

WHAT IS MY BODY TYPE?

There are four basic figure shapes for women. Knowing your figure type helps you select clothing that will accentuate your best features and minimize areas that you want to de-emphasize.

HOURGLASS



Pascal Le Segretain/Getty Images

A woman with an hourglass shape is equally balanced on top and bottom; that is, her bust measurement and hip measurement are about the same. Another characteristic of this figure type is a defined waistline. When a woman has an hourglass figure, the difference between the bust and/or hip measurement and the waist measurement is usually ten inches or more.

Considered the ideal figure type, the hourglass shape is the figure type to keep in mind when considering clothing options. When you create the illusion of an hourglass shape if you have one of the other figure types, you'll also succeed in emphasizing the areas you want to emphasize and de-emphasizing the others.

Pictured: Salma Hayek

TRIANGLE



Amy Susaman/Getty Images

Women who have triangle-shaped figures have proportionally smaller busts and/or narrower shoulders and larger hips and/or thighs when compared to women who have hourglass figures. Also known as a pear-shaped figure, the triangle-shaped figure is the most common figure type for women.

Dressing for a triangle-shaped figure means selecting clothing that draws attention to the bust, creates a defined waistline, and minimizes hips and thighs.

Pictured: Rachael Ray

INVERTED TRIANGLE



Michael Buckner/Getty Images

A woman who has an inverted triangle-shaped figure has proportionally smaller hips and/or thighs and larger bust and/or wider shoulders when compared to a woman who has an hourglass figure. The inverted triangle is not a common figure type; however, with the popularity of bust enhancement by plastic surgery, it's becoming more common.

Dressing for an inverted triangle-shaped figure means selecting clothing that minimizes the bust and creates a defined waistline. Otherwise, a woman who has this figure type may look too top-heavy.

Pictured: Dolly Parton

RECTANGLE



David Livingston/Getty Images

Women who have rectangle figures have relatively equal bust and hip measurements, just as a woman who has an hourglass shape does. However, a woman with a rectangle-shaped figure doesn't have a defined waistline. There's little difference in waist measurement when compared to bust and/or hip measurements, so the rectangle shape is more or less straight up and down. A variation of this shape is sometimes called an apple when the waist measurement is larger than the bust and/or hip measurement.

The major challenge for women who have a rectangle shape is to create the illusion of a defined waistline, which will make them look more like they have an hourglass shape.

Pictured: Marissa Jaret Winokur

Source: <http://petite.about.com/od/whatpetitemeans/tp/4figureshapes.htm>