

# Your Body Build

The human body comes in all kinds of shapes and sizes. No matter how much you might wish you were different, accept your body for how it is and learn to be comfortable while highlighting what you like best. Knowing your body shape and general build will help you select clothing that is flattering and comfortable.

Everyone has good features to accentuate. Try on an outfit you really like, maybe even one you usually get compliments on. Look in a full-length mirror and closely examine the outfit. What, exactly, about this outfit is working for you? Is there something about the pattern or color of the fabric that is especially flattering? Is it constructed in a way that works well with your body shape?

## *Proportion Is the Secret*

You have already learned to take measurements. Do so again and pay particular attention to shoulders, chest/bust, waist, and hips. Height is also part of these proportions, so measure where your hips fall in relation to your overall height. No matter what size you are, you can have any body shape. Selecting clothes that work for you is not about weight as much as it is about proportion.

## *Four Basic Shapes*

There are many body shapes. Four basic ones are described here.

- **Inverted Triangle:** Shoulders or chest/bust are larger than your hips.

Style strategy: Balance broad shoulders with fitted tops and jackets that flare out at the bottom. Use lines that emphasize your hips. Boot cut or slightly flared pants might work well.



- **Triangle or Pear:** Hips are wider than your shoulders.

Style strategy: Emphasize your smaller top. Use lines that appear to broaden the upper part of your figure, such as a yoke or off-the-shoulder top. Clothes with an empire waist might be a good choice.



- Hourglass: Shoulders and hips are about the same size with a very defined waistline.

Style strategy: Emphasize your smaller waist with clothes that fit your waist and flare out away from your body. Accentuate your waist with wrap dresses and belts. Traditional, tailored clothing usually works well.



- Rectangle: Shoulders, chest/bust, and hips are about the same size, with little or no defined waistline.

Style strategy: Create curves with scoop neck tops or with separates that add interest and break up the rectangle. Asymmetrical construction, belted waists, and other embellishments add interest to tops and bottoms.



In general, you can change the appearance of your height with tops and jackets that break closer to your vertical midpoint of your height, instead of at your actual waist or hip. For example, a person with a long torso might wear a jacket slightly above their hips to give the appearance of a longer leg. Someone who is short might want to avoid long jackets and dresses that minimize the appearance of leg length.

Color and texture are other design tools. Use dark, subdued colors and dull textures for areas to deemphasize, and bright colors and textures for those to highlight.

Put your measurements and a calculator to work by doing the math in the online article [The Foolproof Way to Find Out Your Real Body Type](https://www.whowhatwear.com/how-to-find-body-shape-calculator) at [whowhatwear.com/how-to-find-body-shape-calculator](https://www.whowhatwear.com/how-to-find-body-shape-calculator).

## *Be Yourself*

The most important element in your appearance is being comfortable with it yourself. Look in a mirror, experiment with choices, and select the ones you like.

### *Sources*

Collins, Kat. "The Foolproof Way to Find Out Your Real Body Type," *Who What Wear*, October 11, 2019, <https://www.whowhatwear.com/how-to-find-body-shape-calculator>.

Scully, Simone. "What Are the Most Common Body Shapes?" *Healthline*, n.d., <https://www.healthline.com/health/women-body-shapes>