

Do you think size matters? Wrong; shape does

Deborah Burnham is a professional stylist running her own consultancy, specialising in body shape and colour analysis. Her aim is to bring out the best in women by creating looks that enhance their shape, colouring and, most importantly, confidence. During her time at the prestigious London College of Style, she gained experience with some of the world's top styling teams, working with Florence Welch (of The Machine fame) and Naomie Harris. She has subsequently authored a maternity style chapter for The Nest Planner, a guide for expectant parents, and delivered corporate webinars on the power of style.

First things first...what is style?

Style is a form of self-expression; it's personal; it's unique; there's no herd to follow; no rules – style comes from within.

Understanding your body shape is *the* most important starting point...

Whilst there are no rules when it comes to style, there are basics. Break the rules, ignore the fads, but nail the basics. And the first basic is body shape. Size doesn't matter, shape does.

Many mums find their shape changes after pregnancy and are looking for different cuts and styles as a result. But it can be overwhelming to know where to begin. So, you'll be relieved to hear that dressing for your body shape is super simple. It's all about proportion. Few people have a naturally proportioned shape, so it's about creating the illusion of a proportioned silhouette by highlighting your assets and diverting attention from the areas you're less confident with. It's all a trick of the eye – it really is as simple as that!

What does this mean in practice?

Consider which areas of your body you want to draw the eye to and accentuate. Whether that be your waist, legs or shoulders, that's where we direct all the attention. How? By simply throwing colour, pattern, embellishment, stitching detail or accessories at them – they do all the work to send the eye to the areas we want to. And as for those areas you have less love for? They'll be a thing of the past as your eye will be directed away from them!





Let's look at some examples...

Do you typically wear the same size on your top and bottom?

As you're in proportion, play around with cuts, pattern and colour to your hearts' content. If you wish to create the illusion of curves, then mix up high necklines, dropped waists, vibrant patterns, layering and varying hemlines. Or if you're looking to accentuate curves, stick to a great close fit and cinch that waist.

Do you typically wear a larger size on your lower half?

Balance your curvaceous hip line by directing all the attention to your more petite upper half to create proportion – play with colour and pattern above the waist, turn to structured shoulders to add width, dabble with statement jewellery to lift the eye, and accentuate your waist to the max with a belt.

Do you typically wear a larger size on your upper half?

You guessed it, we want to balance your more curvaceous upper half by sending the eye below the waist to create proportion – colour and pattern, interesting hemlines, or a fabulous pair of shoes will achieve this in an instant. For those who lack a waistline, long-line layers create a streamlined effect; or add more shape and structure below the waist if you want to highlight your waist.



What it all comes down to is understanding whether you're in proportion or need to create the illusion of proportion...and which tools in your wardrobe you want to use to send the eye where you want to!

Objectivity isn't always possible when it comes to our own bodies - it can be hugely beneficial to draw on an expert eye! Whether you're wanting to reinvent your wardrobe for motherhood, hit refresh on your working from home wardrobe, or find simple tweaks to get you out of a style rut, Deborah will make sure you walk away not just beautifully dressed, but armed with the knowledge to spot the cuts and colours that work for you, and the confidence to own your style. She believes Personal Styling is a powerful tool that should be available to everyone, which is why she keeps her services affordable and offers evening and weekend appointments to fit any schedule.

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