



MAXIMIZING THE MAINFRAME

LEGS

If your legs are long, you have more options for wearing different skirt lengths, pleated skirts, border prints, flat shoes, or shoes that are bright and draw attention to the feet.

If your legs are short, it will be best to coordinate the color of skirt, hosiery, and shoes for a long unbroken line. The same is true for coordinating the color of pants, socks, and shoes in casual clothes. Boots add length to legs as long as they are covered with a skirt hem or pant hem. Short boots add horizontal lines across the legs that seem to cut the length of your legs at the top of the boot. People with short legs should avoid full wide pants and ankle strap shoes.

SHOULDERS

Wearing bulky fabrics and layers can widen the appearance of the shoulders. Horizontal stripes along with dropped shoulder lines give additional width to the shoulder area. If a man's shoulders are narrow, a wide horizontal striped rugby shirt with dropped shoulders is a great look. Adding shoulder pads can also add width to the shoulders.

BUSTLINE/ CHEST

If you have a small bust/chest, you can wear fuzzy, bulky fabrics on top. Horizontal lines, bright colors, and blousey styles add fullness, as do pleats and gathers. Large busts/chests are most flattered with thin layers and lightweight fabrics. Shoulder pads may or may not help to balance a large bust/chest. Avoid accessories (necklaces, scarves, ties, etc.) that end right at the fullest part of the bustline/chestline, or light horizontal stripes that fall on the fullest part of the bust/chest.

HIPS

Darker colors give a slimming effect to large hips. A jacket provides good balance for wide hips; choose one that ends above or below the hipline rather than right at the hipline. For slim hips, you can make your contour appear more substantial with thick textures, plaids, pleated skirts, and pant styles.

OVERSIZED FASHIONS

Wearing oversized clothes is fine in small doses. Balance a full or blousey top, shirt, or roomy jacket with a narrow skirt or pants; elongate your lower body by wearing hosiery/socks and shoes that match the skirt or pants. Wearing an oversized sweatshirt or sweater with pleated, baggy oversized pants will make you appear larger, possibly adding unwanted inches.



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SMALLER PERSONS

People who are slight of build will appear bulkier (larger) by wearing thick textures, double-breasted jackets, and pleated pants or shorts.

STRIPES

Even horizontal stripes can be worn by larger sizes if you stick to narrow or medium stripes in low contrast colors. For example, a combination of two lighter shades or two darker shades of stripes will draw less attention than a black-and-white stripe combination. A bolder stripe can help if you want to create an illusion of increased size at the bust or shoulder line.

BIG PRINTS

If you know how to wear them, big prints are great. A good rule of thumb is to keep the print about the size of your hand, and the colors soft without a lot of sharp contrast. Big patterns work better on a dress or two-piece outfit with more fabric surface than on small items like a shirt or scarf. All patterns and stripes should be in proportion to your body size.

LINES

Diagonal lines go across your body at an angle. The more vertical a diagonal line is, the taller and slimmer you will look. The more horizontal the angle is, the wider you will look.

Curved lines are very soft and may enhance some of your best features. However, if you want to de-emphasize unwanted curves in your body contour, you need to be aware that repeating a shape will emphasize it. For example, a square neckline will emphasize a square face.

Horizontal lines are formed by a hemline or waistline. Their position can change the visual proportions of your body. You can create illusions of height or cut height with the placement of these lines—watch them closely.

Vertical lines are formed by seamlines and opening edges. They lead the eye up and down, emphasizing height. Vertical illusions tend to make one look taller and, in turn, thinner. The more vertical lines there are in a garment or outfit, the more this illusion exists.