

AMAZING ANSWERS "Hello Dolly!"

A reader writes:

How do you determine the best style to fit your body type? I am 5' 4" and a plus size. I have a small bust line but a large belly, hips, and thighs. I have a horrible time trying to find things to fit that would look great. Any suggestions where to start would be great.

Thanks,
DT

Hello Dolly! (I have always wanted to say that to someone). But all kidding aside, I assure you we can put you on the road to style savvy. First and foremost, we have to talk about proportions. You are heavier on the lower 2/3 of your body, so that leaves us with an imbalance. In fashionable dressing it's all about **BALANCING**. This means that we need to make your figure more prominent in the upper part of your body and minimize attention to the bottom.

You mentioned that you have a small bust line, so we want to draw attention to this by using one of today's enduring styles—the empire waist. This style will nip you in under the bust and create focus where you are the smallest. Look for tops with a v-neck and fluttery sleeves. These features will also draw attention your upper body. You may even consider shoulder pads. Just make sure they aren't too 80s looking. Keep in mind that the cut of the top must be an A-line. In other words, it should skim the body without adding unwanted bulk. In dresses or tops this is an appealing style for a woman of any size and shape, but especially for you.

Another suggestion to help balance your figure is monochromatic dressing. Pair a black or taupe A-line skirt with similar toned hosiery. Add simple round-toed pumps with 3 inch heels to match. Heels will definitely give you a longer, leaner look. Top this with a v-neck top, blouse or sweater in a corresponding tone to continue our vertical line. Your color punch comes from a scarf, necklace or earrings. You could also layer a colorful blouse under the sweater, as long as it doesn't add bulk. This will help to bring the eye up away from your problem area.

If you don't wear heels or skirts, I would go for full leg, semi tailored slacks with side pockets. To add height wear the slacks with a wedge shoe. On top try a buttoned-down tailored blouse, but don't tuck it in. Layer a long sleeveless sweater vest over it to continue the vertical line, and accessorize like crazy!

When it comes to fabrics, you want them to skim your body, not cling to it. If the fabric clings— out it goes! For heavier



folks, the secret to slimmer dressing is the fabric. Stay away from jersey knits, and try to find fabrics that do contain some polyester or other synthetic so that they retain their shape.

Let's recap:

- All about balance
- Draw attention to your bust line or above
- Think monochromatic
- Find fabrics that skim, but don't cling

With these simple rules, and the Goodwill Store & Donation Centers, you can load up a cart and start adopting a new style attitude tomorrow for only pennies on the dollar. So what are you waiting for Dolly? Get going to the store near you and get started!

