



Your Weekly Wardrobe Jazz

Body Shapes: Which One(s) Are You

Curvy Angular Muscular
And maybe... Fleshy



WARNING! I'm going to start out by saying that aging with style is not for sissies. The descriptions below aren't there to frighten you but to help you understand that it isn't just you! All bodies age and most of them do so in ways we aren't so thrilled about. So, brave girl, read on to find your shape. Then you can dress it so that you can **AGAIN** love getting dressed every day!

If you are wondering how to determine your body shape, you aren't alone. (First, open the [WardrobeJazz Face Shape and Body Type Chart](#) and refer to it as you read.) Body shapes can be tricky to define, especially for women whose body shape has changed over the years. You may have started out all angles, and now you are partly curvy... or all curves. Maybe you were once a star athlete and still have the muscular body to prove it, or not. Here then, is a guide to types of body shapes and how to identify yours so that you can use the Body Shapes Guide. And remember you may be all one body shape or one shape above the waist and another shape below. Or your torso is one shape, and your legs are another. This is tricky because part of your body may change over the years and part of it retain the shape you have always had. That said, #1 below will likely still apply, gravity never gives up.

First Some Observations

#1) As we age, our skin gets lax and this shows up as sagging cheeks, jowls, and neck, rolls around the middle, a lower (and squishier) butt, and "knee pads", the pads of fat that appear above your kneecaps. This happens to all of us, even if you are working out regularly and eat sensibly, your skin will, earlier or later, start to slacken, sorry...

Great style has no size, age, or price tag!



#2) Many women start gaining weight in their forties due to menopause or thyroid issues, or other conditions. Bodies gain weight in different areas, some gain all over and keep the general shape they had when younger. Some gain the bustline they wished for as teenagers (life has a strange sense of humor). Some gain only below the waist. Others gain only around the waist and belly. And it's not so much gaining fat per se, it's inflammation and the increased fluid in your tissues that makes for feeling squishy. Sigh...

#3) Metabolism naturally slows down as we age. You are no longer naturally building a body as you were through your twenties, or even maintaining easily as you could in your thirties. After forty, you must make the body keep building muscle to maintain metabolism and adjusting your diet when you aren't using as many calories as you once needed. This condition catches up with most of us but a lucky few keep the metabolism of a 15-year-old all their lives. Wowsers, I can only dream!

#4) Fleshy: The dictionary defines fleshy as having too much fat or even being plump or obese. My observation is that this was written by young men who do not understand how a woman's body ages. Fleshy simply means that your body has a softness to it, and yes, some fat under the skin. It can make you look very feminine, luscious even! Any of the Body Shapes can become Fleshy. If/when #1/#2/#3 above occur, you could gain girth from fat and from inflammation. Inflammation feels squishy and believe me I am speaking from personal knowledge and from years of working with women of every conceivable body shape or combination of shapes.

Body Shapes Defined

Curvy: When you look at your body you see curves. From the roundness of your shoulders to the roundness of your derriere, thighs, and calves, you have curves. Often you have a defined waist, but some curvy girls are just the opposite and have a full waist. Sometimes, but not always, this body type includes a full bust. Your genetics won't have you making bulky athletic muscles or getting that model-type slim body no matter how much you work out. You probably have had to watch your weight all your life. #2 and #3 can make that issue even more complex when keeping your curves under control is definitely not just about counting calories or working out.

Angular: Your body, no matter your age or body size: petite, average, or large frame, doesn't make bulky muscles and doesn't have much fat. You may think of yourself as bony. Shoulders and hips can be narrow, average, or wide. You may develop a belly as you age but otherwise, #1 above will be what makes you look like you have gained weight, even if the scale reads the same as ten years ago. You will likely get thicker in the middle and develop a belly if you become hypo-thyroid.

Muscular: Whether you still work out or not, your body has a toned look to it because of the muscle type your body makes. Your shape could be rectangular or hourglass. You likely weigh more than you look like you do because muscle weighs more than fat, inch for inch. Muscle takes more energy to maintain so you can usually eat more without gaining than a Curvy body. And then comes the issues of #1 and #2, or both. You still have muscles but now you have some fleshiness due to inflammation or you have stopped working out and have added some fat on top of the muscle. And muscles do get lax and smaller if you don't work out, so you can't eat as you once did without putting on fat.

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Examples Of Combination Body Shapes

Pear shapes can be Angular or Curvy above the waist, sometimes quite slender, and Curvy below with a rounded tummy and derriere.

Triangles are similar to Pears, but the difference is that the Triangle is Angular below the waist with wide hips and a flat derriere.

Rectangular shapes are often Angular or can be quite Muscular.

The Inverted Triangle can be Muscular or Curvy above the waist and angular below with slim legs and flat bottom.

People who are athletes can develop a Muscular body that specifically reflects their sport. As examples, swimmers develop their shoulders, dancers develop their legs and derriere. Pilates and yoga and walking make for longer smoother limbs and torsos. Lifting weights gives definition or at least firmness of the muscles, depending on whether your body wants to make defined muscle.

The most important part of determining your Body Shape is to look at yourself to observe, not to judge. If you are judging, you can't have judgment, you can't be objective, and therefore can't make good choices about what features to accentuate and what to ignore or give a bit of camouflage. If you are constantly judging, you miss the point of all this, which is ALWAYS started by choosing your best features and how you will accentuate them, what will you wear to show them off. Once you do that, the "problem" areas may become so insignificant as to disappear altogether. Not to mention that your sense of humor may return.

Next week I will discuss how to choose and show off your best features. Now, stop judging and start looking for the good!

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