

The Top 5 Secrets Every Full-Figured Woman Needs to Know About Lingerie

Size does matter! According to a recent article in the Washington Post, the sale of plus-sized apparel rose by more than 13% last year. The average American woman now wears a size 14, and companies such as Dove and Nike have taken notice. They are among the first national brands to recently launch major ad campaigns designed to embrace the beauty that comes from having ample cleavage and generous thighs.

At long last, full-figured women have finally come into their own. They can celebrate their shape with more clothing options now than ever before, and lingerie has become one of the hottest trends on the fashion map. You've seen it on *Desperate Housewives*, with the female executive who wears nothing but lacy camisoles underneath her blazer. Would you be able to pull off the same look? Although every body style is different, the basic rules are the same. There is an art to choosing (and wearing) lingerie well. Knowing the secrets to a great fit will enable you to look spectacular and feel great about yourself!

1. All Curves are Not Created Equal

No body is perfect. Supermodel Elle MacPherson has said, "The breasts go first, and then the waist and then the butt. Nobody ever tells you that you get a butt when you get pregnant." We all have our flaws, but part of playing up your assets will involve downplaying the parts of your body you are least comfortable with.

If you like, take a good look in the mirror and identify what you love and don't love about your body. If you dislike your hips or waistline, you will want to draw attention to the upper part of your body. Indulge in bras designed to produce cleavage and accentuate your curves.

If you feel like your breasts are too full but you've got shapely legs, then they should become your focal point. A babydoll nightie with an empire-waist will provide support for your top while letting you flaunt what's below.

If you haven't yet found a comfort zone, indulge in a full-length satin chemise with an a-line cut and perhaps a flirty slit on the side. If you do not like your upper arms, look for a sheer or color-coordinated short robe.

The key is to draw attention away from what you do not like about your body, and place it where you feel like being noticed.

2. Everyone Needs a Little Support

The best-kept secret among celebrities and those in the know has to do with the latest lingerie weapons, which can keep even the most problematic physiques in check. Modern-day support garments minimize stomach bulge, lift and separate, and produce a smooth contour under your clothes. Best of all, innovations in fabric and design mean that the painful confinement of girdles (and other instruments of torture) are a thing of the past. Look for camisoles with built-in bra support and high-cut briefs that offer hidden tummy panels. Women with fuller, heavier breasts should make sure to look for bras that feature wide shoulder straps. If you are unsure of your bra size, the best gift you could give yourself would be to get professionally sized by someone who works in the lingerie section of a department store. Making sure that you wear the correct bra size serves not only to make you more comfortable, but it can instantly change your silhouette and may even cause you to drop a d!

ress size!

Spanx is one particular company that specializes in producing comfortable, head-to-toe support to keep your curves looking their best. Sarah Blakely, who founded the company out of her apartment, said "I bought clothes that looked amazing in a magazine or on the hanger, but in reality magnified every panty line and imperfection." Her brand of footless pantyhose offers maximum control, and even boasts the tagline, "Don't worry, we've got your butt covered!"

Seamlessbody.com is another company that specializes in supportive shape-wear designed for looks and comfort. They feature unique bodysuits that can be worn under your clothes and provide all-in-one support for your breasts, stomach and derriere. Both companies feature plus-sized versions of their products and are conveniently available online.

If you have a belly, choose high-waisted briefs over bikini cuts. Not only will they fit more comfortably, but they are great at covering any stretch marks or other flaws and will flatter your shape.

3. Less is More

When it comes to color, keep it simple. A monochromatic look will do wonders to help elongate the bodyline and slim your proportions. In other words, keep the pieces that you wear at any one time as close to the same color as possible. Which shades work best? Dark tones such as navy, burgundy, brown or black will give you a more slender appearance. Another great rule of thumb is to choose colors that flatter your complexion.

It is wise to be cautious of patterns. Some smaller, more discreet prints may add to an outfit, but larger designs have a tendency to clutter or look different when they drape over problem areas you may want to conceal. This has the unfortunate result of drawing the eye directly where you do not want it to go! If you have a personality that must express yourself with multiple colors or styles, a great way to spice up your wardrobe can come from adding on a couple of flashy, attention-getting accessories.

4. Bigger isn't Always Better

One of the biggest misconceptions that many full-figured women have is the notion that choosing larger sizes will hide unsightly bulges and ultimately make them look slimmer. In reality, a shapeless, ill-fitting piece will not define anything, either good or bad, and will make your body appear much less attractive than you would look in clothes more suited to your accurate size. It's fine to shy away from body-conscious items. Lingerie pieces should be a natural reflection of your personality. If you have a conservative personality, wearing longer gowns or adding layers to your look will enhance your beauty and allow you to feel sexy without having to bare all. Should you have a more playful, flirty nature, the sky is the limit! Plus-sized lingerie includes stunning camisoles with delicate embroidery, frilly boyshorts that provide excellent coverage while exuding a youthful, sexy vibe, and buttery soft satin chemises that feel utterly luxurious against the skin. It is always!

It's best to try on lingerie before you buy, in order to make sure you will have the best fit possible. But if you are in a time-crunch or browsing over the internet, the best bet is to stick to your true clothing size.

5. Stores are Just the Tip of the Iceberg

Did you know that many retailers who do not display clothing over size 12 or 14 often have the exact same styles in larger sizes on their websites? If you spot a piece of lingerie that you just like but it isn't in stock, try to find it online. The internet is such a good resource for plus-sized women that countless businesses have opened their virtual stores and specialize in nothing but full-figured lingerie. With a click of the mouse, you can delight in finding an elegant slip or searching anonymously for something more risqu

Author: Jacquie Barry

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