

ELEGANCE FOR PLUS SIZE BODIES

People who are plus size often feel that they simply cannot look good. Good news: this is not true. While it can be difficult to find something fitting when you are larger than the average sizes, it is definitely possible to put together outfits that look fabulous every time, whether you are a man or a woman.

Being plus size is not a fashion deterrent. You can look trendy, classy and stylish if you know how to fit your clothes correctly and choose the right colour combinations to highlight your natural skin tones. Let's review some basics:

Start With a Strong Foundation

No matter what your outfit, be sure to start with figure-enhancing foundation garments. Slips, bras, pantyhose, and even a comfortable shaper can make a huge difference. You want smooth lines underneath your clothing so that the eye is not distracted by a bulky undergarment pushing through.

Make It Fit

There is a silly myth that larger individuals should wear loose-fitting clothes, but that is actually not a good idea. Both overly tight clothes and over-sized garments will only make you look bigger. The secret is a perfect fit. Watch out for styles that add bulk, such as cargo pants, heavy knits, multiple pockets. If you are a technology lover, carry your numerous gadgets in a nice messenger bag or a high quality briefcase rather than filling up your pockets, which will only add volume to your silhouette. A nice fitted shirt and pants will always make you look much thinner than a baggy sweater.

Darker Colours Are Slimming

Light shades will attract the eye while darker shades will detract attention. Bright colours will make you look larger. However, you don't have to dismiss them – balance them with a darker colour. Black, navy blue and burgundy are all very classy options that will make your clothes look better on your body. Add some darker neutrals to your wardrobe to help you look great. If you are most heavy in the lower part of your body, use your darker colours from the waist down. If you have thin legs and a large torso, wear the darker colours in the upper part of your body. Wear colours that highlight your natural complexion near your face.

Lines & Patterns Should Be Proportionate

Have you ever seen a plus size woman in a dress with a tiny print all over it? It usually results in making her look far larger than she actually is. Much like a petite woman's body would be overwhelmed by a large print, small prints are not usually suitable for larger individuals. Sometimes a small print combined with a bold, larger coloured stripe can look great. Evaluate each print option individually knowing that the smaller the print the bigger you will look.

Opt for vertical lines, whether in the print, knit or confection of the garment to visually lengthen your figure. However, limit the width of the stripes to avoid a buffoon look. Avoid any pattern that will cause stretch distortion at the midriff level.

Jackets & Shirts

In order to button the jacket or shirt around the midriff, you may have to buy a size or two bigger than you normally would choose. This often means that your shoulder line will be too low and that the arm of the sleeve will be too large, which will make you look even heavier than you actually are. Get a good tailor to fit it correctly.

Keep Accessories Proportional

What you use to enhance your wardrobe counts too. Everything from earrings and necklaces, to belts, scarves and handbags should be scaled to your size. A tiny clutch or delicate chain will only serve to make you appear larger than you are. Make sure your jewelry and other accessories are proportionate to your size for the best results. Do not hesitate to wear bold statement pieces. Leave the dainty earrings to the petite ladies – on you they will look out of place. You can also attract the eye away from the heaviest part of your body with a stunning pair of glasses, a trendy hat for the outdoors, a colourful scarf with a dark jacket, or a nice tie if you wear a suit. It will not only upgrade your style, it will become the focal point of attention.

Make sure you also choose clothing that makes you feel good and that you are comfortable wearing. No one looks good when they feel uncomfortable, the confidence you display when you feel at ease will shine through and help enhance any outfit.

Finally, don't be too conscious about your size. A confident, pleasant personality will make a much stronger impact than your extra number of kilos. And if you want to adopt a new lifestyle that will make you slim down, give yourself some attainable goals. Once you start losing the weight, make the necessary adjustments to your wardrobe so that your clothes always fit properly. That is the fundamental root of elegance.

Kathleen Gran is a certified Image Consultant and associate member of the Association of Image Consultants International. She trained with one of the select few Certified Image Masters in the world. She is also certified by Reach Communications Consulting, Inc. in the 360Reach Personal Brand Assessment. Kathleen's 10 year experience in corporate management and training positions, early career positions as special event and marketing project coordinator, combined to her passion for the impact of people's image on others have led to her career in image coaching. She helps people discover their authentic image and believe in their personal power.

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