

a
common
thread

A FASHION FOR THE SOUL BOOK

JEN PRINCIPLE

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A Common Thread: A Fashion for the Soul Book

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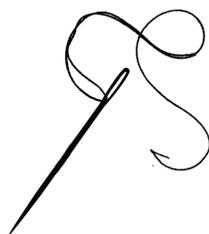
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This is a work of creative nonfiction. The events are portrayed to the best of Jen Principe's memory. While all the stories in this book are true, some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of the people involved.

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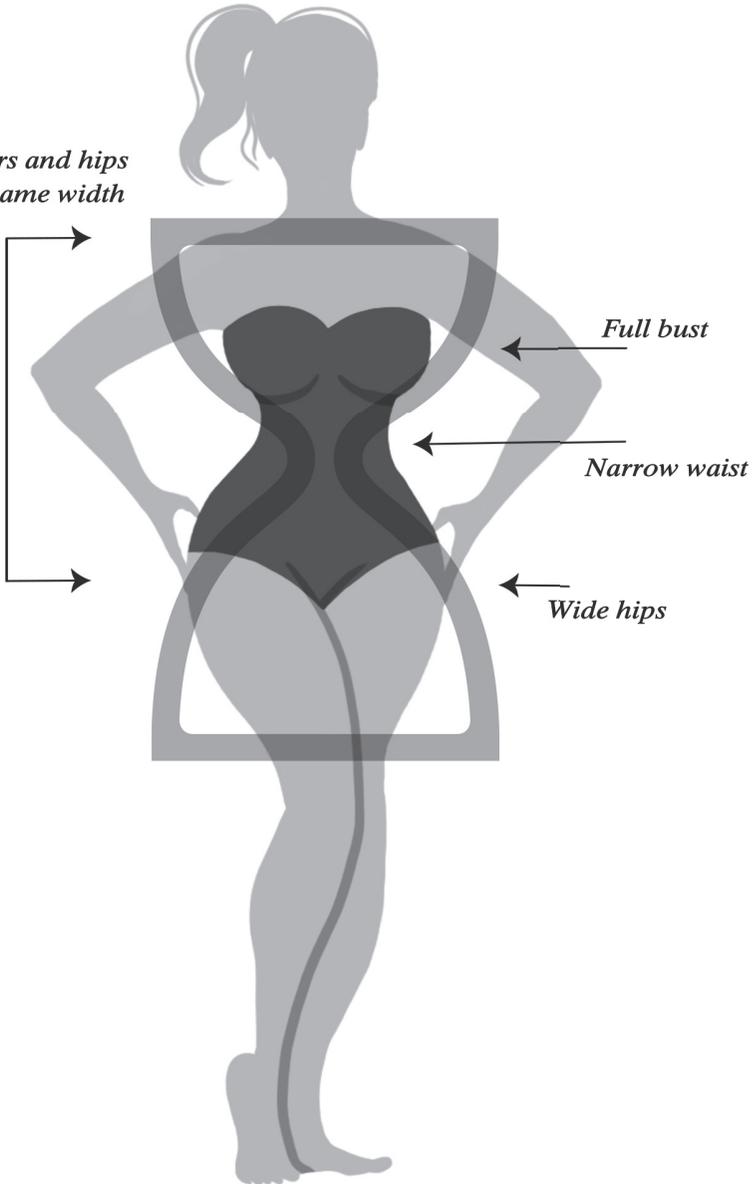


Body Types

FRIENDS AND FOES

Hourglass

*Shoulders and hips
are the same width*



The Hourglass Shape

The hourglass shape is defined by a woman's body measurements—the circumference of the bust, waist, and hips. Hourglass body shapes have a wide bust, a narrow waist, and wide hips with shoulders and hips being roughly the same width. You tend to have a short waist and round bottom. Think of the iconic Marilyn Monroe, who was known to be a size fourteen (which would be a size eight to ten today) with measurements of 35"-22"-35". Some people describe the hourglass shape as “curvy with a well-defined waist.” It's all about celebrating your waist and showing off your neckline. Focus on silhouettes that draw the eye to the slenderest part of your body. Famous hourglass shapes include Marilyn Monroe, Beyoncé, and Jennifer Lopez.

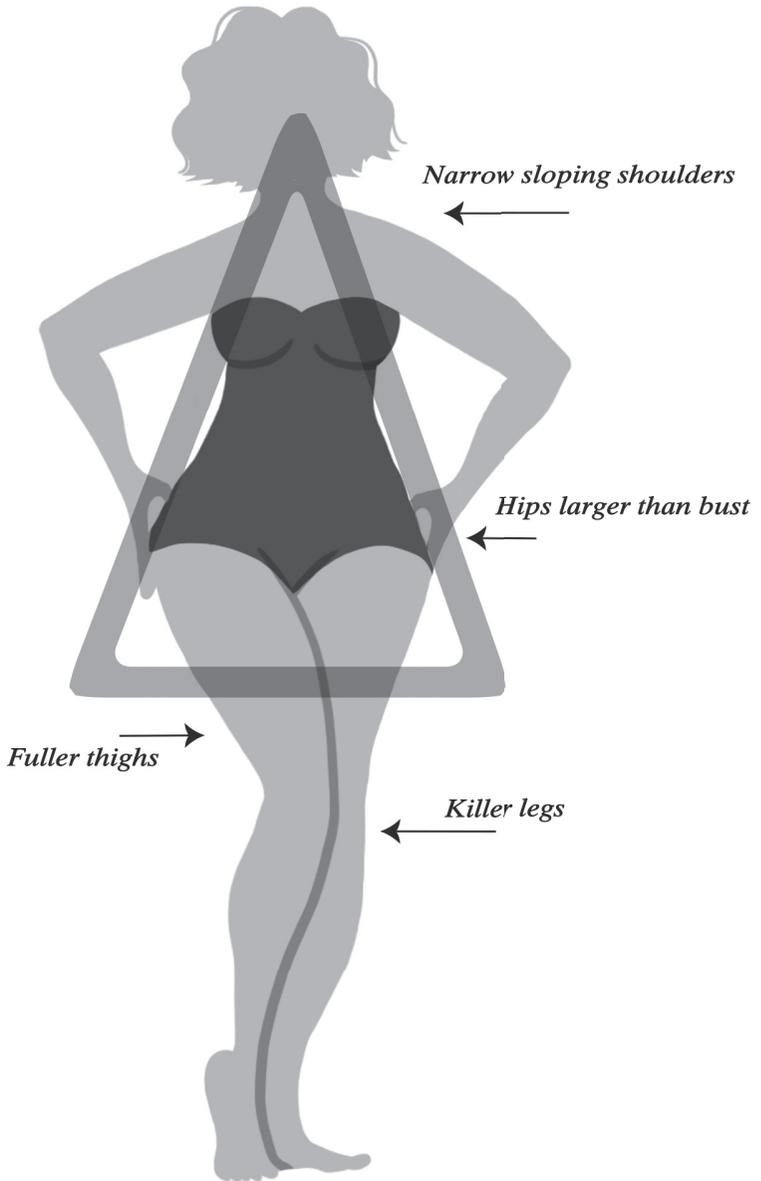
THE HOURGLASS SHAPE

STYLING TIPS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embrace the bum • Define your waist • Show off your curves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick stretchy fabrics • Avoid anything shapeless and boxy
Tops (Friend)	Tops (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitted wrap tops • Fitted V-neck or boat neck • Form-fitting jersey knits • Peplums, as these tops mirror your shape • Button-down with sleeves rolled up to where the waist hits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tunic tops (they typically stop right at the waistline) • Empire tops • Turtlenecks (they create an area around the bustline so that it appears larger) • High-neck tops (high necklines can make the chest look even fuller) • Kimono tops • Tube tops
Outerwear (Friend)	Outerwear (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trench coats, belts • Fitted blazers that cinch at the waist and flare at the hip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boxy jackets
Dresses and Skirts (Friend)	Dresses and Skirts (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap dresses are your best friends • Fit-and-flare dresses • Bodycon dresses with stretchy fabrics • High-waisted and pencil skirts (they elongate the legs; add a flounce around the bottom to balance fuller tops and jackets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loose, free-flowing fabrics • A-line dresses • Empire waist dresses • Baby doll dresses

THE HOURGLASS SHAPE

Pants and Jumpsuits (Friend)	Pants and Jumpsuits (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-waisted and narrow-waist flared jeans or trousers (they balance out the hips and create the illusion of longer legs; flaring should start from top and not from the knee) • Boot-cut jeans • Fitted jumpsuits • Full-length, fitted skinny jeans and leggings • Pro tip: See a tailor to pinch in the waist of your pants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-waisted pants (unless your stomach is very flat) • Cropped pants • Cargo pants with large pockets • Pockets that add weight to your hips
Accessories (Friend)	Accessories (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belts are your best friend! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lucky you, accessorize all you like. But keep it in proportion
Shoes (Friend)	Shoes (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed-toe pumps • Nude pumps • Pointy-toed shoes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoes with ankle straps
Proceed with Caution	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baggy clothes • Vertical stripes • Bold patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pants with large pockets on front or back • Heavy, thick fabric like corduroy, tweed, and wools • Skinny jeans (layer to camouflage with a duster or cardigan)

Triangle



The Pear Shape (or Triangle Shape)

The pear, also known as the “triangle” shape, has narrow or sloping shoulders, with hips that are larger than your bust and wider than your shoulders. You may have a round bottom, fuller thighs, and slender lower legs. The key here is to elongate your figure so that you look less bottom-heavy by drawing attention to your upper body. In the pear club: Kelly (Clarkson) Brianne, Kate Winslet, and Rihanna.

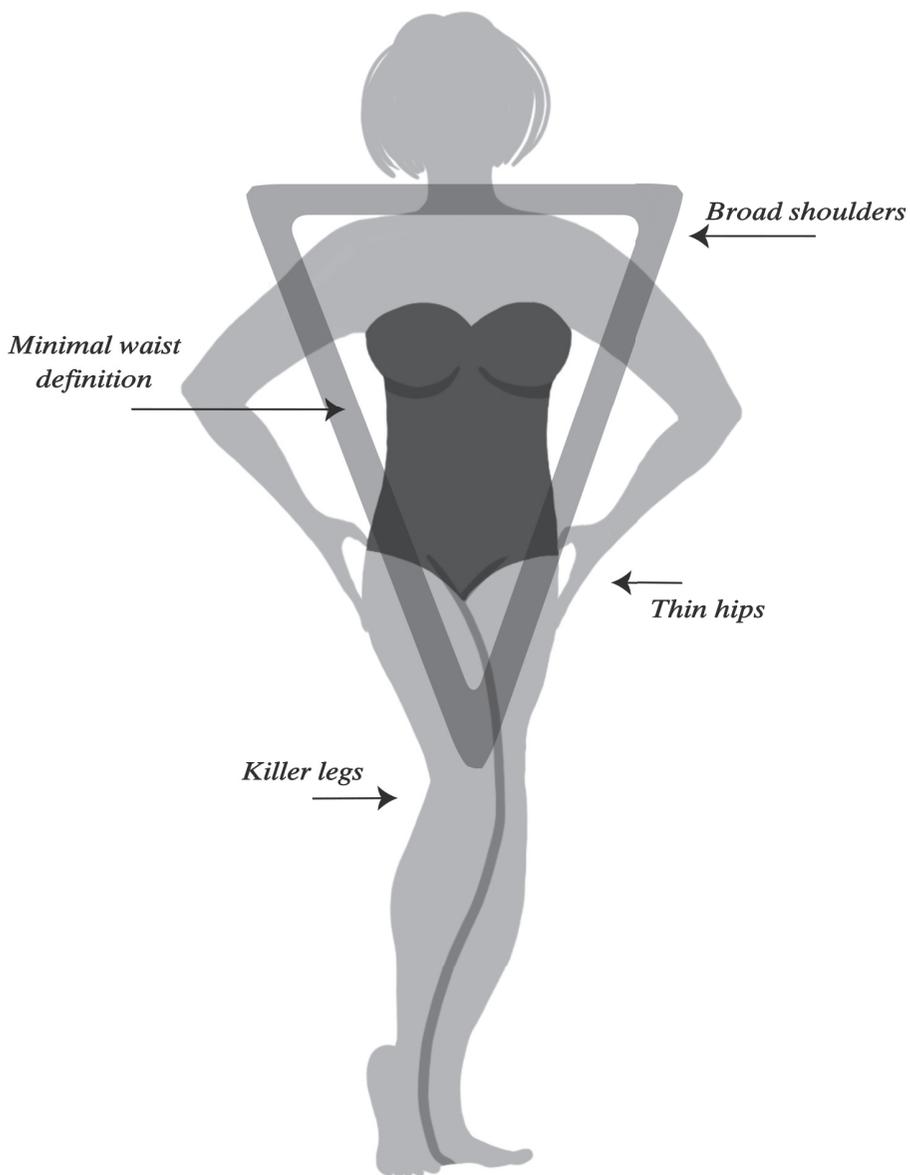
THE PEAR SHAPE

STYLING TIPS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always wear a solid or dark color on the bottom • Try bright colors or bold patterns on top • A statement necklace draws the attention upward • Never tuck in your tops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid drawing attention to your hips • Outerwear should hit above or below the hips • Horizontal stripes on top create a balancing effect
Tops (Friend)	Tops (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Button-down shirts • Tunic tops (as long as they don't cling to your belly) • Halter tops • Strapless clothes • Bright colors and patterns (this will draw attention to your upper body) • Puffed or flutter sleeves • Embellished shirts with interesting collars • Cowl necks • Tops with shoulder pads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kimono tops • Peplum tops
Outerwear (Friend)	Outerwear (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cropped jackets with upper detailed embellishments (wear a longer, loose-fitting top underneath—longer than the jacket—that hits below the hips) • Sweaters or cardigans that hit below or above the hips • Dusters • Longer jackets that are nipped in at the waist • Sweaters or jackets that hit at your widest point • Wide belts (instead, use a thin belt, worn slightly higher than your waistline in the same color as your pants or dress) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peplum-style coats, as they emphasize the hips • Straight-cut and boxy coats

THE PEAR SHAPE

Dresses and Skirts (Friend)	Dresses and Skirts (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A-line skirts and dresses • Fit-and-flare dresses • Tulip dresses • Wrap dresses • Off-the-shoulder, fit-and-flare cuts • Strapless dresses with full skirts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-waist dresses • Miniskirts (they highlight the heaviest areas) • Pencil skirt • Shift dresses • Sheath dresses • Bodycon dresses (unless off-the-shoulder or has ruche)
Pants and Jumpsuits (Friend)	Pants and Jumpsuits (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat-front slacks or jeans • Tailored straight-leg pants (avoid side pockets) • Flared jeans or pants (this draws the eye away from the hips) • Boot-cut jeans or pants • Palazzo pants with a well-defined waistband • High-waisted pants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skinny jeans or cigarette pants (if you wear either, pair with a long top that goes over your hips and an outerwear piece) • Pants that add weight to hips • Patterned pants
Accessories (Friend)	Accessories (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessories are your best friend. They draw the attention away from the hips • Scarves • Statement necklaces • Statement earrings • Brooches on lapels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be cautious of belts—keep them thin and high.
Shoes (Friend)	Shoes (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knee-length boots • Pointy-toed heels, especially nude ones that will make your legs look longer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round-toed shoes • Ankle boots • Shoes with ankle straps (but avoid shoes that cut off at the ankle, like booties; they shorten your legs)
Proceed with Caution	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White jeans can be tricky and appear to make you look heavier—camouflage your hips with a layered, mid-thigh outerwear piece, like a cardigan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid a wide belt; a thin belt will help define your waistline.

Inverted Triangle



The Inverted Triangle Shape

The inverted triangle can sometimes be confused with the apple shape. The distinguishing characteristics are broad shoulders and thin hips with no waist definition. Both body shapes may have a larger bust with killer legs. A well-toned inverted triangle is one of the most coveted body types. But it's all about balancing the upper and lower body so that "triangles" don't look top heavy or too broad. The trick is to minimize the attention to your chest and shoulders and add volume to your lower half to harmonize your silhouette. In the inverted triangle club: Cindy Crawford, Renée Zellweger, and Demi Moore.

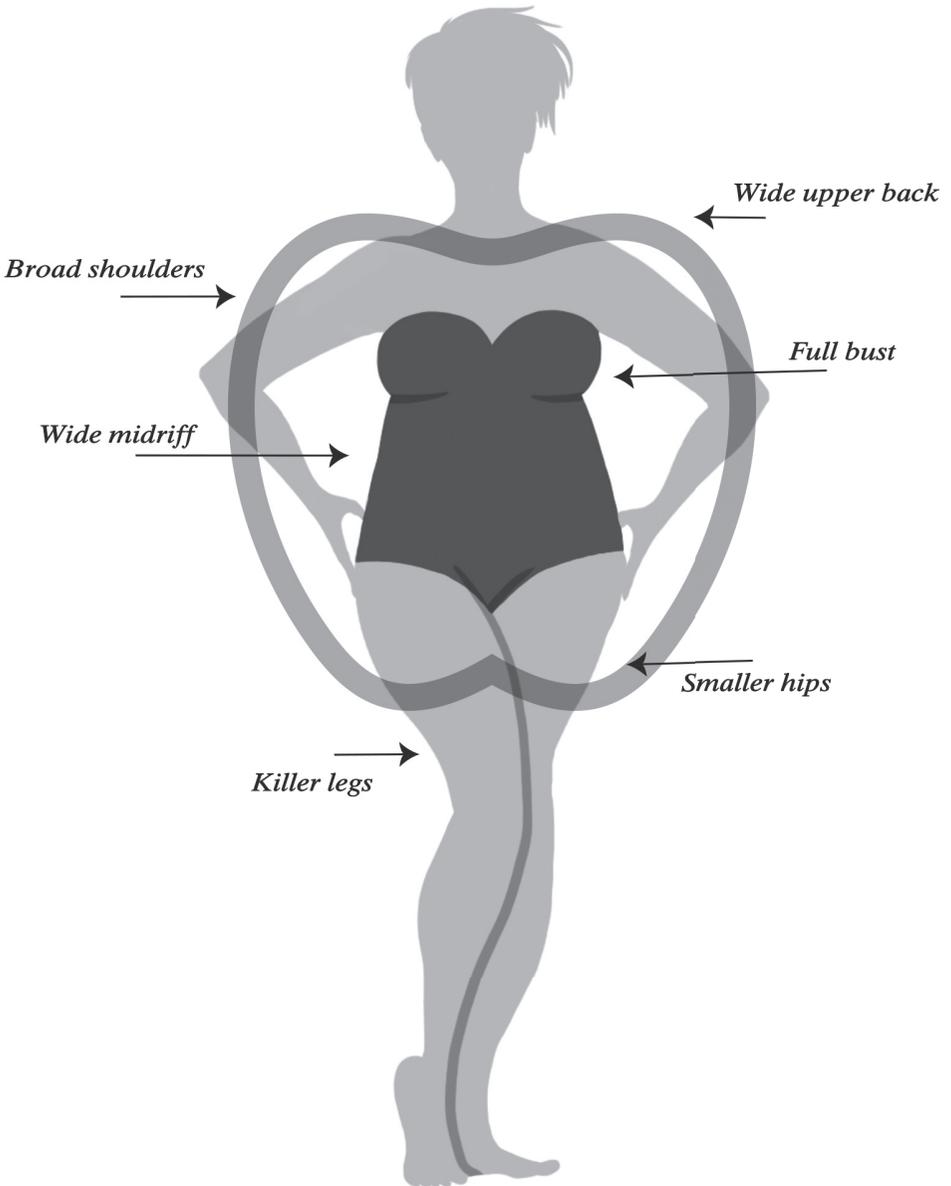
THE INVERTED TRIANGLE SHAPE

STYLING TIPS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embrace your strong shoulders (they help to create the illusion of a very small waistline) • Show off those legs! • Wear darker colors on top and lighter colors on bottom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep jewelry small on the upper half of your body to avoid drawing attention to your shoulders • Avoid shoulder pads and puffed sleeves at all costs • Keep it simple and steer clear of tops with embellishments
Tops (Friend)	Tops (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap tops • Halter tops • Crew and scoop necks • Tailored tops that tie or nip at the waist • Peplums • Asymmetrical cuts • Kimono and dolman-sleeve tops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tops with shoulder pads or flutter sleeves • Wide or plunging necklines • Spaghetti strap tops (look for ones with slightly thicker straps) • Wide, off-shoulder tops • Loud patterns • Billowing, shapeless blouses • Fitted long sleeves
Outerwear (Friend)	Outerwear (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nipped or belted at the waist • Straight and deconstructed cuts • Peplums • Jackets that extend beyond the hips • Sweaters or jackets with hip details • Wrap cardigans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double-breasted • Big collared jackets or coats with shoulder details • Jackets with shoulder pads
Dresses and Skirts (Friend)	Dresses and Skirts (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maxi and midi skirts that create volume • Tulip, box pleat, and A-line skirts • Dresses with paneled or nipped waists • Tiered, full, and pleated skirts • Shift, A-line, and pleated dresses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight, fitted dresses that don't add volume to the hips • Watch necklines and avoid embellishments that emphasize the upper body

THE INVERTED TRIANGLE SHAPE

Pants and Jumpsuits (Friend)	Pants and Jumpsuits (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palazzo pants • Baggy, boyfriend, and boot-cut jeans • Boot-cut flare jeans or trousers • Flare and wide trousers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skinny-fit jeans
Accessories (Friend)	Accessories (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large bangles and cocktail rings • Long pendant necklaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large earrings and statement necklaces
Shoes (Friend)	Shoes (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go for bold, bright, and eye-catching shoes • Wedges and block heels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are petite, avoid shoes that cut off your legs
Proceed with Caution	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide necklines • Clothing that is too fitted may create a muscular build 	

Apple



The Apple Shape

The apple shape is described as “top heavy,” meaning your weight leans more toward your upper body. Apples have a wide torso, broad shoulders, and full bust, waist, and upper back. Apple-shaped bodies tend to have thinner arms, legs, and hips and tend to gain weight in their waistlines. The key here is to balance it out, draw the attention away from your belly, and emphasize your legs. Being an apple shape does not mean that you are heavy. You can be tall and slim and still have an apple-shaped body. In the club: Jennifer Hudson and Catherine Zeta-Jones.

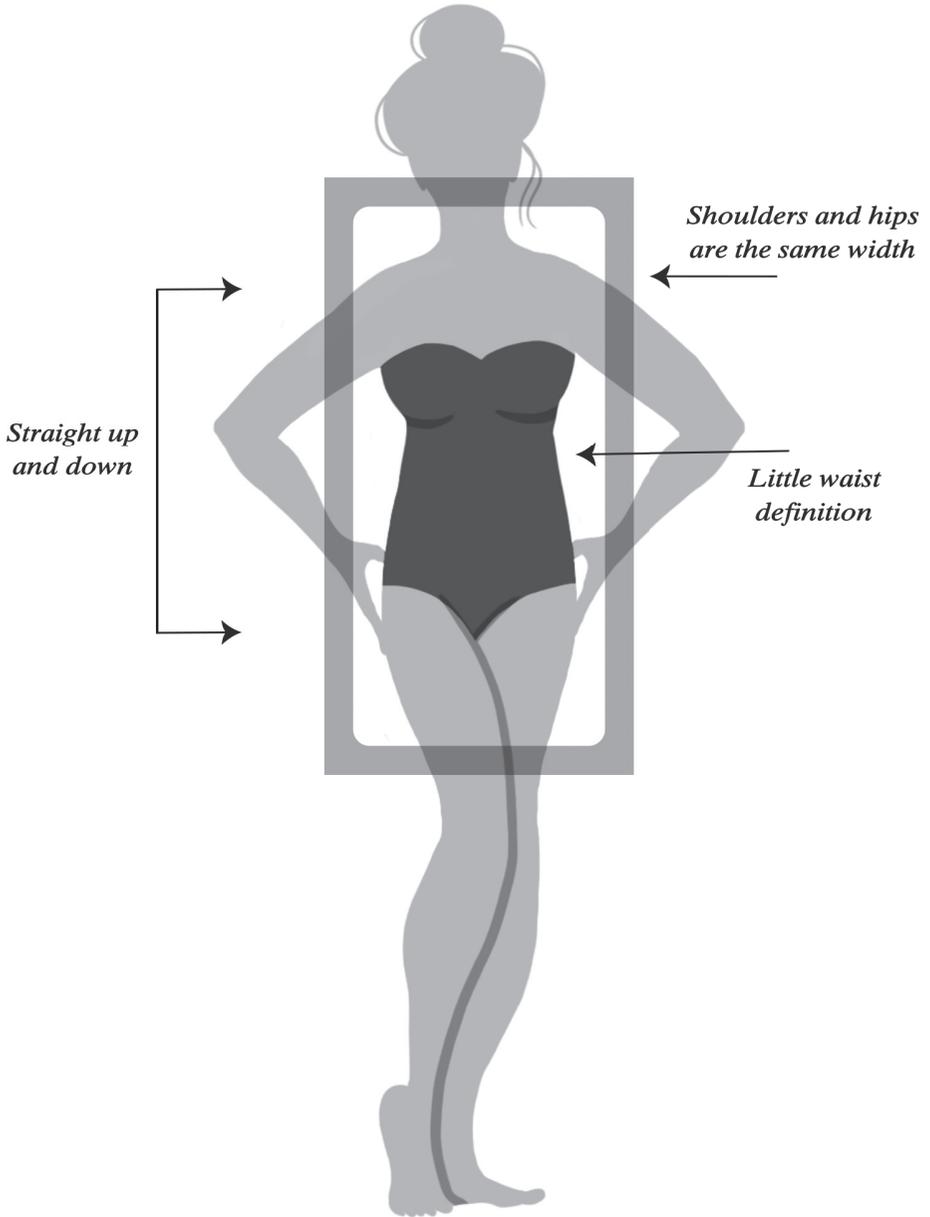
THE APPLE SHAPE

STYLING TIPS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have great legs, flaunt them • For more leg coverage, try opaque tights or nylons • Don't cover up your body with loose, shapeless clothing • Define your curves • A well-fitted bra is a must 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid unnecessary bulk around your middle by choosing soft fabric • Draw attention to legs and shoulders • Look for clothing with vertical lines to create a long and lean silhouette • Emphasize your cleavage to draw attention upward • Ruche is your best friend
Tops (Friend)	Tops (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap tops (they will create a more defined waistline and show off your bust) • Dolman sleeves • Empire-waist cuts (they draw attention to the slimmest point of your body) • Loose, V-neck blouses • Peplums (this creates the illusion of an hourglass and covers your midsection) • Asymmetrical tops (this helps create slimming lines) • Patterns can create a camouflage effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitted tops • High necklines • Tight, clingy T-shirts • Voluminous, shapeless tops • Decorative necklines (this causes the eye to be drawn upward)
Outerwear (Friend)	Outerwear (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-front jackets without closures • Cardigans without closures • Long sweater vests • Dusters • Long lapel blazers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big puffy jackets • Shapeless, boxy garments

THE APPLE SHAPE

Dresses and Skirts (Friend)	Dresses and Skirts (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empire waists • Shifts • Off-the-shoulder • Wrap dresses (ties on the side of the dress, not in the front) • Bias cuts (cut on a diagonal) with loose fabric • Dresses with ruche, draping, or layers • A-line and pencil skirts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiered ruffle skirts • Bodycon dresses and tops
Pants and Jumpsuits (Friend)	Pants and Jumpsuits (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leggings • Straight jeans • Skinny jeans • Trousers, flared or straight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide-leg trousers
Accessories (Friend)	Accessories (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement earrings, rings, cuffs • Long necklaces • Scarves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small petite bags, as they don't balance out the shape of your body
Shoes (Friend)	Shoes (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bold-colored shoes to show off your legs • Nude shoes to make legs look even longer • Embellished shoes • Pointy-toed shoes • Single-strap shoes • Over-the-knee boots • <i>Anything</i> that shows off those legs! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-calf ankle boots, as they can shorten your legs
Proceed with Caution	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beware of clingy materials, especially around the waistline. Belts are a good way to cinch the waist! However, make sure your belt is worn at the thinnest part of your midsection and that its color is the same as the garment's. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For outerwear, buttoning or closing is optional for the ones I suggested, so make fit the priority here. Choose sizes that fit your shoulders best. Fill in any "open" space with a scarf or a long necklace.

Rectangle



The Rectangle Shape (or Straight Shape)

The rectangle body type, also known as the “straight” or “athletic body type,” has proportions that are very straight up and down. Your shoulders and hips will be roughly the same width, with little waist definition, regardless of whether you’re a size four or size twenty-four. You may be described as more muscular than curvy. The goal for rectangle body types is to create curves for a more hourglass shape.

You can play up any part of your body. If you want to add some volume up top, try rocking a small shoulder pad or a flutter sleeve. Create more curves by cinching your waist with a high-waisted belt. If you are very small busted, invest in a good push-up bra. In the club: Natalie Portman, Gwyneth Paltrow, Gwen Stefani, and yours truly.

THE RECTANGLE SHAPE

STYLING TIPS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play up your shoulders with a puff sleeve • Stay away from shapeless or boxy clothing • Define your waist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try a peplum to draw attention to your waist • Fill your hips with a wide-leg silhouette
Tops (Friend)	Tops (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embellishment around bust and shoulders • Halter tops • Off-the-shoulder • Button-down (tucked and belted) • Scoop necks and V-necks • Puffed and flutter sleeves • Sweetheart necklines • Peplums • Wrap tops • Princess sleeves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tunics • Boxy shapes • Bell sleeves
Outerwear (Friend)	Outerwear (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double-breasted coats or jackets • Belts • Peplums • Structured jackets • Fitted blazers • Coats that hit below the knees (this will elongate your frame) • Straight-cut coats • Dusters • Wraps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boxy jackets • Cropped jackets

THE RECTANGLE SHAPE

Dresses and Skirts (Friend)	Dresses and Skirts (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit-and-flare • Peplum dresses • Bodycon dresses • X-line dresses • U- and V-neckline dresses • Asymmetrical cuts • Wrap dresses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boxy shapes • Shift dresses or skirts
Pants and Jumpsuits (Friend)	Pants and Jumpsuits (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trousers • Flared trousers • Skinny jeans • High-waisted jeans or pants • Flare-cut jeans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shapeless, baggy pants • Palazzo pants
Accessories (Friend)	Accessories (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When it comes to jewelry, anything goes • Belts are your best friend, but keep them thin and neutral to create a defined waist • Round clutches and bags that tuck under the arm work best • Statement earrings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No foes here!
Shoes (Friend)	Shoes (Foe)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rectangles can rock all styles of shoes, but a good trick to feel less athletic is to try a ballerina slipper or a feminine T-strap. I personally am a rectangle and love a chunky men's-style loafer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be cautious of heavy, chunkier heels, as they can detract from your lean, long legs.
Proceed with Caution	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be careful with long, layering necklaces. They can elongate your body. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose bags that aren't too oversize and rest at your waist.

And there you have it! I hope that you now have a better understanding of the five different body types and that you can clearly identify your own. You also have knowledge of the most figure-flattering shapes and styles for your body. Head on over to my website by using the QR code for a free download of your personal body type shopping cheat sheet to take with you the next time you go!

