



What not to wear

Nothing is more unflattering than a too-tight jacket or suffocating waistline. Look stylish, feel comfortable with the right fit.

BY PAULA MCCOOEY

You've seen those photos in fashion magazines that zero in on problem spots — the butt, thighs or stomach — typically accompanied by a caption that screams: What not to wear.

Experts say that while the latest fashion trends are desirable, proper fit is what ultimately will get you noticed, and, more importantly, make you feel good.

The fact is unflattering clothing can make someone look shorter or heavier than they actually are. Stacy London, of TLC's *What Not To Wear*, says the key to great personal style is to find clothes that fit right and "self acceptance."

"That does not mean you have to like every part of your body," says London. "But you do have to know what you do like and don't like so you know what to emphasize and what to camouflage."

When shopping for clothes, Lisa Singer, a merchandise manager at Reitmans, recommends keeping an open mind and calling on the sales staff for help.

"Ask, 'What do you think would work for me? These are the things I want to hide and these are the things that I want to flaunt,'" says Singer, adding it's a good idea to get another perspective from someone who isn't involved in your life and who will likely be more objective.

Singer says another problem is people get stuck in a size — in their mind. So it's important to embrace the fact you can be one size on top and another on the bottom.

"I find that a lot of women have the misconception that, let's say, they are a size eight on the bot-

tom, they should be an eight on top. Women, we all come in different shapes and sizes. And I think we have to learn more about what suits us on top, what suits us on bottom, and what complements the body as a whole."

Telltale signs your clothes don't fit

1 Sagging shoulders. Shoulder seams on tops, jackets and fitted dresses should sit on the edge of your shoulder; if they extend beyond your natural shoulder line, the garment is either too big or the wrong shape for your body.

2 The ill-fitting jacket. You should be able to button up a jacket and the lapels should sit flat across your chest. If not, the jacket is not a good fit.

3 No room to move. When a garment fits properly, it's comfortable and easy to move in. Waistlines on a skirt, for example, should be just loose enough so you can turn the skirt around while you are wearing it.

4 Awkward top lengths. If your stomach is revealed when you raise your arms, your top is too short unless, of course, it's a crop-top. And longer-length tops need to fully cover hips, without pulling or fitting too snugly.

5 Classic 'muffin top.' A sign that pants are too small when your stomach hangs over the waistband. It can also mean the style is wrong for your body. If you've got curves, for example, avoid a straight fit pant and go for a curvy fit, which sits lower on the hips and will fit you at the waist.



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If you're a size eight on top, it doesn't mean you should wear a size eight on the bottom. Buy to fit your body.

With fitted dresses, like the Safari-style shirt dress (\$56) from Reitmans, shoulder seams should not extend beyond your natural shoulder line.