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Design Lines to Slenderize

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Very few women have ideal body proportions. Almost everyone has some features that are out of proportion in relationship to other parts of their body. Some women appear to be top heavy (i.e. a large bust and small hips) or bottom heavy (i.e. small bust and large hips). If you are losing some weight or plan to lose some weight, there are ways you can visually look pounds thinner.

You may dress to look slimmer by creating optical illusions. Optical illusions can be created through the effective use of design lines.

LINES

Line is the most basic element of design because it divides areas into shapes and spaces. Lines can give direction or a feeling of movement to a design. As a basic tool, line can be used to create optical illusions in dress.

To begin looking at the illusions made by lines, consider the lines below. The vertical lines are all the same length, but the addition of other lines can change the apparent length of a line. A change in the location of a line can change the apparent size of an area.

"Eye" Line "Y" Line Arrow Line "T" Line "Crossed" Line

When the extra lines go up as in the "Y" line, the eye tends to follow so the length of the vertical line seems longer than it really is.

In the "Arrow" line, the eye follows the downward movement of the line and the vertical lines seems shorter.

In the "T" line, the eye stops at the bar and moves back and forth rather than up and down. This vertical line seems to appear shorter than the "Eye" or "Y" lines.

The "Crossed" line causes the eye to bisect the vertical lines, therefore shortening it.

Line direction may be vertical, horizontal, diagonal or curved. Vertical lines usually carry the eye up. Horizontal lines usually carry the eye across. Diagonal lines slant and because of the slant can give different effects. Curved lines are graceful. They may be soft when slightly curved or bold when tightly curved.

Selecting the right lines can make you look slimmer. Creating the illusion of height, will help to compensate for the fuller figure. Vertical lines that lead the eye upward create the illusion of height. Outfits of one color and those with center front interest can add height. Using the "Y" line such as a "V" neckline increases height.

To look taller or slimmer try the following:

- Vertically striped fabrics
- Straight, rather than curved lines
- Long diagonal lines
- Narrow panels or gores
- Narrow standing collars
- Decoration on lengthwise center front line
- Long, narrow V or U necklines
- Narrow vest openings
- Narrow belts to match garment
- Long straight sleeves
- Raglan sleeves
- Decoration and trim placed high on shoulder near neck
- Princess lines and beltless one-piece dresses
- Full length coats

SPACING

Even though vertical lines tend to add height and horizontal lines usually add width, evenly spaced lines may create a different effect. Look at the vertical stripe illustrations. The eye tends to look across the figure when the stripes are widely spaced.

Now look at the horizontal stripe illustrations. The wide spaces seem to lead the eye upward. When the distance between two lines is widened, the eye travels from line to line.

LINE PLACEMENT

Line placement can draw attention to a desirable body feature and detract attention from a figure fault. A vertical line placed to one side of the figure adds height and slenderizes. A side placement tends to be more interesting and varied than a center placement. It is generally flattering and disguises figure faults because the garment is unbalanced with the line on one side of the body and the eye is drawn to it as a focal point.

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