

HOW TO DRESS YOUR BODY TYPE



Why is it that Hollywood starlets always look fabulous? Is it because they all have perfect bodies? No!! It's because they (or their stylists!) understand their body types and dress for them.

by Illysia Neumann-Loreck

There are 5 different body types:

- X (Hourglass)
- I (Rectangle)
- T (Broad shoulders)
- A (Pear)
- O (Round)

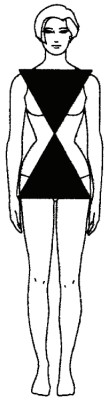
Looking good in clothing does not have a lot to do with whether or not you have a great body. Claudia Schiffer, the Bridget Bardot look-alike supermodel from the 80s, has VERY flabby knees, and she is knock-kneed. You would never know that by looking at her magazine spreads because the fashion stylists knew how to dress her, and the photographers knew which angles worked best for her.

Everyone has flaws and areas of concern. You need to be your own fashion stylist and dress for your figure type, so that what you wear is flattering on you. It's as easy as ABC: Accentuate, Balance and Conceal. For example, I am an "I." If I wear a wrap dress, it makes me look like I haven't hit puberty yet because it highlights the fact that I don't have any curves. When a curvy girl wears a wrap dress though, it looks fab because it accentuates her curves in all the right places.

It isn't very difficult to find out your body type. It requires taking three measurements: your shoulders, waist and hips. To do so, you will need newspaper or wrapping paper, painting tape (so you don't damage your walls) and a pencil. Enlist someone to help you with this. You will want to wear tight fitting clothing – a bathing suit works best but anything that isn't loose will do. Tape pieces of newspaper or wrapping paper (white side facing out) together

to make a rectangle that will go from your neck to your bottom. It should be wider than the widest part of you. Tape the paper to the wall. The height should be from your neck to your bottom. Stand against the paper, and ask your friend to mark a good-sized dot on each corner of your shoulder, where your shoulder blade ends. Then, he/she should mark dots on each side of your waist – the narrowest part of your mid-section. Lastly, lift your leg so your thigh is parallel with the ground, and feel for a bump where your leg meets your hip. That is your hipbone. Mark dots on each side where your hipbone is.

Now come away from the wall, and draw a line from the left shoulder dot to the waist dot to the hip dot over to the other side and back up ending at the first shoulder so all the dots are connected. If your hips and shoulders are balanced and your waist nips in, you are an "X." If your shoulders are wider than your hips, you are a "T." If your hips are wider than your shoulders, you are an "A." If you're shoulders and hips are balanced and you have fullness in your mid-section, you are an "O." Last, but not least, if your shoulders and hips are balanced and you have a small bust and bottom, you are an "I." Now, turn the pages to find out what you should and shouldn't be wearing for your body type ...



"X" HOURLGLASS

GOAL

Show off what you've got

LOOK FOR

- clothes that define your waist and figure
- fitted jackets with waist definition
- shaped, crossover or wrap tops
- tops that nip in at the waist and flow away from the body
- jeans cut for women
- dresses with cinching at waist or belt
- single-breasted jackets and coats
- wrap dresses
- shirts with princess (vertical) seams
- pants with wide or bootleg bottoms

AVOID

- wearing clothes that hide body shape
- boxy jackets
- straight tunics
- men's shirts
- baggy clothes
- too much layering
- a lot of detail on the pockets of pants
- skinny jeans or jeggings

Do



Sofia Vergara



Gwyneth Paltrow



"|" RECTANGLE

GOAL

Create curves

LOOK FOR

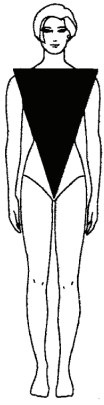
- bottoms that highlight hips and behind
- tops that emphasize waist
- texture and layering
- jackets with set-in waist, with details or pockets
- tops with details, patterns and layers
- A-line, pleated or paneled skirt
- flowy fabric, curvy cut or ruffles to soften angles
- styles that lend an illusion of a waist or bypass it altogether
- any type of jeans including jeggings or skinny jeans

AVOID

- large, gathered skirts
- close fitting garments
- low rise pants; a higher rise will give the illusion of a waist



Do →



"T" BROAD SHOULDERS

GOAL

Balance shoulders and hips

LOOK FOR

- minimum detail at shoulder
- straight lines
- uncluttered silhouette
- constructed jackets
- tailored skirts
- shift dresses
- crisp fabrics
- add dimension to hips with pockets, layering, etc.
- full or flared pants
- deep v- or scoop-neck top
- sleeveless or halter tops
- diagonal line at shoulder

AVOID

- frills and flounces
- tiered skirts
- epaulettes
(ornamental shoulder
decoration typical
of military style)

Do



Elle Macpherson



Beyoncé



"A"
PEAR

GOAL

Balance shoulders and hips

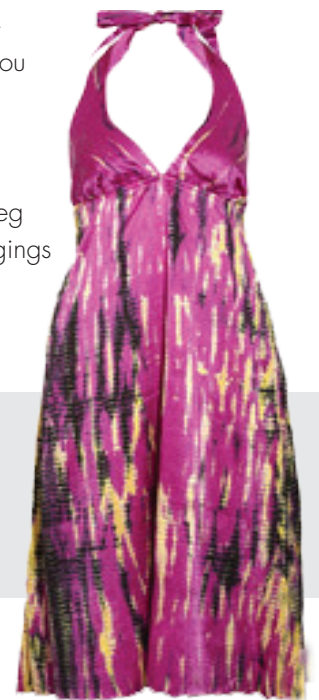
LOOK FOR

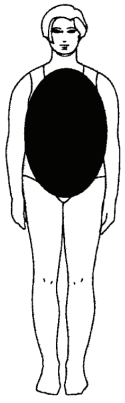
- jackets with details
- tops with patterns or horizontal stripes
- twin sets
- wide collar coats
- fluid fabrics on the bottom
- textured fabrics on top
- simple skirts with bias cut (fabric is cut on the diagonal for better flowiness), or long length
- plain front pants with side zip and bootleg or flared bottom
- boat neck tops
- focal point above the waist
- create volume on top through flowy tops

AVOID

- jackets that finish at the widest part of you
- straight skirts
- details on bottoms
- tight-fitting tops
- pant with tapered leg
- skinny jeans or jeggings

Do →





"O"
ROUND

GOAL

Create some structure

LOOK FOR

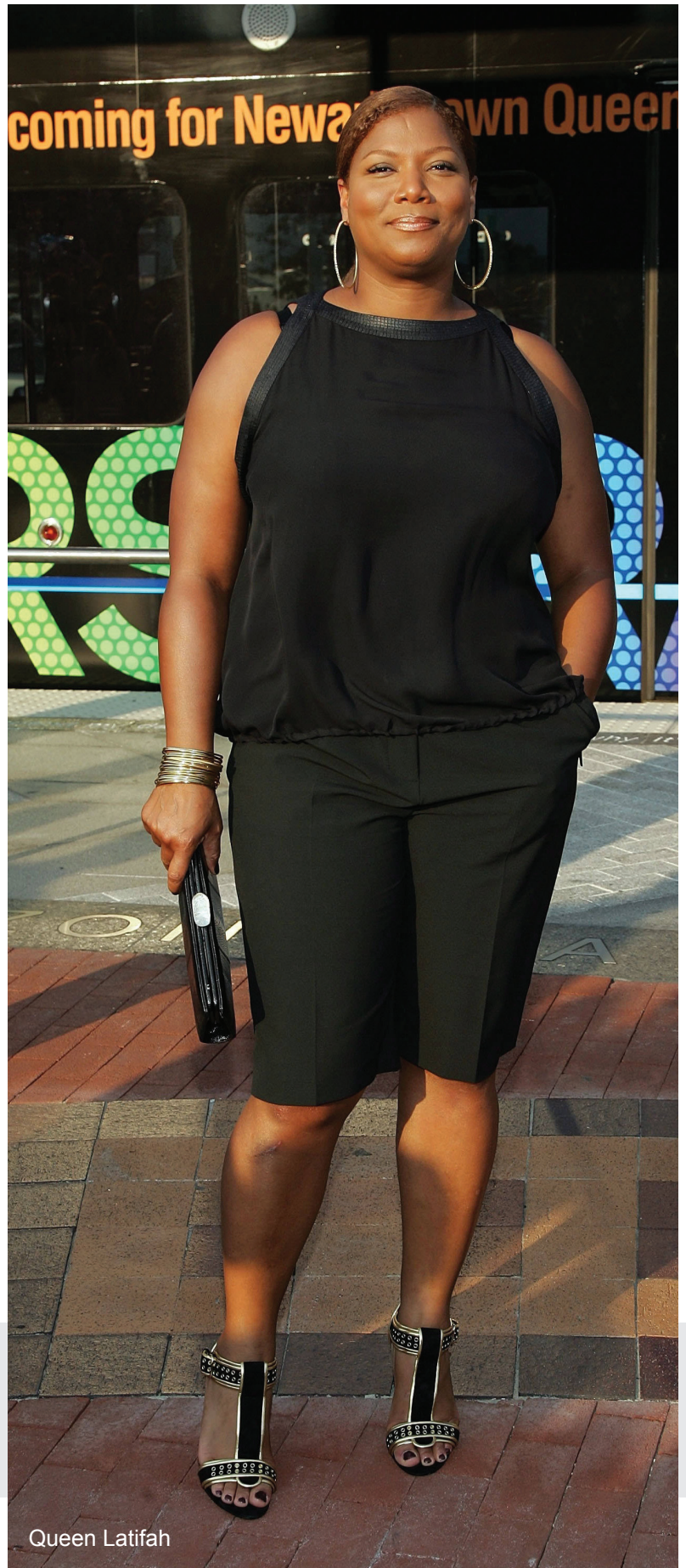
- soft fabrics and straight lines
- cardigan style jackets
- collarless jackets, pleated pants or details around mid-section
- v-shaped necklines
- drawstring trousers
- wrap skirts
- a-line dresses
- pants and skirts should skim over mid-section
- tops should fall just below waist or past bottom

AVOID

- stiff fabrics
- pockets
- angular details like lapels
- detailed, set-in waist and belt
- fitted tops



Do →



Queen Latifah