence, you stop outsourcing how something makes you feel (good or bad) to others. You regain, and retain, control. You’re now in the driving seat as to how this is going to look, moving forwards.

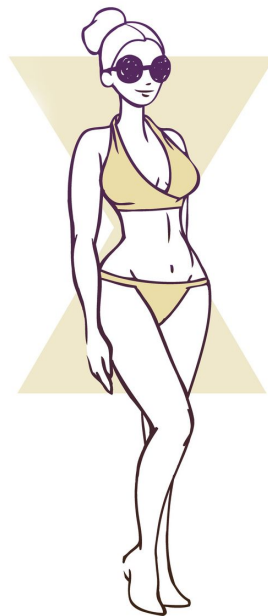
PS Here’s a little secret that I’m going to share with you. No client of mine who has ever expressed a fear of looking like “mutton dressed as lamb” would **EVER** look that way. If anything, she tends to play it too safe. So just take comfort from that!

CHAPTER 2

Perception of Perfection

OK so now we've taken a look at your style confidence, let's start to take a closer look at styling your shape.

Rightly, or wrongly, the hourglass figure is considered to be the “perfect” female shape. That's because the top and bottom half of the body are balanced with a bust, a neat waist, and hips in proportion with the bust.



Makes sense right? And the most iconic examples of hourglass figures are Marilyn Monroe, Sophia Loren and Brigitte Bardot.

Whilst the aim when styling your shape doesn't have to be to create an hourglass figure, it is worth bearing in mind that styling techniques are aimed at re-balancing your figure, so as to make your proportions between your upper and lower body balance. We'll come on to how you achieve that later on!

That doesn't mean that I personally perceive any shape to be less than perfect, or that talking about “re-balancing” means that anyone is out of balance. It's just that in

styling your shape, what we're aiming to do (if you choose to) is to create a balance between your top half and your bottom half and knowing that, can really help.

CHAPTER 3

How streamlining your options broadens your horizons

Something that you might be wondering is whether, in choosing to wear certain shapes of clothes which flatter your shape, you will be narrowing the choice of clothes you can wear. And I totally understand why you might be thinking this. But I've found the opposite to be true.

Identifying shapes of clothing that you love, and that work for you, actually opens up a whole range of options to you. Rather than being limiting it's liberating. It allows you to cut out the noise, and to minimise the overwhelm and frustration of wondering whether something works for you, or not.

There's a freedom that comes in knowing that you are wearing the clothes which flatter your figure the most. It takes away the uncertainty and allows you to be creative with what you choose to wear. It inspires confidence and enables you to express your personality through your clothes via the use of print, colour, texture and accessories.

Rather than standing in the corner, nervously tugging at what you're wearing and wondering whether it looks OK on you, you are confident and happy, meaning that you set those fears to one side and instead concentrate on making sure that your clothes reflect your amazing personality!

CHAPTER 4

#Style Goals

By the end of this book, I'd love for you to love your shape - or to at least have an appreciation of all the positives that it has to offer.

Being aware that others admire the attributes that you take for granted is a great place to start. So often we only see the things that we're not happy about, whilst glossing over and brushing aside our biggest assets. Right?

"Oh my tiny waist? It's much bigger than it was." "Really, I've never thought of my legs as that great. I think they're a bit skinny." Sound familiar?

So whilst you may be focussed on your less than flat stomach, others will be admiring your narrow hips, long legs and slim ankles. And whilst they're focussed on their shorter, heavier legs, you're admiring their nipped in waist and flatter tummy. It's such a common situation but one that it's really hard for us to see outside of.

Above all else I'd love you to realise that, however hard you try, you can't fight genetics, so it's important to try and work with your genes and not against them.

Has anyone ever told you that you have your Dad's legs, or that you're the same shape as your Mum? Well there's a reason for that. In exactly the same way that you might share other characteristics of theirs, such as the colour of their eyes, their curly hair or the same shaped nose, you share body characteristics too.

The funny thing is that we accept having the same coloured eyes as our parents, or their curly hair, or a similar shaped nose, realising that there's little that we can do about them. However, because society has told us that there is a way that our bodies should "look" it's easy to pick fault with what our parents, and our genes, gave us.

Yet that's definitely one battle that we're not going to win, so let's concentrate on embracing the positives and making the most of what we've been given. That really is when you can start to love your shape and style yourself with ease...even if you have spent your whole life wishing that you had legs like Elle MacPherson. I'll let you have

more details of the style tips and tricks as they relate to specific body shapes, later on in the book.

CHAPTER 5

Game Changing Styling Principles

There are 6 styling principles which apply to whatever body shape you are and which are literally game changers. They are free, easy to use and you can apply them in an instant. They are also a really good starting point and something to come back to time and again in the future.

These principles can make all the difference when it comes to styling your shape. Our bodies may change over time, particularly with babies and the menopause, plus identifying your body shape is not an exact science. But these principles will ALWAYS stand you in good stead - which is why I promote a non “rules based” approach to styling.

Posture

OK, so let's start with posture. I know, I know! As a child you were told to stand up and to put your shoulders down and back. How annoying was it? But the thing is, if you do this AND draw your tummy in too, it can be revolutionary, especially if you and your tummy have a tricky relationship!

Only last night I caught sight of myself in a full length mirror. I was slouching, my hips were pushed forward, my tummy was sticking out and it was a real wake up call. “Blimey, who's that looking back at me?” I thought to myself.

This wasn't about weight. It was more that the reflection in the mirror did not match the reflection in my head of how I thought I looked! A few quick adjustments and everything looked much better. And it's not just about vanity; standing well and using our core will really help with back issues too.

Attraction & Distraction

If you just remember one thing when it comes to styling yourself, let it be this formula: Good styling is all about ATTRACTING and DISTRACTING. It's about ATTRACTING attention to the areas with which you are most happy by using colour, print, texture,

detailing and accessories to draw the eye towards them and DISTRACTING attention away from the areas with which you are least happy by using darker colours, lower grade prints, ruching, tailoring and flattering fabrics.

At this stage you might just wonder what I'm talking about so let me give you a couple of really quick examples. Just think about a woman wearing a pair of bright red shoes. I can guarantee that so many people will comment on them. Those red shoes will be attracting all the attention and getting all the love. It would be the same with a large pair of earrings, or a sparkly, scarf, or a polka dot shirt. That is where the attention of anyone looking at her would be directed.

Conversely, a silky shirt in a darker colour flows over the frame without clinging. A dark pair of trousers will distract from curvier thighs and a ditsy print will keep the eye on the move and stop it from honing in on a shapely tum. So whilst some things - such as bright colours, sparkles and bold prints - will draw the eye to them others - such as silky fabrics, ditsy prints and darker colours - will make the eye cast over them.

Balancing Your Proportions

When it comes to styling, as well as ATTRACTION and DISTRACTION there's also the issue of BALANCING OUT OUR PROPORTIONS, which is really what we concentrate on when styling the different body shapes.

As I mentioned earlier in relation to the hourglass shape, the bottom half and the top half are already balanced, so as long as nothing is done to throw that balance out (eg by wearing huge shoulder pads) then it will remain that way.

Other shapes require a little styling assistance to balance the top and bottom half. If you choose not to balance your shape that's brilliant - and in fact sometimes, intentionally creating a shape that isn't balanced, can have great dramatic effect.

Equally, knowing how to balance your shape may just make you go "Ahhh, so that's why things haven't been looking quite right!" We'll look at exactly how to do this in relation to each body shape, in later chapters.

But for now I'll share with you a little known trick, which is this : just use a bit of "flare" (both creatively and literally). Wider hips can be balanced by wearing a skirt or

trousers with a little flare at the hem. A flared sleeve will balance a wider upper arm and a peplum (or flared) top will create the illusion of a smaller waist. So dare to flare!

In addition to the principles that I've talked about above (posture, attraction and distraction, and balancing your proportions) three other principles that I'd love you to take on board and be aware of are these...

The Fit Of Your Clothes

More than anything else, the FIT of your clothes is super important. Ignore the size labels, ignore everything else and just look at how it fits. Many women are wearing clothes which are too large for them and all that they serve to do is to swamp their shape under excess fabric.

When it comes to fit, I want you to take a really close look in the mirror. Is there too much room in the arms? Is there excess fabric in the legs? In trying to accommodate a curvy bust, are you swamping your torso in acres of billowing fabric, which is only serving to make you look larger – everywhere! Do your sleeves finish half way down the back of your hand and if so, do they look as if they are swamping you?

Oversized can be a good look if done in the right way but throwing your shape, and your proportions, off by wearing things that don't fit just isn't in your best interests.

Where Does Everything Finish?

Next, I want you to look at where everything finishes. Where does the hem on your skirt or trousers finish? Where does the hem of your dress sit? Where do your tops finish on you? Where does your jacket finish on your body?

When it comes to your arms (upper and lower) your legs (upper and lower) and your torso, there are wider and narrower parts. Your limbs and your body aren't the same width from "top to toe". That's just how it is. We go in. And we go out!

It's an idea to look at where your trousers, dress, skirt, sleeves, jackets or tops finish on you. They are more flattering if they finish at the narrowest point on your leg, torso or arm.

Now in some cases this might also make it the least comfortable, or the coldest, or it might mean that you can't create a look that you want so I would say 3 things in relation to this.

First, don't apply the principles rigidly if they don't work for you. Take what works for you and leave the rest behind. You should express your creativity and personality through your clothes and not be bound by rules.

Secondly, you may choose to use this principle on just one area of your body – for example the length of a top or jacket, so that it doesn't finish at the widest point of your hips. Or a dress or skirt length, so it doesn't finish at the widest part of your calf.

Thirdly, in Chapter 13 in the book, I will give you ideas as to how you can “style things out”. Take a look there for ideas of tweaks that you can make to pieces so that they work in the best way that they can for you.

And here's an exercise for you to do!

Stand in front of a full length mirror with a towel held in front of your legs. Slide the towel up and down your legs and see where the most flattering point is for a dress or skirt to finish. If it helps, our legs “go in” just underneath our knees and also just above the ankle bone.

Playing To Your Strengths

We've already taken a quick look at this but it's worth mentioning again. So few women actually play to their strengths. In fact so few women actually realise what their strengths are!

Characteristics that others admire and long for can be taken for granted. Brushed over and ignored, we often focus on what others have, rather than the gifts that we have been given.

We covet the flat tummy and narrow waist of some shapes, whilst lamenting our own protruding tummy and lack of waist. Yet we fail to appreciate what lovely long legs and narrow hips we have. We are ALL guilty of this. So sometimes it's just good to sit back and to remind ourselves to take a minute to appreciate all that we do have.

So how do you identify what your positive areas are?

Here's an exercise for you to complete...

1. Are there any attributes that friends comment on in particular? For example "Oh I wish I had legs like yours?" or "You're so lucky that you have such a tiny waist" or "You've got such a great bum!"
2. Do you find that you have to choose clothes to accommodate one area in particular? For example, do you have such a small waist in proportion to your hips that you have to hunt for jeans that don't gape at the waist? Or do you need to buy a longer leg length in trousers because your legs are so long? Perhaps trousers swim in fabric around your hips, suggesting narrower hips, or maybe you've been told that you have a model's shape, in which case you may have broad shoulders. Whilst these characteristics may make buying clothes more difficult, these same characteristics may also be your finest ones.
3. Thirdly, be honest with yourself. As women, we would rarely admit to thinking "Oh I love my shoulders." or "My legs are toned and shapely." But this is your chance to own what you love and to be proud of your assets.

Believe me, I've spent 10 years standing in changing rooms with women and I've seen them covering fabulous legs in baggy jeans, hiding waists under shapeless t-shirts and draping shapely busts in billowing fabric.

It's completely understandable that in trying to minimise something we're less confident about, we cover it in fabric. However, when it comes to fabric - sometimes less really is more! And more often what that it does is hide EVERYTHING, not just the area we're trying to hide.

Sometimes I just say "Whoaaaaa, you have an amazing pair of legs, or a tiny waist - let's make the most of them."

I absolutely believe that women should celebrate their strengths and play to them at every given opportunity. This doesn't mean wearing pieces that make you feel uncomfortable, or wearing things that are too revealing for what you're happy with. It's just a case of identifying what you love, what you want to "showcase" (in a way that works for you) and being confident enough to go out there and just do it!

Trying on in quick succession

Oh my golly this is a GAME CHANGER and it's so simple but a real insider tip!

Trying things on in quick succession really helps the eye tune in to what does, and what doesn't, work for your shape and this is hugely valuable intel that you can use moving forwards.

I've seen this happen time and again in the changing rooms. Clients often claim not to have any idea what suits them but after trying on 5 to 10 pairs of jeans in quick succession, we both unanimously agree on the same pair. *It's CRAZY!*

It also serves as a huge confidence boost to my clients who then start to believe that really, they do have an idea of what suits them. This is great, because there's nothing better than seeing a woman's confidence start to grow.

I believe that as we get older, we lose our ability to trust our intuition as to what we like and as to what suits us...unlike when we're children and we just wear what we love and love what we wear, So it's time to work on reclaiming and developing your style intuition.

Here's an idea! When shopping for pieces, do so by category – trousers, skirts, dresses, tops and so on. Trust that your eye will filter out which shapes flatter you the most then try them on again for a second time and start to build your outfits from there.

CHAPTER 6

Bodyshape Identification

OK, so it's time for a quick re-cap before we move on.

So far we've looked at the perception of perfection in the form of the hourglass body shape. We've also considered how streamlining the shapes of clothes that you wear actually offers WAY more choice and inspires confidence, as well as how accepting your shape really is the only answer if you want to style yourself with confidence. . We've also looked at game changing styling principles.

For now, I'd like to take a minute for you to think how far you've come....and we haven't even started to consider the different body shapes yet!

Speaking of body shapes, I work with 5 main shapes in particular; the hourglass, the apple, the pear, the strawberry and the column or rhubarb. Each of these five body shapes can be categorised even further but that can start to get unnecessarily complicated and complicated isn't the name of this game. *Not at all!* The aim of this book is to make things easier for you.

Whilst it is undoubtedly helpful to identify your shape, and to understand which shapes of clothing will suit your figure the most, I want to encourage you to have the confidence to trust your intuition and to try out new ideas.

It's a bit like when you first start to bake cakes. You follow the recipes to a T, knowing that if you do, it will work for you. As you get more confident, you start to break the rules and get a little experimental with things. Sometimes it works amazingly well and sometimes it doesn't work quite so well but you can have a huge amount of fun finding out - and when it does work well, it's a great confidence boost and something which you can build on moving forwards.

I recall styling one of my clients, who was a lovely girl. She was fairly young and had curvy hips and so her shape was theoretically more suited to a bootcut, or flared, style

jean. This is a few years ago now, when EVERYONE was wearing skinnies and I remember her saying to me:

“But Beth, I don’t want to be the only girl in the pub wearing boot cut or flared jeans and for everyone to know the reason I’m doing that is because I have a big bum”

And I understood exactly what she meant. There are ALWAYS ways of styling things out and I don’t want you to feel that you have to stick to a prescriptive set of rules which really don’t appeal to you.

When it comes to your body shape, the first thing that we are going to do is to identify it by reference to the flow chart, below.....



STRAWBERRY
You're an athletic beauty



PEAR
Just look at your waist!



HOURLASS
You're beautifully proportioned

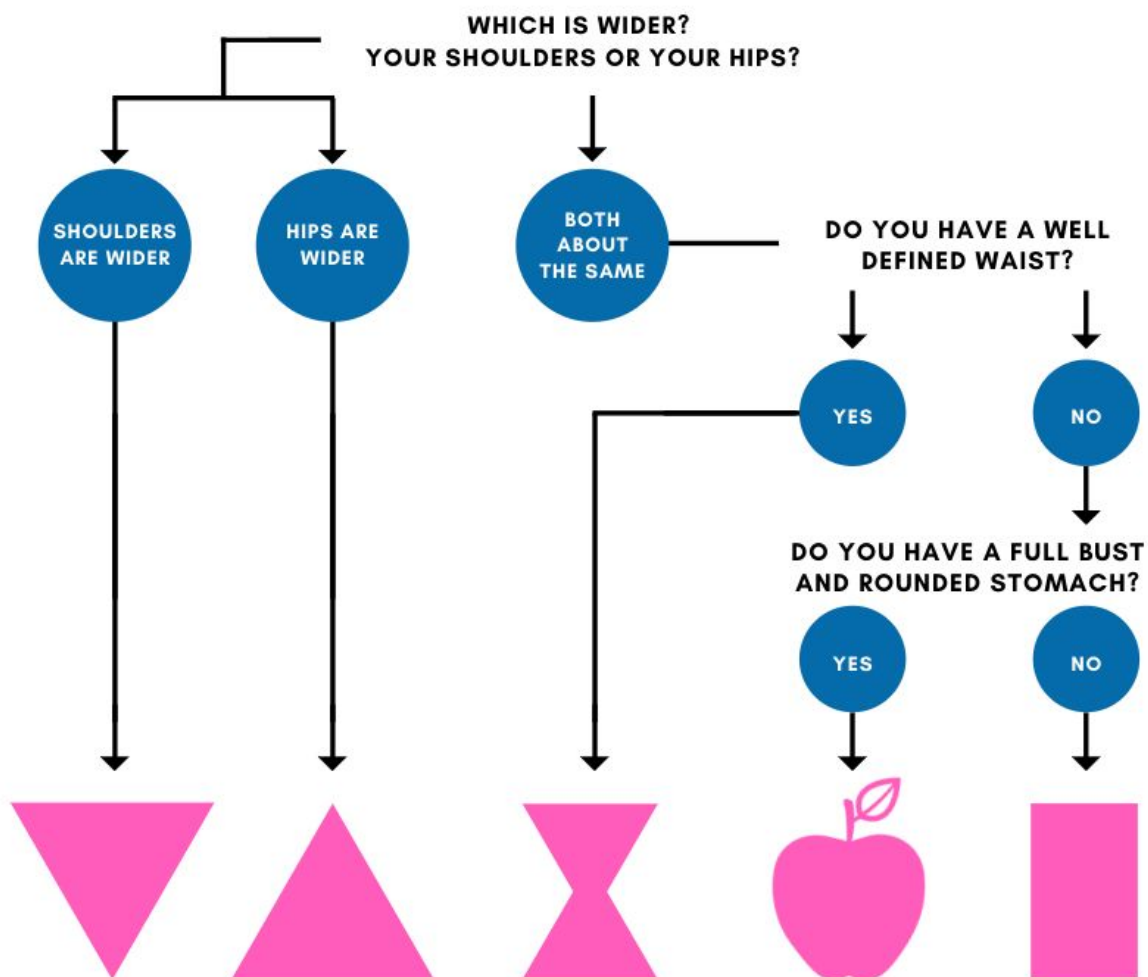


APPLE
You're the apple of everyone's eye



RHUBARB
You're straight up, and down

Find your shape



So along the top of the flow chart, we have the five body shapes. Just follow the flow chart down and you will arrive at your body shape.

Then, in the next chapters, we're going to take a look at each of the 5 different body shapes and how to style them.

If you feel that you fall fairly neatly into one of the shapes, the guide which relates to your shape will be super helpful for giving you ideas of how to balance your shape, the fabrics that work best for you and the shapes of clothing, that will flatter you the most. The fabrics that we wear are much overlooked but they can make a HUGE difference to our shape and they really should never be ignored when buying a new piece of clothing.

If you feel that you have one or two characteristics that you would like further information on how to style, glance over all of the guides and see which ones have characteristics similar to you – then just dig into them for further details.

Don't worry, I can hear that voice inside your head! You may be thinking to yourself – “but help, I don't really fall into any of those body shapes. I'm a little bit of one shape and a little bit of another all fused together so where does that leave me?”

Hey! Don't worry! I have you covered!

What I suggest that you do is identify the one, or two, shapes which you feel that you most closely resemble out of the five. Some of the shapes are diametrically opposed, so you're unlikely to consider yourself both an apple and a pear shape. But you may think “well I'm a rhubarb shape but with wider shoulders.” There may even be other factors which come in to play, so you might be thinking to yourself “I'm an hourglass shape but I'm petite, so which takes priority when styling myself – my height or my shape?”

Having identified which shape, or shapes, you feel you most closely resemble take a look at the relevant guides and see which principles you could most easily apply when styling yourself.

Then, head to the next chapter where I will share with you an alternative approach to styling.

Most people have one or two features that they feel dominate their shape more than any other. So what I'm going to do is to give you some really simple advice on how to style those features in particular. Sometimes just knowing what works best for a curvy bust, or a no longer "as flat as it used to be" tummy is enough to make styling yourself a whole lot easier.

The Hourglass Shape

Contents

In this guide you will find:

Introduction

You have an hourglass shaped body if...

Your styling goals

Looks to invest in

Looks that aren't your best friend

In more detail

Fabrics

Shoes

Accessories

Your perfect shaped clothing

A final word

Introduction

This guide is meant to be just that - a guide - and not something to adhere to religiously, or to be bound by. There are no rules here! Knowing the principles of how to style your shape can make everything fall into place. Equally, once you understand the principles, deviating from them can bring a fresh approach, and variety, to your outfits. All I would suggest is that you experiment. Some principles you may prefer to stick to quite closely. Some you may discount entirely. And that's the beauty of it. Take what works for you and leave the rest behind!

You have a HOURGLASS shaped body if you have:

- A full bust
- A well-defined waist
- Shoulders and hips and that are a similar width and which balance with one another
- Rounded bottom
- Curvy body



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Your styling goals are to:

- Emphasise your well defined waist
- Highlight your curves
- Maintain the balance between your upper and lower half

Looks to invest in:

- A well fitting bra
- Scoop, sweetheart and v-necklines to open up the chest area
- Wrap tops and dresses to create definition around the bust and waist
- Tops and jackets that nip in at the waist
- Skirts that are A-line or prom style
- Straight and bootcut trousers but you can rock a skinny too!

Looks that aren't your best friend

- Tops and dresses with an empire line
- Anything straight or boxy
- Stiff fabrics which stand away from your curves
- Anything too voluminous - it will just hide your shape
- Some high necklines, depending on the piece of clothing

Fabrics

An hourglass shape doesn't require fabrics for balance - you are already balanced! With your feminine curves, it's important not to shroud yourself in too much fabric which could have the effect of hiding your shape and creating bulk so avoid stiff, thick fabrics which stand away from the body.

Instead opt for finer, draped fabrics both top and bottom - although fabrics which offer support to an hourglass shape also work really well. Think premium jersey, denim with stretch, silk, viscose and cotton with an element of elastane.



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Shoes

As you are already in proportion, all that you need to concentrate on is retaining the balance of your silhouette. Just pay attention to your outfit and this will inform your shoe choice. If you opt for a heavier fabric jacket, such as boucle or wool, or a top with shoulder pads, then a chunkier heel will serve to keep your shape in balance. If you opt for a lighter weight fabric, then a more delicate shoe may be a slightly better choice. But to be honest, your balanced shape means that you can pretty much get away with anything that you choose – so just have fun with your shoes!

Accessories

Necklaces, if placed near to your bust, will have the effect of drawing attention to it, but that's just something to be aware of. A necklace with a weighted pendant can create a v-shape, which can be super flattering if you're wearing a round necked top. Large earrings elongate the neck and draw the eye upwards.

Belts can emphasise the waist but wide belts can have the effect of shortening the torso, so keep them to a narrow, to mid, width.

A bag will emphasise the point at which it finishes. So if it finishes at the waist, it will emphasise the waist. If it finishes the hip, it will emphasise the hips. Just bear this in mind when choosing a bag.



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Your Perfect Shaped Clothing

Your top half

Tops can have a huge impact on any shape. Being at eye level, they are quite often what we notice first in an outfit, unless another piece in the outfit is particularly striking in its colour, print or design.

As you are already in balance, the idea is not to throw your shape off balance by wearing a neckline which is too narrow, (such as a halter neck) or a neckline which is too wide, such as a slashed neckline. But to be honest, most necklines suit you. Just be aware that a higher neckline, such as a turtleneck or polo neck will make your bust look bigger, whilst lower and wider necklines will show off more of your bust.

These are ideal necklines for your shape



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Sleeves

Again, given that you are already so beautifully in proportion, you may want to maintain that balance. Alternatively you can use sleeves to good effect to either broaden, or narrow, your upper body.

Assuming that you want to maintain the balance in your silhouette, opt for sleeves that are fitted and which are inset – ie which follow the natural curve of your shape, as opposed to a batwing for example which effectively adds volume to the torso, or a fluted sleeve which adds volume to the upper arm.



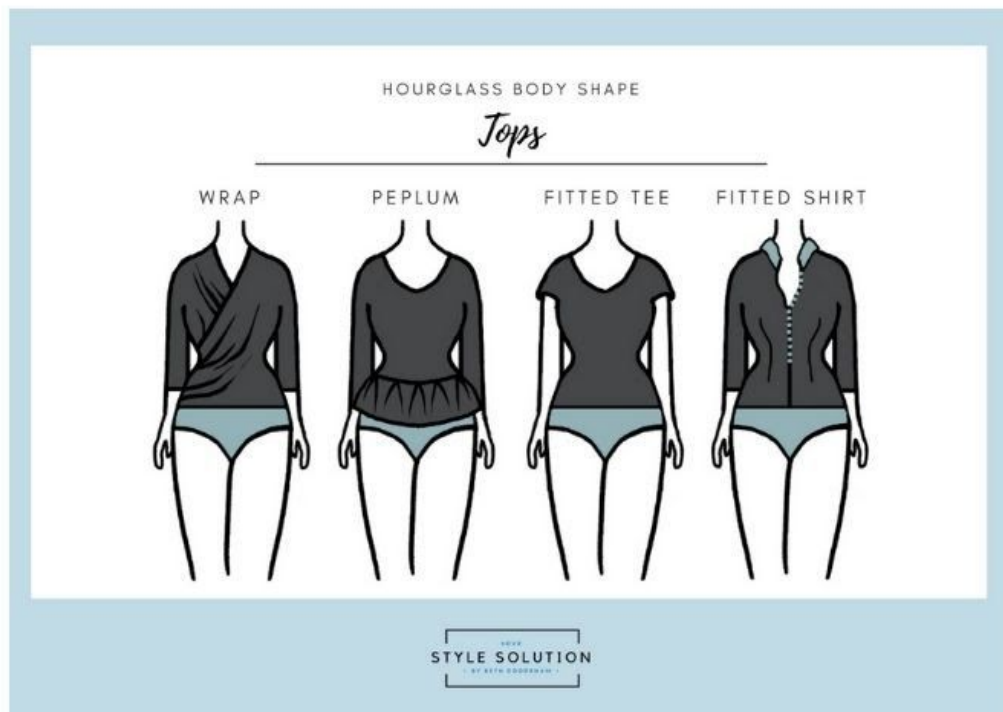
© BETH GOODHAM STYLIST

Tops

Tops which are fitted and which are belted or wrap style can be used to enhance and emphasise the waist, whilst still making the most of your curvy bust. Conversely, tops with little shape, or additional bulk, will hide your natural waist.

If you prefer to minimise your bust, use darker colours and avoid ruffles, bows or embellishments at the bust line.

When it comes to knitwear lightweight, fitted sweaters and knits are more flattering for your silhouette. Chunky, heavy knits and looser sweaters add bulk and can throw your proportions off balance. If you like heavier knitwear, a chunky open cardigan with a more fitted top underneath still makes the most of your shape, whilst providing the look that you like.



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Bottoms - Trousers

Again, as with all other pieces of clothing, your trousers should maintain the natural balance that you have between your upper and lower body. The best way to do this is by wearing slimmer fit trousers, as opposed to styles that are very baggy or excessively wide.

Having said that a fluid fabric, such as a crepe, which moves with you, allows you to wear a wider style trouser without throwing your shape out of balance. Most styles of trousers work well on your shape you may just wish to avoid pleats, darts or pockets around the tummy area and hips, as these can add bulk.

A trouser which is mid, or high rise, will emphasise your slim waist, as opposed to a low rise trouser or jean which will create a horizontal line across your hips, which are naturally wider than your waist. A low rise trouser will also have the visual effect of shortening your legs.

When it comes to jeans, a straight or bootcut jean suits you but slightly tapered jeans and boyfriend jeans can also work well. Wear a skinny too if you love them!

These are ideal trousers for your shape.



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Bottoms - Skirts

Again, with skirts the aim is to maintain the natural balance that you have in your silhouette. A skirt which sits on your waist will accentuate its slimness, whilst those which are voluminous will proportionately make the waist look even smaller.

Flip and A-line skirts suit your shape, as well as pencil skirts and fuller maxi skirts.

It may almost be easier to think about the skirts which are best for you to avoid, such as those made in stiff fabrics and any with ruffles, big pleats and embellishments around the hips as they will either disguise your gorgeous curves, or add bulk to your lower body.

These are ideal skirts for your shape



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Dresses

Dresses are fabulous for playing with your curves! You can make the most of them by working in ruffles and detailing on your top half, which will add to your bust, and by including pockets and width to the skirt part of your dress, to add curves to your hips. The addition of a belt will really emphasise your shape.

Wear fitted dresses to make the most of your shape, or opt for darker colours or vertical stripes to minimise your curves. A dress with a voluminous skirt will make your waist appear even narrower.

The dresses which work for your shape the least are those with straight lines or boxy cuts as they fail to make the most of your beautiful curves.



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Jackets & Coats

The ideal shaped coat or jacket for an hourglass body shape is one which is form fitted and tailored and which follows the natural silhouette.

Coat or jackets with belts, shaping, or details at the waist will accentuate the narrow waist. A-line or straight coats both work well for you. Coats or jackets which are single breasted are more streamlined and don't add additional bulk.

Coats or jackets that don't make the most of your shape are ones which are boxy or straight and which can't be belted. Empire lines are best avoided as they tend to be too voluminous for your shape and they can't be belted without creating tension with the empire line.

Shoulder pads, epaulettes and any details on the shoulder line will draw attention to them, so keep these details to a minimum if you prefer not to draw attention to the shoulder area. Wide collars will also have the same effect as they draw the eye outwards.

These are ideal jacket and coat shapes for your frame



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A Final Word

An hourglass shape is the shape most coveted! Enjoy and embrace your curves and don't try to hide them. It's true that more formal clothes work better with your shape so when you're "off-duty" remember to opt for lighter fabrics, and for pieces with stretch and support in them. No tents allowed!



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The Apple Shape

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Introduction

This guide is meant to be just that - a guide - and not something to adhere to religiously, or to be bound by. There are no rules here! Knowing the principles of how to style your shape can make everything fall into place. Equally, once you understand the principles, deviating from them can bring a fresh approach, and variety, to your outfits. All I would suggest is that you experiment. Some principles you may prefer to stick to quite closely. Some you may discount entirely. And that's the beauty of it. Take what works for you and leave the rest behind!

You have a APPLE shaped body if you have:

- An average to big bust
- Fullness around the middle and a less defined waist
- A fairly flat bottom
- Narrow hips
- Good legs
- A shorter body compared to your legs
- You put on weight around your tummy area first



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Your styling goals are to:

- Elongate the torso
- Draw attention to your legs and hips
- Draw attention to the upper part of your torso
- Create the illusion of a waist
- Draw attention away from the mid-section

Looks to invest in:

- A well fitting bra to elongate the torso by creating separation between the bust and mid-section
- V, scoop, sweetheart and wrap necklines to flatter a curvier bust and elongate the torso
- On your top half, you benefit from wearing clothing which is straight to slightly fitted, with soft fabric which drapes and which doesn't add bulk to the torso
- Statement jewellery as it draws the eye upwards
- Clever draping and ruching around the tummy area
- Column dressing: a long coat or cardigan worn over a top dissects the body vertically into 3 columns, making it appear slimmer
- Print on your top half will keep the eye on the move
- Use detailing and embellishment above the bust and below the hips whilst keeping the mid-section plain and simple
- Side zip, flat fronted trousers, will avoid adding bulk over the tummy area
- Knee length A-line skirts will balance out a broader upper body
- Wrap dresses with an A-line skirt flatter the bust and again balance a broader upper body
- Straight leg jeans and trousers with a slight boot flare also work well for balancing your proportions

Looks that aren't your best friend:

- High waisted trousers and skirts
- Heavy detailing or embellishment around the waist
- Light colours and horizontal details which widen and highlight the waist
- Excess fabric around the waist such as pleats or gather
- Shapeless or boxy clothing
- Fabrics that add volume on your top half such as fleeces and puffy jackets



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Fabrics

In order to disguise your tummy area, utilise tailoring in the form of jackets and blazers. Not only will tailoring add shape but it will also provide structure. Dresses with darts, seams and corsetry will also work well for smarter occasions and shirts with darts, shaping and an element of stretch will work beautifully for you.

For those occasions when you don't want to rely on tailoring, use fabrics that skim but which don't cling. The temptation can be to swathe your middle area in voluminous fabrics to disguise your tummy but all that does is to add bulk. Heavier jersey fabrics can work well in this sense, as can fabrics which have the ability to drape beautifully such as silk and viscose.

Layer lighter pieces together for warmth, rather than opting for bulkier pieces.

On your lower body a wider choice of fabrics is available to you as there is less need to disguise and balance your lower body. Have fun with print, texture and colour to draw attention to your gorgeous hips, legs and ankles.

Accessories

The combination of a rounded tummy and a curvy bust can make jewellery slightly trickier and it's an idea to keep necklaces towards the upper chest area. Simple is best! Earrings and hair slides will draw the eye away from the tummy area, as will fine, layered necklaces.

A slim silhouette which is created by the clever use of tailoring, and horizontal colour blocking, works best on an apple shape (think a long line cardigan with a silky, coloured top underneath, to create three distinct vertical "stripes" down the body).

Whilst belts can play a role in terms of giving shape to wider clothing, they don't need to be the focus of your outfit. Keeping them darker, and toning them to the colour of your top, dress, jacket or coat, will allow them to be functional in terms of creating shape, without being a feature and drawing attention to the tummy area.

Attention will be drawn to wherever your bag finishes. Draw attention to your narrow hips by using tote bags, messenger bags, shoppers and cross body bags. Using clutches and shoulder bags will draw attention to your wider upper body, so whilst you don't need to avoid it, just be aware of this.



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Shoes

As an apple shape, the temptation is to elongate and emphasise long slim legs, with shoes with slim heels but as you have a broader upper body, this can actually throw your shape off balance.

Wearing a stack, wedge, platform or block heel will actually balance your broader top half much better. Your beautiful slim ankles can take a flat shoe, as well as a shoe with an ankle strap, so make sure that you take advantage of this by wearing strappy flats and flip flops in the summer. In the winter, opt for a knee high boot with a stacked heel.



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Your Perfect Shaped Clothing

Your top half

Tops can have a huge impact on any shape. Being at eye level, they are quite often what we notice first in an outfit, unless another piece in the outfit is particularly striking in its colour, print or design.

For an apple shape, the aim of a top – and in particular its neckline – is to lengthen and narrow the torso, whilst creating separation between the bust and the tummy area. A top should also take attention away from the fuller mid-section.

Choosing necklines which are wide and low (such as a V-neckline) will achieve this for you. Conversely, high and narrow necklines will do the opposite (such as polo necks, or high, round necklines).

These are ideal necklines for your shape:



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Sleeves

Because the upper half of your body is where you are broader and curvier, sleeves can make a huge difference in terms of either accentuating this, or bringing balance to your outfit.

Aim to avoid a batwing sleeve which will broaden the upper body, as well as effectively merging your arms in with your bust and mid-section.

To draw attention away from the tummy area, use short sleeves. If you're wearing long sleeves, try and ensure where possible, that the sleeve is full length and finishes lower than your hips, rather than in line with your mid-section.

These are ideal sleeves for your shape.



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Tops

Tops with the necklines and sleeves shown above, and which have enough volume in them to skim over the tummy area, will work best for you. The danger is to shroud the mid section in fabric so as to disguise it but this just makes it look larger. Keeping tops fitted and narrow down the side of the torso, whilst at the same time using fabric to accommodate a wider mid-section, will work fabulously.

A print can be more flattering as it confuses the eye and keeps it on the move. Tops with embellishment either around the neckline so as to draw the eye upwards, or the hemline so as to draw the eye downwards, work well for you.

Keep knitwear long and lean, rather than short and bulky. Loose, open, longline cardigans will dissect the torso vertically, breaking up its width. Fine knit wrap cardigans are also flattering. If you prefer a jumper, opt for a fine knit, with a v or scoop neck, which has a little movement in the torso area – such as a swing style.

These are ideal tops for your shape



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Bottoms - Trousers

In theory, the "correct" trouser shape for an apple shape is a boot cut, wide leg, or flare, as its width serves to balance out the wider upper body. Equally, very tapered trousers, such as skinny jeans or peg style trousers "should" be avoided because they accentuate slim legs and make the upper body look broader.

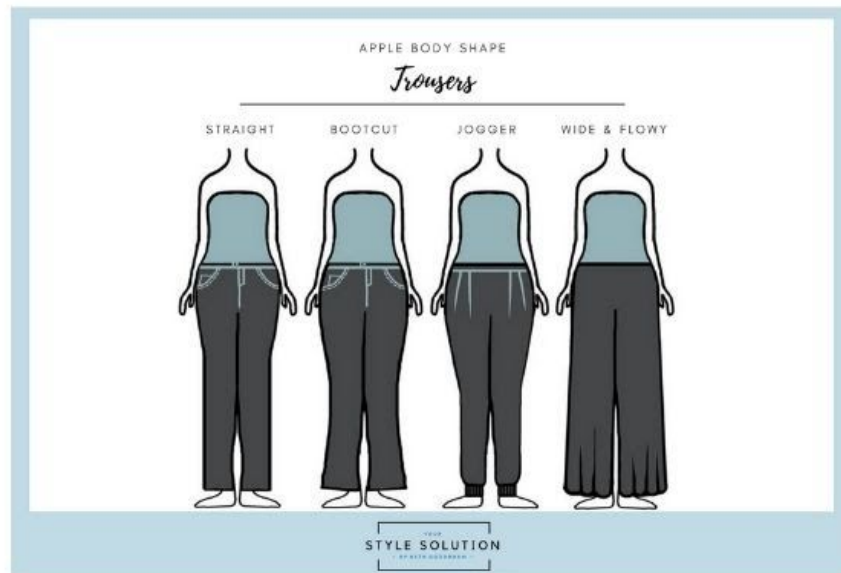
However, my styling approach is to accentuate your best features and I remain unconvinced that encasing beautiful legs in wide or flared trousers makes the most of them. Having said that, wider trousers in a light weight fabric such as crepe means that the definition of slim legs is still visible.

As ever, it's a question of balance. Wearing straight trousers, or skinny jeans but with a stacked or chunky heel, will still be a great look for you, even if it's not theoretically "perfect". Equally, fitted trousers with a silky top and longer line cardigan may offer an alternative option. A jogger style pant in a silky fabric is also a great style because they have a little room in the leg which serves to balance a broader top half, whilst being anchored back in at the ankle, therefore making the most of your beautiful slim legs.

Flat fronted, side zipped trousers with a wide waist band are flattering and avoid adding bulk around the tummy area. Conversely, pleats and ruching will add bulk where it's not required, so this is just something to bear in mind.

Given that you've got such beautiful legs, use colour, print and lighter fabrics on your legs to draw attention to them. This will also draw attention away from your mid-section.

These are ideal trousers for your shape



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Bottoms - Skirts

Skirts for the apple shaped figure should aim to balance out the broader upper body, whilst at the same time disguising the tummy area and making the most of your narrow hips.

Skirts with lots of volume in them - such as a prom style midi skirt - won't achieve this for you. Whilst the volume will balance out your upper body, it will also disguise your narrow hips and bulk out your tummy area.

Options are to choose a skirt which is flat over the tummy area and narrow over the hips but with more volume around the hemline - such as an A-line skirt or a trumpet skirt. If you like the idea of a pleated skirt, opt for one where either the pleats are stitched down and start from underneath the tummy, or if the pleats come from the waistband try and choose one in a silky fabric and with accordion pleats, which have less volume in them.

Whilst pencil skirts don't offer the volume that you require to balance out your upper body, they emphasise your hips beautifully so I suggest playing to your strengths with a pencil skirt and using a top from your "ideal tops" image above to both disguise your tummy area and to create the balance that you need by lengthening, and slimming, your torso.

These are ideal skirts for your shape.



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Dresses

Dresses which flatter your narrow hips and show off your legs, whilst at the same time disguising your tummy area, are ideal for you.

Wrap and fixed wrap dresses in a heavy weight jersey fabric are flattering as they offer support whilst at the same time creating definition around the bust and waist area. They also skim over the tummy. If a straight, or narrow, skirt is a preferred option (especially to highlight a narrow lower body) opt for an open neckline and horizontal ruching over the tummy area, for the most flattering look. Empire lines can work, provided that the lower part of the dress (underneath the empire line) isn't too voluminous.

Details around the hemline will draw the eye towards the legs, whilst embellishment and shoulder details will draw the eye upwards. Prints will distract from a larger tummy.

These are ideal dresses for your shape.



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Jackets & Coats

Jackets and coats are your best friend! The right style offers structure, shape through the bust and waist area, along with neat lines through the shoulders.

A simple, single breasted tailored jacket, with a low v-neckline and which finishes just below the hip bone, is the most flattering style for the apple shape.

For a more casual look, a simple, straight, open jacket works well as it dissects the upper body into three, creating a flattering look.

Avoiding embellishment over the mid-section as well as belts, breast pockets and high necklines will work best for you as well as avoiding fabrics that add bulk, such as puffy jackets.

The same principle applies to coats. A simple v, or open neck, single breasted style will work best for you. If you do choose a double breasted style, try and pick one where the buttons aren't too far apart as they will broaden the upper body.

Another option is a simple, single breasted full length coat with a slight flare at the hem as this creates a nice long line and balances out the silhouette.



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A Final Word

As an apple shape, your tummy has probably been the bane of your life. But just LOOK at your narrow hips, your long slim legs and your shapely ankles. And look at that shapely bust. They are your greatest assets so make the most of them!



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The Pear Shape

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Introduction

This guide is meant to be just that - a guide - and not something to adhere to religiously, or to be bound by. There are no rules here! Knowing the principles of how to style your shape can make everything fall into place. Equally, once you understand the principles, deviating from them can bring a fresh approach, and variety, to your outfits. All I would suggest is that you experiment. Some principles you may prefer to stick to quite closely. Some you may discount entirely. And that's the beauty of it. Take what works for you and leave the rest behind!

You have a PEAR shaped body if you have:

- Narrow shoulders with a smaller bust
- A well-defined waist
- You carry more weight on your lower body than your upper body
- You have full hips, thighs and legs
- If you put on weight, it tends to go to your hips, thighs and legs first
- You have a long body in proportion to your legs



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Your styling goals are to:

- To create balance with your lower body by bringing focus to, and broadening, your upper body
- To take attention away from the lower half of your body
- Emphasise your waist
- Narrow the hips and thighs
- Slim the legs

To draw attention to your upper body wear:

- A well fitting bra
- Print, bright colours and embellishment on the top half to draw the eye upwards
- Stripes, boat necks, wide lapels and shoulder details to broaden the shoulders
- Tops with bust pockets
- Off the shoulder neckline and halter neck will also broaden the shoulders
- Ruffles and embellishment to create the illusion of a bust
- Polo necks and high necks as they flatter your neat top half
- Fitted, or semi fitted tops, to emphasise your waist

To minimise and draw attention away from your lower body wear:

- Darker items on your bottom half to narrow the hips and thighs
- Slight volume in the bottom half, either by way of a kick flare trouser or A-line or fluted skirt to balance the hips
- Straight leg trousers with a wedge or heavier boot if a bootleg or kick flare is not your preference
- Fitted three quarter length coats
- A heel if you like them and find them comfortable
- Toning your tights to your shoes to elongate the legs

Looks that aren't your best friend:

- Bias cut dresses and skirts
- Anything baggy or boxy on your top half which disguises your shape
- Tops that finish at the widest point on your hips. (Instead opt for a French tuck if your top is longer, just to lengthen the legs and define the waist, or wear a longer top or knit that finishes below the widest part of the thigh)
- Patterns, embellishment, shimmery fabric or bright colours on your bottom half (but if you love them, wear them anyway. Just know that you might need to style them out a little!)
- Anything that adds volume around, or attracts attention to, the hips, such as pockets, pleats, gathers embellishments.
- Super skinny jeans – but again if you love them, just know that you can style them out with a heavier boot or shoe and a longer line top (if you choose to do so)



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Fabrics

As the aim of styling your shape is to balance your curvier lower body with your narrower upper body, avoid using bulky fabrics around the hips and thighs as they will add volume and won't create the sought after balance.

A combination of a fabric that doesn't work well for your shape, combined with a style which isn't super flattering, can make for an item that really doesn't make the most of your gorgeous shape.

A prom style skirt in a super thick fabric, for example, will be less flattering to your shape than a prom skirt in a silky fabric, which will move WITH you much better. Being aware of the fabrics that work better for you may just make some pieces that seemed previously inaccessible, suddenly super wearable.

When it comes to your upper body, anything goes! You don't need to shy away from heavier knits and fabrics so head for chunky knits, roll necks, denim shirts, tweed and boucle jackets.

Shoes

Shoes can help to re-balance the pear body shape in two main ways. First, by elongating the legs, bringing them back into proportion with the pear shape's longer body and also by slimming them.

Heels work well in this sense, particularly a slightly chunkier one such as a stack, block, wedge or platform heel as that also brings balance. If a heel is not an option, a platform can offer a great alternative, as can a chunky trainer. Delicate flats and ankle straps are not the most flattering choices. However toning your shoes with your trousers, or tights, will elongate the legs, whilst wearing a brighter shoe will draw the eye downwards. So have fun with colour!



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Accessories

Use jewellery to draw the eye upwards towards your neat top half. Long earrings will elongate the neck and layered necklaces add interest. Hair clips and hairbands can be used if they suit your personal style.

Scarves will also draw the eye upwards and can be used to add print, texture and colour to your outfit whilst at the same time, distracting from the lower body.

Belts can be used on the natural waistline, or just above, to anchor looser fitting clothes. Belting a dress just above the natural waistline will have the effect of shortening the body and elongating the legs. You may want to think about avoiding wearing belts on the hips as it will draw attention to them whilst at the same time giving the effect of shortening the legs.

Using a large bag can have the effect of proportionately narrowing the hips, whilst carrying a bag at waist height will draw attention to your slim waist.



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Your Perfect Shaped Clothing

Your top half

Tops can have a huge impact on any shape. Being at eye level, they are quite often what we notice first in an outfit, unless another piece in the outfit is particularly striking in its colour, print or design.

As a pear shape, the aim of the neckline is to widen and shorten your upper body. Slashed, bateau and off the shoulder necklines work well in the summer, whilst polo necks, turtle necks and cowl necks work well in the winter.

These are ideal necklines for your shape



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Sleeves

You can add volume to the upper body with short sleeves by keeping them wide and fluted, rather than fitted, which will only emphasise your wider lower body.

When it comes to longer sleeves, it's a good idea to minimise volume around your hips by keeping your sleeves fitted.

Whether wearing short, or long sleeves, shoulder details will broaden your upper body.

This can be achieved by puff sleeves and shoulder embellishments.



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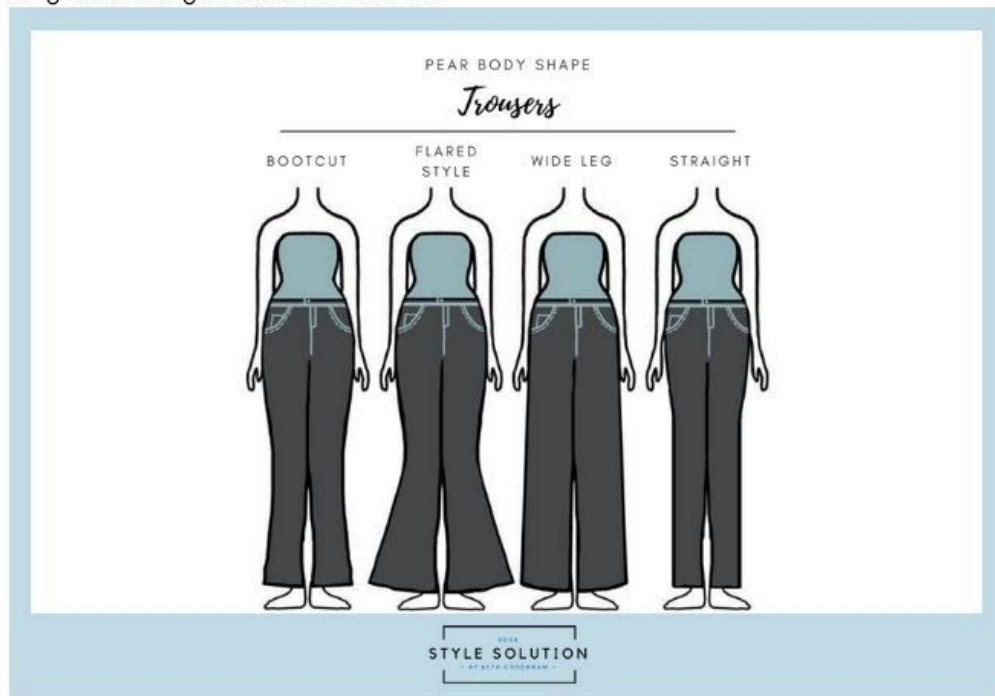
Bottoms - Trousers

I'm first going to look at the ideal trouser for a pear shape and I will then provide styling solutions if you're not a fan of them!

In terms of what it will achieve, the ideal trouser for a pear shape will slim the lower half of the body and narrow the hips. Additional width at the trouser hem (for example a boot cut, flared, or wide leg) will balance out a curvier hip, whereas an absence of that same width (such as a straight, skinny, tapered, peg or legging style) will emphasise the hips.

Details such as pleating, lighter areas over the thighs on jeans, whiskering, heavier fabrics like corduroy, large prints, light colours, turn ups and big pockets are not the most flattering. Conversely, darker colours, clean lines and fluid fabrics will work well for you.

If you really don't like a boot cut, flared or wide leg and instead prefer a skinny, straight, tapered, peg or legging style, these can be styled out by wearing a heavier boot or shoe to create a little balance with your hips, or by wearing a longer top, knit, cardigan or coat, which comes down to your mid thigh. As discussed, a chunkier heel will also lengthen the legs and create balance.



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Bottoms - Skirts

Skirts are your style weapon! Not only do they create balance between your upper and lower body but they also have fabulous leg lengthening properties - it's impossible to detect where your body ends and your legs start.

As with trousers, skirts with volume around the hemline are the most flattering for your shape, so think of A-line, fluted and pleated skirts (although pleated skirts are best in a lightweight floaty fabric so as to avoid adding too much bulk.)

In terms of skirt length, somewhere around the knee, or nearly full length, is best for lengthening the leg.

Try to avoid anything with a horizontal detail or a skirt that is over embellished. A print can be good for keeping the eye on the move.



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Dresses

Dresses should emphasise your narrow top half and draw attention to it, whilst minimising your proportionately heavier, lower body. The same principles that apply to tops and skirts, apply to dresses.

If you prefer to choose a dress which is naturally looser in style (which can be way more comfortable as we get older, or if we're eating out!) try nipping it in with a belt, which can be removed for comfort if necessary.



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Jackets & Coats

Generally, the most flattering coats and jackets for a pear shape are fitted and fall below the hip line. These have the effect of defining the waist, minimising the hip area and creating the illusion of length and height.

Whilst cropped jackets suit a neat top half (especially on a smaller frame) they can accentuate a curvier lower body, so in this instance, you might opt for a cropped swing style jacket, which will create balance. Equally if you prefer a shorter style coat, opt for one that has a slight flare at the hem, such as a pea coat as this will also create balance.



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A Final Word

Pear shaped ladies often focus their own thoughts and attention on their curvier lower half, at the expense of their narrow waist, flatter tummy and smaller bust. Being able to wear print, ruffles, sparkles, stripes, chunky jumpers and lots of layers on your top half is a gift - so embrace it. Draw the attention to your top half and up towards your beautiful face. Keep it simple on your lower half and you won't go far wrong.



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The Strawberry Shape

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In this guide you will find:

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Introduction

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You have a STRAWBERRY (or athletic) shaped body if you have:

- Shoulders wider than your hips
- Bust can be large or small
- Fullness around the middle and a less defined waist
- Narrow hips
- Flattish bottom
- Good legs



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Your styling goals are to:

- Create balance between your wider top half and narrower bottom half by narrowing the shoulders and creating curves around the hips and bottom
- Draw attention away from the shoulders (unless you love them – and why shouldn't you?!)
- Draw attention to your legs
- Create the illusion of a waist
- Use volume on the lower half of the body to create balance

Looks to invest in

- A well fitting bra
- V, scoop and lower necklines to soften the shoulders
- Asymmetric tops
- Statement jewellery to draw the eye upwards
- Fabrics on your top half that skim but don't cling and which don't add bulk
- Clever draping and ruching around the tummy area
- Column dressing: a long coat or cardigan worn over a top dissects the body vertically into three, making it appear narrower
- Print on your top half will keep the eye on the move
- Use detailing and embellishment above the bust and below the hips whilst keeping the rest plain and simple
- Straight leg jeans and trousers with a slight boot flare

Looks that aren't your best friend

- Shoulder pads and capped sleeves as these broaden the shoulders
- Narrow spaghetti style straps which also broaden the shoulders
- Horizontal stripes, wide necklines and shoulder details or puff sleeves
- Large scale prints on the upper body
- Excess fabric around the waist such as pleats or gathers
- Block colours
- Shapeless or boxy clothing
- Fabrics that add volume on your top half such as fleeces and puffy jackets



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In more detail:

The most noticeable characteristic of the strawberry body shape is the broad shoulders. The aim is to narrow the shoulders (but only if you choose to – broad shoulders, look AMAZING!) so that they are more in line with the strawberry shape's narrower hips, whilst at the same time creating the illusion of a wider lower body (without adding bulk), to bring it in line with the wider shoulders. Where the two meet, is the style sweet spot!

Narrowing the shoulders can be achieved by:

- Choosing necklines which draw the eye towards the centre of the body and reduce the width of the upper body, such as scoop, sweetheart and v-necklines.
- Avoiding shoulder details (including shoulder pads and puff sleeves) which have the effect of drawing the eye outwards;
- Avoiding horizontal stripes on the shoulder area or anything that creates a horizontal line, such as an off the shoulder top;
- Using soft, draped fabrics which don't stand away from the body

When it comes to creating balance, the aim is to create the illusion of a curvier lower body but without adding bulk. For that reason I suggest keeping pieces flat around the tummy area – so limiting the pleats, or gathers – instead look to the hem of the garment, for width.

Ways to achieve a curvier lower body are:

- Using tailoring to create the illusion of a waist, which will automatically create the illusion of a curvier lower body;
- Use skirts and trousers which have a kick flare at the hem;
- Use lighter, brighter colours not only to draw attention to the legs but these will also act as a visual "highlighter"



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Fabrics

Using lighter weight drapey fabrics on your top half will avoid adding any additional bulk to your broader top half. Think silk, viscose, jersey and tencel for tops and blouses and fine gauge knits for knitwear.

As discussed above, you can use the shape of your clothing to add width to your lower body to create balance. Alternatively use heavier fabrics such as denim, velvet, tweed and boucle.

Shoes

A strawberry body shape benefits from additional volume on the lower body to balance out the broader upper body. Draw attention to your fabulous legs with statement shoes. In order to achieve the balance required, opt for chunkier heels, such as wedges, platforms, stack and block heels. Your great legs can take an ankle strap, as well as a flatter shoe if you prefer.

Accessories

If you choose to do so, you can draw attention away from your wider shoulders by using chunky cuffs and cocktail rings, or statement, rings. Chunky necklaces and chunky earrings however, may be too close to your broader shoulders and could have the effect of drawing attention to them.

A long necklace will have the effect of creating a v-neckline, which will break up broader shoulders. Scarves which are tied towards the centre of the body will draw the eye inwards and away from your shoulders. Belts can create the illusion of a waist but make sure that they are in proportion with your frame.

Bags are a fabulous way of drawing attention to the lower half of your body and distracting away from your broader upper body. Bags should rest on your lower body – such as your hips and thighs. Satchel, structured handbags and long strapped shoulder bags will finish at the most flattering point on your body. If you have a larger frame, you can carry off chunkier bags with embellishment and detailing.



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Your Perfect Shaped Clothing

Your top half

Tops can have a huge impact on any shape. Being at eye level, they are quite often what we notice first in an outfit, unless another piece in the outfit is particularly striking in its colour, print or design.

The aim of the top for a strawberry shape is to narrow the shoulders and one of the best ways to do this is by choosing deep, open, necklines such as scoop, sweetheart and v-necklines. Asymmetric necklines dissect the body at an angle, counteracting the squareness of the shoulder line.

Low and wide necklines will have the opposite effect, so you may choose to avoid off the shoulder styles, as well as bateau and sabrina styles, which will all broaden the shoulders.

These are ideal necklines for your shape



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Sleeves

When it comes to narrowing a wide shoulder, sleeves can have a huge impact (just think what shoulder pads did to those ladies in "Dallas"!)

Unless there is a desire to specifically enhance the shoulders (which if you do want to do, then brilliant!) avoid puff sleeves as well as shoulder detailing such as shoulder pads or epaulettes.

In the summertime, choose a short fitted sleeve or a wider strap over a spaghetti strap. Just be aware that halter necks can broaden the shoulders.

A sleeve that finishes at the elbow or wrist and which flares slightly - such as a kimono sleeve or a dolman sleeve - has the effect of narrowing not only the shoulders but also of slimming the waist, both of which help to create balance with the narrower lower body.



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Tops

Tops can be used to enhance and emphasise the waist, whilst at the same time playing down broader shoulders and diverting attention away from the upper body.

Adding slight volume to the hip area will create the illusion of a narrower waist, as will wrap style tops. Wearing darker colours, and keeping shirts fuss free around the neckline, will divert attention away from the upper body.

The use of detail in the centre of the body, such as with a pendant necklace or slogan tee, will draw the eye in and away from broader shoulders. Small prints will keep the eye on the move, breaking up the upper body. Anything that gives the illusion of dissecting the upper body, such as diagonal stripes, an asymmetric hemline or lightning bolt image will work wonders for you.

When it comes to knitwear, avoid chunky jumpers and bulky knits, as well as horizontal stripes and shoulder details. Instead opt for fine gauge v necks and open cardigans.

These are ideal tops for your shape



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Bottoms - Trousers

Given that you have slim legs, in some ways it's a shame to add volume by wearing trousers with width to them so don't feel that you have to. However, doing so will balance your shape.

One option is to wear narrower style trousers in brighter colours or prints. This immediately has the effect of highlighting your legs and drawing attention to them. Or just experiment with wide legs, culottes, flares, utility trousers, track style pants and narrower styles.

When it comes to jeans, anything which is flared from the knee, or looser in style, will balance out your wider top half. Bootcut, flared, boyfriend and wide shaped jeans will all suit your shape. Embellishment will also take the attention away from your upper body and shoulders. Think whiskering, different washes and rips (if that is your thing!) But again, if you prefer to stick to a skinny or straight leg, then go for it. You have incredible legs!

These are ideal trousers for your shape.



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Bottoms - Skirts

In theory, skirts should add volume to the hip area to balance out the wider shoulders but you may prefer to accentuate your narrower bottom half by wearing a slim fitting skirt.

Draw attention to your lower half by wearing brighter coloured skirts, as well as using stripes and patterns.

As you have such great legs, opt for skirts in different lengths, from short, to midi to maxi. A bias cut slip skirt works great on your shape. If you do prefer to add volume to your lower half, then a tulip, A-line or tiered maxi skirt works well for you.

These are ideal skirts for your shape



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Dresses

In the same way that skirts with volume will balance your broader upper body, so will dresses which have volume in the skirt. A shaped waist, a belt, or a waist detail, will also create the illusion of a waist for you.

Wearing a dress with a lighter, or printed, skirt to it will draw the eye to the lower body.

In theory, strapless dresses with a top which cuts straight across the torso should be avoided as they widen the upper body but if the skirt has volume to it, this will help balance the proportions. You may want to think about avoiding dresses with a very narrow skirt to them but sometimes it's nice to play up your broader shoulders.

Although one of the dresses below is shown with a closed shirt collar, it can be opened for versatility, to create a deep, wide, neckline.

These are the ideal dress shapes for you



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Jackets & Coats

The ideal shaped coat or jacket for a strawberry body shape is one which both creates a waist and adds volume around the hips. This is because it will balance out the broader upper body.

Coats with belts, shaping or details at the waist will create the illusion of a waist, whilst coats which have detail or a flare at the hip line, will add volume to the hip area.

Shoulder pads, epaulettes and any details on the shoulder line will draw attention to them, so keep these details to a minimum if you prefer not to draw attention to the shoulder area. Wide collars will also have the same effect as they draw the eye outwards.

These are ideal jacket and coat shapes for your frame



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A Final Word

Having said all of the above, and having talked about the need to create balance, I love the “imbalance” of the strawberry shape and all that it implies in terms of an athletic physique.

You have the perfect model shape, with shoulders like coathangers. Whilst the theory would suggest that creating balance is the aim, and that skinny jeans and leggings should be avoided, you have amazing legs, so I say rock them!



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The Rhubarb Shape

Contents

In this guide you will find:

Introduction

You have an rhubarb shaped body if...

Your styling goals

Looks to invest in

Looks that aren't your best friend

Fabrics

Shoes

Accessories

Your perfect shaped clothing

A final word

Introduction

This guide is meant to be just that - a guide - and not something to adhere to religiously, or to be bound by. There are no rules here! Knowing the principles of how to style your shape can make everything fall into place. Equally, once you understand the principles, deviating from them can bring a fresh approach, and variety, to your outfits. All I would suggest is that you experiment. Some principles you may prefer to stick to quite closely. Some you may discount entirely. And that's the beauty of it. Take what works for you and leave the rest behind!

You have a RHUBARB shaped body if you have:

- A small to average bust
- A small to average tummy
- An undefined waist
- Shoulders and hips and that are a similar width and which balance with one another
- Few curves
- Straight hips and bottom
- You may have a long body in proportion to your legs



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Your styling goals are to:

- Define the waist by breaking up the rectangle shape
- Create the illusion of curves
- Lengthen the legs

Looks to invest in:

- A well fitting bra
- Off the shoulder necklines as well as halter necks, round necks, boat necks or polo necks
- Tops and dresses with embellishment or ruffles to create the illusion of a bust
- Tailored jackets and coats to create waist definition
- Tailored clothing in general to create structure
- High waisted trousers to give the illusion of a waist and lengthen the legs
- Skirts and dresses with volume to create the illusion of hips
- Skinny jeans but you can rock a wide leg or flared trouser, too
- If you like heels they will elongate the legs, as will toning your tights to your shoes
- Layering two different length tops together with break up your longer torso
- Use print and texture to add interest

Looks that aren't your best friend:

- Straight dresses and skirts
- Slouchy jackets and blazers
- Anything super voluminous
- Baggy or boxy tops and tunics
- Anything that gives the impression of shortening the legs (such as cropped trousers) or lengthens the torso (such as dropped waist dresses)



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Fabrics

If your desire is to create curves, use tailoring and soft draped fabrics. Fabrics which flow soften an angular frame. Textured fabrics can also add interest to your outfits.

Shoes

When it comes to shoes, there are no "rules" for rhubarb shapes. A rhubarb shape will often tend to have a slight leaning towards one of the other body shapes and stack, block, wedge and platform heels work well with both apple and pear shapes. If you are particularly delicate, a stiletto or kitten heel may work well on you. Generally the less angular the shoe the better but to be honest, go with what you love!

Accessories

Jewellery is your thing! Anything works on you: Chunky, fine, layered, delicate – you can do it all. Your frame is slightly angular so slightly rounded jewellery may be better for you. Longer necklaces may have the effect of lengthening your body further – but this isn't a hugely significant issue. If you feel that you veer slightly more towards an apple shape, or a pear shape, refer to those guides to get advice on your accessories.

Belts will help to break up an angular frame and to create the illusion of a waist. A belt placed slightly higher than the natural waist – for example over a wider dress – will shorten the body and elongate the legs. If you are taller with a larger frame, opt for wider belts. Conversely, if you are on the petite side, opt for narrower belts.



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Your Perfect Shaped Clothing

Your top half

Tops can have a huge impact on any shape. Being at eye level, they are quite often what we notice first in an outfit, unless another piece in the outfit is particularly striking in its colour, print or design.

There are two approaches to take when styling the rhubarb shape:

- To create curves
- To accentuate your slender frame

If your aim is to create curves, use round necklines and soft shapes. Embellishments such as pussy bows, ruffles, rounded collars and lace trims help to draw attention to the upper part of the body and also create curves.

If your aim is to accentuate your slender frame, opt for narrow necklines such as turtlenecks, mandarin, crew, funnel and halter necklines.

Square necklines aren't so flattering as they accentuate the angular nature of your frame. These are ideal necklines for your shape:

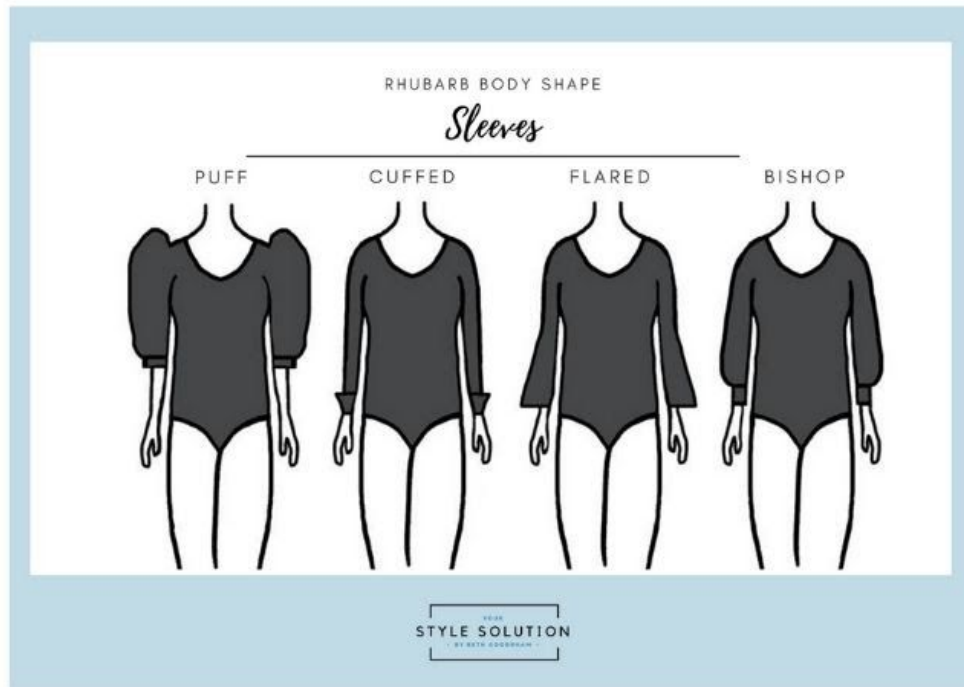


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Sleeves

Due to the straight lines of the rhubarb shape, sleeves that add volume to the upper or lower body (depending on their length) are the most flattering.

The only sleeve that really doesn't play to your strengths is a straight, fitted, sleeve but other styles whether embellished, rolled up sleeves, or sleeves with large cuffs – bishop, puff, or flared sleeves all add interest.



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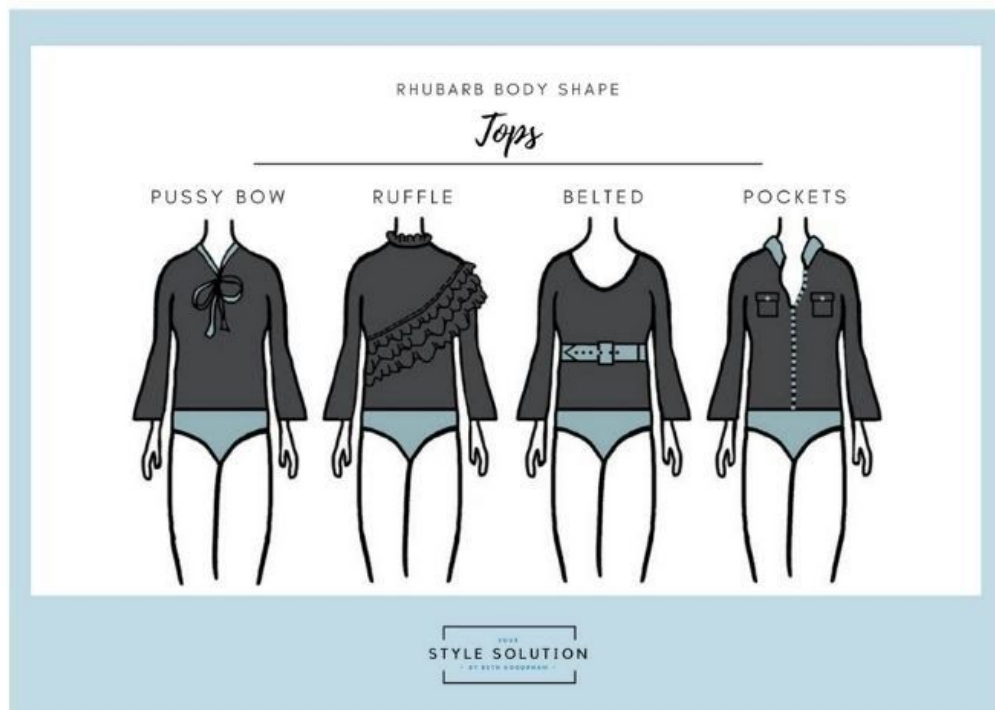
Tops

The aim of tops for the rhubarb shape is to define the waist and create volume to the bust area. Belts, darts, tailoring and soft draped fabrics can assist in defining a waist, whereas frills, bows, lace details, bust pockets and ruffles will add volume.

The tops which are least flattering to your shape are shapeless boxy ones as they don't help to create the illusion of a waist, or of curves. Maybe think about avoiding straight, boxy style tees, instead opting for draped t-shirts which are shaped at the waist.

When it comes to knitwear, the squarish silhouette of the rhubarb can be softened by curved detailing and softer shapes. Having said that, as a rhubarb myself, I like short boxy jumpers as they have a leg lengthening effect, so go with what you love! Long cardigans with belts are a good look for the rhubarb shape.

These are ideal tops for your shape



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Bottoms - Trousers

Straight fitted trousers will emphasise your straight silhouette so if that's not the look that you're striving for, soften it with flares or wide legs, which will add volume and curves to the lower body.

Fabrics like crepe and viscose, which flow, soften the angled frame as do trousers with details such as pleats, turn ups, pockets and whiskering. Just bear in mind whether those details may draw attention to areas that you perhaps don't want to draw attention to – such as your thighs or hips and/or whether they may have the effect of shortening the legs. It's just a question of balance really and what you choose to give priority to.

Boyfriend, bootcut and slim jeans all work with your frame.



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Bottoms - Skirts

Skirts are a fabulous way to add curves to the lower body. A wide hemline, pleats, tiers, fluting and ruching all achieve this. Another way to add volume is via light and bright colours, as well as prints.

Straight or A-line skirts can also work, if you're going for a more streamlined silhouette.

These are ideal skirts for your shape



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Dresses

The perfect dress for the rhubarb shape is one which creates volume both top and bottom, whilst nipping in the waist, either with a belt, with princess seams, with the clever use of colour, or with a wrap or kimono style tie.

It's a good idea to balance out a dress with a wide hem, with details on the upper body such as ruffles, or big sleeves just to keep the proportions in check.

Dresses that are least flattering for your shape are ones which are boxy and shapeless, as they swamp your frame and fail to give you any shape. The exception to this is a short "buffet" style dress, which when worn with thick black tights in the winter, will show off your shapely legs. Whilst it's an entirely different look, it's still flattering for your shape.

These are the ideal dress shapes for you



© BETH GOODHAM STYLIST

Jackets & Coats

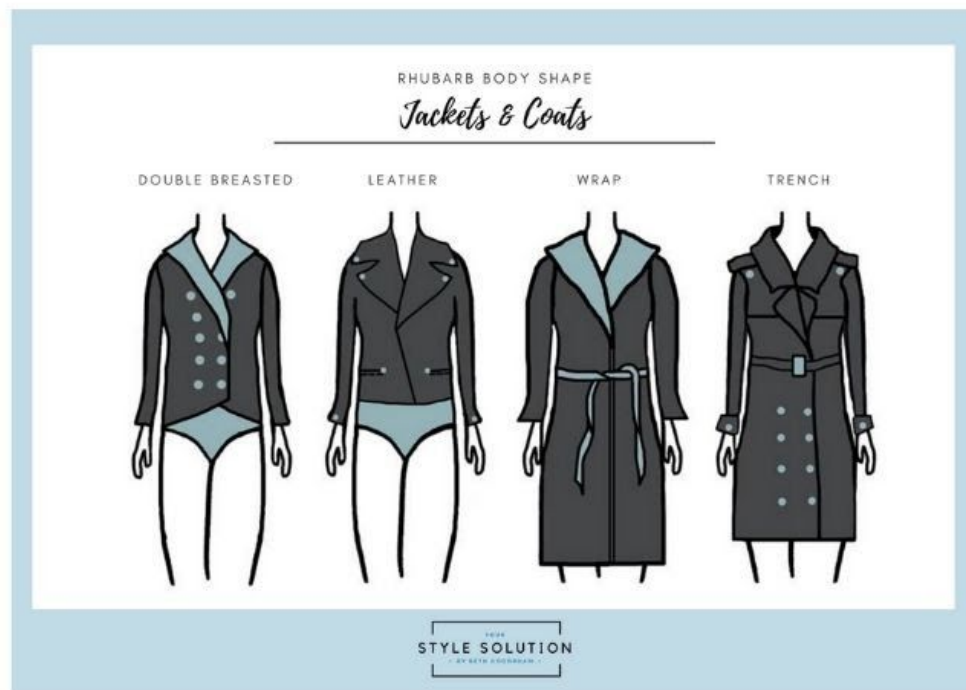
The ideal shaped coat or jacket for a rhubarb body shape, is one which is nipped or belted in at the waist, to create shape.

Embellishments around the bust are great for broadening the shoulder line – for example double breasting and pockets. Cuff detailing and flaps all add interest to the upper body.

Jackets which are slightly flared at the hips will help to create volume in that area, giving the creation of curves.

Longer coats that go past the knees will elongate and slim the body. They are particularly flattering if they are slightly flared at the hem and belted.

These are ideal jacket and coat shapes for your frame



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A Final Word

Embrace your shape! You're lucky as it's so flexible. You can head down the androgynous route, or the gamine one, or you can create curves with tailoring and belts or not if you choose not to. There are no limitations on what you can do, so have fun experimenting.



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CHAPTER 12

Styling Techniques For Different Areas

In this chapter I'm going to teach you about an "alternative approach to styling", which I mentioned earlier.

What I am about to teach you can be used in three ways:

Either it can serve to enhance what you learned from the body shape guides in the previous chapters, and take things to the next level. Or, if you feel that you just want to learn how to style one or two areas in particular this approach will help. OR if you don't feel that you fit into any one particular body shape, you can use this method instead.

The areas that we are going to concentrate on are the ones that I have seen my clients struggle with the most, as well as the ones that I am asked most about via my blog, Instagram and in emails.

As we've talked about previously, great styling involves attracting or distracting the attention to, or away from, certain areas whilst using different styling techniques to balance out the proportions. That's it in a nutshell. And that's what I'll be doing when we look at how to style each of the following:

- A small bust
- A curvy bust
- A rounded tummy
- Curvy hips
- Wide shoulders
- A long body
- A short body
- Short legs
- Being petite

How To Style A Small Bust

(Refer to the Pear & Rhubarb Shape Guides For More Info!)

The world is your oyster when it comes to tops. But it's key to sort out the right underwear for you, which will make all the difference. A balconette bra with slight padding is great as it adds both lift and separation, as opposed to a padded push up bra which just squeezes you together. Look for a similar style when it comes to swimwear, or styles which offer you uplift, light padding and detailing, such as frills.

Moving on to tops: pleats, ruffles and gathers add volume but in a chic way. You can have fun with halter necks, pussy bows, button down collars, sparkles, sequins, print (polka dots, animal print, stripes) pocket detailing and colour. Polonecks, turtle necks and round necks suit you as do heavier knits and fabrics. Lower necklines may leave you feeling a little bare and exposed, so it's something to bear in mind.

Embrace single, or double, breasted jackets as well as puffas and faux fur coats - your shape can take the added bulk.

How To Style A Curvy Bust

(Refer To The Hourglass & Apple Shape Guides For More Info!)

The first port of call is a great bra shop. If you're in the UK, brands such as Bravissimo, Rigby & Peller, John Lewis, Marks & Spencer, along with specialised lingerie

boutiques, will be the best places to go. If you can build up a relationship with someone in store, even better.

Softly draping fabrics such as modal or viscose, or those with a heavier, silky weight, will suit your shape the most because they won't add volume. A composition of 95% jersey and 5% elastane will offer you both weight and stretch. The aim is for a body skimming silhouette, rather than a baggy one.

The issue that most women with a curvy bust have is that if they find a top to fit their bust, it's too large everywhere else. It can be too large in the body, the shoulders don't fit, the sleeves have too much room in them and the overall effect is to add volume. On the other hand, if the top fits everywhere else, the wearer can be left with gaping buttons or fabric which is obviously over stretched.

A curvy bust is best suited to wide open necklines, such as a scoop, sweetheart, v, or square neckline. You may feel that anything which is high, such as a roll neck or a round neck, is slightly less flattering/comfortable to wear.

Darts and seaming on shirts create shape, rather than volume. A fixed placket means that there aren't any buttons to pull. Adding poppers between the buttons avoids gaping and wrap over tops with a cami underneath flatter your shape.

A print, such as animal print will keep the eye on the move, especially if the print is a low grade print, meaning that there isn't too much contrast between the lightest, and the darkest, colours in the print.

One way of balancing out a curvier bust is to keep your top half tailored, with a wider trouser beneath to balance your proportions. If you have a slim bottom half however, that idea may not appeal. Instead, use print and colour on your bottom half and a darker colour on your top half, to create a minimising and distracting effect.

When it comes to dresses, empire lines or tunics really aren't your best friend as the fabric hangs straight down from the bust, rather than being anchored back to your figure. The exception to this is if a tunic style top is nipped in under the bust with a wide band.

When it comes to knitwear, aim to choose lighter layers, rather than chunky/bulky jumpers and if you're not too chilly, then choose a wider, open, neckline. The same applies to coats and jackets in terms of trying to avoid bulk.

How To Style A Rounded Tummy

(Refer to the Apple Shaped Guide For More Info!)

A rounded tummy can be the bane of many a woman's life, whatever age and shape she may be. Whilst many women do, and should, love their curvy hips and shapely bottoms, I've yet to find a woman who loves the fact that her tummy sticks out.

Babies, IBS, periods, the menopause, stress, medication – all of these can have a huge impact on the size of our tummy on any given day and along with it, how we feel.

Posture is key when it comes to how rounded your tummy looks. We're all guilty of not standing as upright as we could. Drooping shoulders and hips that are pushed forward will do nothing for a rounded tummy. The best thing about good posture is that it is free and it can make a big difference in an instant.

Underwear is key in elongating the space between the bust and the tummy – so head to your local department store or lingerie boutique to get properly measured and fitted for bras which will flatter your shape.

I'm really not a fan of recommending support underwear, unless a garment or an event absolutely requires it. Instead I'd rather that women source the right shaped clothing for their shape. If anyone has to mould, force, squeeze or rely on heaps of support underwear, then it's probably not the right piece of clothing for them.

The danger is that in an effort to disguise a rounded tummy, women drape themselves in swathes of fabrics (think oversized tee shirts) which do nothing to flatter the female form whatsoever. They increase the width of the torso from side to side and from front to back, as well as disguising any notion of a waist, or a bust.

So whilst you may want to disguise your tum, that's the ONLY thing that you want to disguise. Not your bust, or your waist, or your entire upper body!

Shape, fabric (and it's composition) plus print, are four factors that are relevant when choosing pieces to help flatter the tummy area.

As to shape, strategically placed ruching can be great for disguising. Tops with a wide waistband (think sweatshirt style but in a lightweight fabric) can be fabulous as they allow the fabric above the waist band to drape over the waistband in a flattering, blouson, type of effect. This provides enough room to accommodate a less than flat tummy, without swathing its owner in metres of billowing fabric.

The same is true of dresses with a drawstring waist. The fabric above the drawstring can drape slightly, which is also good for disguising the tummy area.

Anything that adds volume around the tummy will be less flattering. So gathered waists, trousers with pleats, and pleated skirts, aren't as flattering as flat fronted side zipped trousers.

Some ladies feel more comfortable in a higher waisted trouser, whilst others prefer a trouser that sits on the hips. It's always worth taking a profile view, just so that you can see whether what you're wearing goes in underneath your tummy, as this can emphasise it.

Fabrics will be key in this scenario and anything that is silky or draped will skim the stomach without clinging or adding volume. Look to silk, viscose and tencel for draped fabrics. When it comes to fabric composition, cotton with stretch in it will work well as it will still allow definition of the waist and bust, whilst allowing the tummy to sit in comfort. Avoiding anything which is bulky or boxy and which stands away from your shape will also be helpful.

Print is great for confusing the eye and keeping it on the move so a printed top can work wonders, compared to a plain one.

Wrap tops, tees with ruching over the tummy, tops with a band under the bust which brings attention to the narrowest part of your torso and then gently flares away will all work well for you.

My favourite item of clothing is one that skims without clinging and one that I can breathe in to full capacity, and then out to full capacity, whilst the item of clothing barely moves!

How To Style Curvy Hips

(Look To The Pear & Hourglass Guides For More Info!)

Curvy hips are all part of being a woman – but not every woman who has them, wants them!

When it comes to hips, it's all about balance. It's about balancing the slimness of the lower leg, with the curviness of the hips. It's also about balancing the curviness of the hips with the upper body. The hips are sandwiched between two areas which are slimmer than they are – so there's a little balancing to think about!

When it comes to balancing the hips with the lower legs, that's easier. Darker colours, wide legged, flared, palazzo, or dare I mention them bootcut trousers, will work wonders when balancing wider hips. Essentially anything with a wider hemline will have a balancing effect.

If none of these appeal, wear a straight leg trouser and a chunkier shoe or boot. A maxi skirt with volume, a pleated skirt, a skirt with a fluted hem – all of these will have the same effect.

When it comes to styling your top half, use it to draw attention AWAY from the lower body by using print, colour, texture and shine. Also use it to create balance with the lower body by using slash necklines, epaulettes, horizontal stripes and wider lapels. Three quarter length flared coats and jackets are more flattering than ones that finish at the widest point of the hips (remember the “towel in front of the mirror” trick earlier in the book?!)

A shorter jacket – such as a cropped or leather one – can look great if it's being worn with a skirt or dress with some fluidity or volume in it. This is because the skirt or the dress will be doing the “hip balancing” job in your outfit.

How To Style Broad Shoulders

(Refer To The Strawberry Guide For More Info!)

Whilst the fashion industry loves wider shoulders for the great coat hanger look they give to clothes, individuals who are blessed with them don't always find them so easy

to live with. Common observations are that they make women feel masculine and bulky. Whilst many may feel that wide shoulders may not be overly dainty and feminine, they can be uber glamorous.

3 techniques to use when styling broader shoulders:

- Distract attention away from your shoulders
- Create balance between your lower body and your broader upper body
- Use specific styling techniques to minimise the width of your shoulders

Remember how styling is all about attracting, distracting and re-balancing? Well the same applies to wide shoulders.

Distract by using a bright print on your lower half as it draws all the attention to that area, and therefore, away from your shoulders. The same applies with brighter colours, texture, shine, prints, detailing and so on.

Re-balance wider shoulders by using width on your lower body. This can be achieved by wearing palazzos or flared, or boot cut jeans, or skirts or dresses with a “flip” or flared hem.

Styling Techniques: Avoiding anything that creates a horizontal line across the shoulders will serve to narrow and soften them. It may be an idea to have an awareness of how horizontal breton stripes, or a bardot style top, puff sleeved, epaulettes or detailing can impact on your shape. Shoulder pads may not be your best friend, in the same way that unstructured t-shirts or short, boxy jackets aren't the most flattering for your shape. The angular nature of your shoulders can be softened with tailoring, as well as with fluid fabrics that drape such as jersey, viscose and tencel.

Another idea is to draw the eye into the centre of the body and away from the shoulders with strategic placement or detailing. A v-neckline, a pendant necklace or a long scarf can be used to good effect. Bold earrings will also draw the eye inwards towards the centre of the body.

The aim here is to effectively carve up your squarer top half with tailoring, shaping, ruching, scoop necks, v-necks and curved lines.

How To Style A Long Body

(Refer To The Pear Shaped Body Guide For More Info!)

Anyone who is *long waisted* has a long torso in relation to their legs. The best way of giving the illusion of a less long torso is first, to re-position the waist higher up and second, to disguise where the legs meet the body.

So how do we re-position your natural waist?

Wearing skirts or trousers with an elasticated waist allows you to re-position where they sit on the body and can be used to shorten the torso.

Wearing a midi or maxi dress with a belt positioned slightly higher than your natural waist also shortens the torso as does wearing a dress with a wide band positioned just under the bust.

Detailing on garments can also re-position the natural waist (think jewelled details, or print, or a block of colour), as can the use of cropped cardigans and jackets.

A long body can result in tops being too short. One of your best looks is to wear a shorter top, with a high waisted longer line skirt, trousers, or culottes.

Shorter tops can be achieved by knotting a shirt at the waist, or by seeking out “cropped” style tops (not necessarily in the belly button flashing sense...unless you want to). Anchoring your top into your waistband via a French tuck will also have the effect of shortening your torso, as will wearing a cropped cardigan over a dress.

Layering two different length tops together can also break up the length of the torso.

Another way of shortening the torso is by wearing a dress or skirt. If it's impossible to see where your legs and body meet, it's impossible to know the length of either!

How To Style A Short Body

(Refer To The Apple Shaped Guide For More Info!)

For those who are *short waisted*, their torso is short in relation to their legs. The aim is to create the illusion of a longer body and there are a number of ways of doing this.

Wearing lower rise trousers will lengthen your body as they will require a longer top. If you don't like lower rise trousers, then just leave your top untucked as this will also lengthen the torso.

Elasticated pieces will also mean that you can reposition where your natural waistline sits. Wearing pieces lower than your natural waistline will lengthen your upper body.

A brightly belt placed slightly lower than your natural waistline will also give the illusion of a longer upper body as the eye is automatically drawn to the bright colour.

Look for details which give the effect of elongating the body, such as strategically placed stripes, sequins, embellishment, dropped waists and so on.

You may quite possibly want to avoid tucking things in, wearing cropped jackets, high waisted skirts or empire lines as these all shorten the torso. Instead wear longer tops with vertical stripes, or a slim sweater worn untucked over a shorter skirt. Also consider wearing a low slung belt around your hips, or wear longer line tops with asymmetric hems to draw the eye downwards.

How To Create The Illusion Of Longer Looking Legs

(Refer To The Pear Shaped Guide For More Info!)

Show me a woman who doesn't want to make her legs look longer and I'll show you a whole lot more who do! Height is immaterial – it's possible to be tall but to still have proportionately short legs.

Hiding the demarcation between where the legs join the body will mean that no one has any idea how long your legs are. Put simply, this means wearing skirts and dresses, rather than trousers, dungarees, jumpsuits or culottes.

Maxi skirts long enough to cover heels of any height will instantly lengthen the legs, as will toning your boots to your skirt and making sure that they meet, without leaving a gap.

Dresses with a seam positioned slightly above the waist will give the appearance of super long legs, as will belting a dress at slightly higher than waist height.

Clearly, wearing skirts and dresses isn't practical for everyone on a daily basis, so other tricks involve wearing a longline waistcoat, or longline fine knit, over jeans and a sweater.

A dress over trousers is also a good look, as are creases down the front of wide leg trousers, pinstripes, block colours and a high waisted trouser.

Only those who can afford to lose a few inches can wear wide, cropped trousers. This is also the case with turn ups and it's even more so in the case of a dropped crotch.

Anything cutting across the leg horizontally will shorten it – especially if it occurs at the widest point. The best (or worst) example of this are wide, cropped trousers. Other examples include ankle straps, t-bar shoes, mid calf boots, midi skirts or leggings that finish at the widest part of the leg.

When it comes to slimming the legs, darker colours on the legs will slim and lengthen them, whilst pale colours will do the reverse. This applies to tights, trousers, leggings – you name it!

Patterned tights will also add bulk but an awareness of this means that they can be offset with heels. Matching your shoes to your tights will lengthen legs.

How To Style Being Petite

Now there's not a huge amount that anyone can do (and nor should they want to do) about being petite. But I am often asked questions about how to give the illusion of height.

The obvious and most effective way to do this is by looking to your shoes to add some height. The most flattering style is one which is cut low at the front, with a slight point to the toe, simply because it draws the eye down and is elongating. Anything that cuts across your leg at any level – such as an ankle strap, or a T-bar, or a mid calf height boot, will have the effect of spoiling the flow of the lines. If you're more of a flats girl, platform or wedge trainers are a good option as are biker boots or anything with a slightly chunky sole.

When it comes to your clothes, the aim is to elongate and to draw the eye downwards. There are several ways to do this. A v-neck jumper will give the illusion of lengthening your neck and your torso. A single breasted jacket with narrow lapels will also do this, as will an open neck shirt.

Vertical stripes, pinstripes and creases in the front of smart trousers will have the same impact as they will draw the eye down. Head to toe colour blocking will have a lengthening effect, as will wearing a dress in the same print or colour. Toning your shoes to your tights is another great styling trick.

Petite ladies often ask me whether they can wear cropped trousers and my answer is absolutely yes! The most flattering look is when they finish just on the ankle bone. Sleeves also look better when adjusted to the right length.

Whilst being petite doesn't mean that you shouldn't have fun with your clothes, keeping things fuss free, tailored and simple will be the most flattering look for you.

A neat silhouette definitely works in your favour, as does avoiding any breaks across the body (for example by not wearing a bright belt over a dark dress, or by not wearing separates). Think three quarter length fitted coats, narrow trousers or straight trousers. Wide cropped trousers really aren't your best friend BUT having said alllll of that, if you love a vibrantly printed maxi skirt with lots of volume – you go for it. These are only guidelines and as we all know – “rules” are for breaking!

CHAPTER 13

Styling Things Out!

Now here's the thing. Often there can be a conflict between what you might want to wear and what you know is the most flattering for your shape. So what's a girl to do?

Easy! Wing it. And by wing it, I mean STO - "Style Things Out". You shouldn't feel forced to stick to a rigid set of rules that don't serve you well. Instead, learn how to "Style Things Out" so that you can wear whatever you choose - and whilst heels are often a good solution, this isn't just about adding heels to every outfit!

Here are 5 common issues that arise and here are the answers on how to STO!

No to skinny jeans as you've got curvy hips and heavy legs?

Yes to adding something chunkier on your feet, such as trainers, a chunky biker boot, a flatform or a wedge heel - all of which will create balance. Often people think that the answer lies in wearing a longer tunic style top to disguise their hips but that can have the effect of shortening the legs so rather than trying to disguise, instead aim to balance your hips with chunkier footwear. Or try both and see which you prefer. Alternatively another great way to STO is by wearing a shorter top with a long line cardigan, or duster coat over the top.

No to high necks as you've got a curvy bust?

Yes to creating the illusion of a v-neck by using a necklace, which draws the eye into the centre of the body and which breaks up the chest area by creating that "V" shape. The same look can be achieved with a scarf, a v-neck jumper or a v-neck coat/blazer.

No to midi skirts and dresses that cut you off at your widest point of your leg?

Yes to drawing attention towards your feet with a pretty anklet or shoes with details. A pointed shoe with a low scoop at the front will also draw the eye down and elongate

your legs. Alternatively introduce balance with a wedge trainer or platform sandal. In the winter tone your tights to your skirt, or wear a knee high boot as they are always super flattering.

No to bardot tops as you've got wide shoulders?

Yes to creating a focal point further towards the centre of the body via statement earrings, or a pendant. Use colour, scale and sparkles to achieve this.

No to pleated skirts as they don't suit your shape?

Yes to skirts with accordion pleats, in a lightweight fabric. These don't add as much volume as wider pleats in a stiffer fabric. Or choose a style that has the pleats stitched down to just underneath the tummy area.

All of the above ways of "STO" use techniques that you're already familiar with - whether that's attraction, distraction or balancing proportions. If in the future you happen to come up against something that doesn't look "quite right" just refer back to the different techniques available to you and see how you might use them to make subtle tweaks which make all the difference.

CHAPTER 14

Conclusion

In writing this book I wanted to break things down and make choosing the right shape of clothes for your figure, a stress free experience.

“Rules” are not fun and they exist to be broken! Wearing what you love and loving what you wear are so important. Life is too short not to!

The women who really look as if they have this nailed; the women who walk confidently into a room, are the ones who adopt what works for them - whether that comes down to colours, styles, shapes and trends - and leave the rest behind.

And that’s what I would love you to do. Take what works and leave the rest behind but please don’t blend in for fear of getting it wrong. Blend in because that’s your signature style, blend in because you prefer to but don’t blend in because you’re worried of what others might think. You haven’t come this far to only come this far!

Embrace your shape and enjoy your clothes. Play to your strengths and use your arsenal of styling weapons to make you feel confident, to feel alive and to thrive. You’ve got this. Just go and show the world how much!

I know that you can figure this out.

With all my love,

Beth xxx

Style is a way to say who you are without having to speak”

Rachel Zoe

Outfit Colour Combinations

Green



Green & Lilac



Forest Green & Black



Green & Pale Blue



Green & Purple



Green & Taupe



Olive & Breton Stripes



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Outfit Colour Combinations

Grey



Grey & Blush



Grey & Black



Grey & Orange



Grey & Pale Blue



Grey & Purple



Grey & Yellow



Tonal Grey



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Outfit Colour Combinations

Tan



Tan & Grape



Tan & Grey



Tan & Khaki



Tan & Navy



Tan & Pink



Tan & Purple



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Outfit Colour Combinations

Yellow



Yellow & Black



Yellow & Denim



Yellow & Green



Yellow & Grey



Yellow, Khaki & Tan



Yellow, White & Leopard



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'''

Outfit Colour Combinations

Black



Black & Metallic



Black & Purple



Black & Orange



Black & Grey



Black & Taupe



Black & Leopard



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Outfit Colour Combinations

Navy



Navy & Denim



Navy & Green



Navy, White & Tan



Navy Breton Stripes & Tan



Navy, Orange & Pink



Navy, Black & Grey



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Outfit Colour Combinations

Pink



Denim & Pink



Pink & Black



Pink & Grey



Pink & Khaki



Pink & Navy



Pink & Pink



Pink & Silver



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Outfit Colour Combinations

Red



Red & Grey



Red & Navy



Red & Pink



Red & Purple



Red & Tan



Statement Red



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Module 1 - Lesson 3

Wardrobe Checklist

TOPS	OWN	ACQUIRE	TROUSERS	OWN	ACQUIRE
Basic tops and Tees (plain, functional for layering)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Smarter for work (cigarette/tapered/straight/wide leg)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smarter Tops (breton, slogan etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More casual (cigarette/tapered/straight/wide leg)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blouse & Shirts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Utility trousers (straight or skinny)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Going out/smarter Tops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chino style trousers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
KNITWEAR			Cargo style trousers (straight or skinny)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crew neck sweater	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Printed/checked/floral straight or skinny	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
V neck sweater	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Silky track pants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polo neck sweater	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leather Leggings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chunky knit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Cropped chunky knit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SKIRTS		
Long swing knit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A-line (knee length or longer)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Short fitted cardigan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pleated - silky, pleather or velvet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fine knit cardigan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Midi	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long coatigan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maxi - fluted, tiered, straight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
JEANS			Pleather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skinny	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pencil	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Straight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Boyfriend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Mom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Cropped kick flare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Wide leg	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Flared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Dungarees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Jumpsuit/Boilersuit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			



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Wardrobe Checklist

DRESSES

Knee length shift

Shirt dress
(knee length, midi or maxi)

"Buffet Style" (short or long)

Wrap style

Sun dress

Off the shoulder

Prom style

JACKETS & BLAZERS

Trench Coat

Parka

Smarter wool coat
(pea/princess/military/crombie)

Puffa

Leather jacket

Faux Fur (long or cropped)

Blazer

Tux

Denim jacket

OWN ACQUIRE

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SWIMWEAR

Bikini (halter neck, 50's style, sporty, bra style, mix and match)

Swimming costume (bandeau, 50s style, sporty)

Sarongs and beach cover ups

Oversized shirts

OWN ACQUIRE

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SHOES

Flat shoes (ballet, loafer, t-bar, ankle tie, ankle strap, D'Orsay/flip flop/clog/brogue/monk)

Heeled shoes
(block/kitten/stiletto/cone/stacked/court/t-bar/ankle tie)

Mules(heeled or flat) slides

Boots (biker/chelsea/walking/ankle/mid-calf/knee high/wellington)

Trainers (fashion)/wedge trainers/hi tops

Sandals (wedge/flat/ankle tie/platform/espadrille/birkenstock/wooden heeled)

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ACCESSORIES

Scarves (long skinny/silk/square/large printed/blanket/chunky knit/long wool)

Gloves (mittens/wool/faux fur/leather)

Hats
(bobble/beanie/fedora/trilby/floppy straw for the summer)

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Wardrobe Checklist

JEWELLERY

OWN ACQUIRE

Necklaces (choker, pendant, dainty for layering, charm, chunky chain)

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Bracelets (charm, layered, friendship, stacked, chain, jewelled, bangles)

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Earrings (stud, dangly, statement, tasselled, ear cuffs)

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Anklet (chain, charm, beaded)

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Rings (dainty, statement, stacked, thumb, jewelled)

☐
☐

BAGS

Daytime
tote/crossbody/shopper/rucksack/bucket/
saddle/quilted/baguettes/duffel/satchel/
hobo/messenger satchel

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☐

Evening
Wristlet/clutch/cross body

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☐

SUNGLASSES

Aviator

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☐

50s style

☐
☐

Heart

☐
☐

Square

☐
☐

Mirrored

☐
☐

Oval

☐
☐


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A HOST OF EVENTS CAN LEAVE US WONDERING
WHAT TO WEAR. SO, LET ME HELP YOU WITH THIS
OUTFIT PLANNING GUIDE!



Your Event Outfit Guide & Planner

BY BETH GOODRHAM

Is there anything that you want to base your outfit around which you already own?

If so, is there anything that you need to add to it to complete it? (Maybe a new pair of shoes would update several outfits that you've previously worn, or some new accessories would add the "bling" that you're after. Perhaps a tux style blazer could add some edge to a simple jeans and heels type outfit or a bright but simple dress could be accessorised in a number of different ways)

How are you going to factor in the time to source it? (eg late night shop, late night online order, borrow from a friend, delegate some of your other tasks to others to free up a couple of hours)

What's your budget?

What 3 outfit options could you create from your existing Wardrobe?

Are you able to identify one hero piece for your outfit? Eg statement earrings, statement shoes, bright lipstick, smoky eye – something that you can use to draw attention towards a particular area?

Use the guide on the next page to plan your outfits and if you have time, lay them out and photograph them in advance so that you're super organised WAAAAAY in advance!

Beth Goodrham Stylist
www.styleguileblog.com

Outfit Planning Guide

A host of events can leave us wondering what to wear. So, let me help you with this outfit planning guide!

Take a minute to think about the following questions and use the outline on the next page to jot down your outfit ideas so that you don't end up standing in front of your wardrobe, 5 minutes before you're due to go out thinking to yourself "What am I going to wear????!"

Event (s):

Date(s):

Date by which I will choose my outfit (this could be 1 day, or 1 or 2 weeks out):

Official Dress Code (if any):

Your own Dress Code (what would you be comfortable wearing) Confidence comes from feeling comfortable in what you're wearing, so if the dress code isn't clear, adopt your own approach:

Special considerations (temperature, weather, distance you will be walking, the need for an elasticated waist band, layers, flats/heels etc)

Beth Goodrham Stylist
www.styleguileblog.com



Event Outfit Planner

EVENT:

OUTFIT:

TOP:

BOTTOM:

DRESS:

JUMPSUIT:

COAT:

SHOES:

ACCESSORIES:

OUTFIT 1:	OUTFIT 2:	OUTFIT 3:	OUTFIT 4: