

ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY
CAREER DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Professional Dress Tips for Women

Color, Body Shape and Other Considerations

Project a proportional body shape by drawing attention away from your less favorable features. Color and accessories, and style/cut can also be used to create professional persona.

Color

- *Red is an aggressive color. Red projects authority but can be intimidating to others.*
- *Blue projects authority. It's great for media shoots but not when you need to be seen as creative.*
- *Brown is the least threatening color and gets people to open up and communicate freely.*
- *Green is a calming color and should be avoided in risky ventures (requesting money from a bank)*
- *Orange is the least professional color and should be worn only in accessories.*
- *Yellow will get you noticed so be ready to contribute.*
- *Purple is effective when you want to project confidence and individuality.*
- *Gray is the safest option for suits. It is less authoritarian than black or navy but still professional.*
- *Black is the most formal of colors but requires that you are impeccably groomed.*
- *White projects high standards but, like black, requires impeccable grooming.*

COLOR ANALYSIS: YOUR COLOR PALATE

- **Step 1:** Determine which season best describes your hair color. Remember...your natural hair color is to be used - not colored hair.
- **Step 2:** Determine eye color
- **Step 3:** Once you have determined which season best matches your hair and eye color – get tips on what clothing colors are right for your “season” by finding your season palette on the next page.

SPRING (warm)

Hair: Golden blonde, golden brown or red
Eyes: Blue, blue gray, blue green or light turquoise green

SUMMER (cool)

Hair: Ash blonde, light ash brown
Eyes: Blue gray, green, or hazel

AUTUMN (warm)

Hair: Golden brown, red, auburn or chestnut
Eyes: Dark brown, hazel or green

WINTER (cool)

Hair: Black, ash black brown
Eyes: Blue, brown, hazel or green

The Spring palette consists of clear, warm colors all with yellow undertones.

- Neutrals: Ivory, light to medium beiges, light to medium browns, warm gray and navy
- Violet, periwinkle, true blue, aqua and turquoise
- Apricot, peach, salmon, corals warm pink, clear bright red, light orange and orange-red
- Pastel to bright yellow green, golden yellow and clear gold
- Jewelry: Gold

The Summer palette consists of the following colors with subtle blue undertones.

- Neutrals: Soft white, rose-beiges, rose-browns, blue-gray, navy
- Powder blue from light to medium, periwinkle, aqua, blue-greens from light to deep
- Blue pinks from light to medium, watermelon red, blue-red, and burgundy
- Lavender, raspberry, soft fuchsia, plum and lemon yellow
- Jewelry: Silver

The Autumn palette contains the following colors with golden undertones

- Neutrals: Off white, warm beiges, warm browns from light to dark, camel, gold
- Mustard, tomato red, pumpkin, terra cotta, rust, peach & salmon
- Lime green, yellow-green, moss green, grayed green, olive green, jade green, forest green
- Turquoise, teal blue, dark periwinkle blue
- Jewelry: Gold

The Winter palette contains the following cool colors with blue undertones.

- Neutrals: White, light grays to charcoal gray, black, taupe, and navy
- True blue, royal blue, turquoise, royal purple
- True green, emerald green, pine green
- Hot pink, magenta, fuchsia, burgundy, blue-red & true-red
- Icy green, icy yellow, icy aqua, icy violet, icy pink, icy blue
- Jewelry: Silver

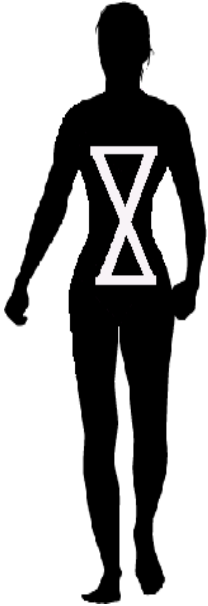
Summarized by Mai Ka Lee

*Contributions from Professor Mary Soroko and **Color me Beautiful** by Mary Spillane and Christine Sherlock*

Hour Glass Shape

You have an hour glass shape if the circumference of your shoulders is the same as your hips and your waist is 10 inches smaller than your hips. While you have the ideal body shape, finding professional clothes can be difficult.

The goal of a woman with an hour glass shape is to accentuate the waistline and draw attention away from the chest



TIPS

- Choose thin, non-pleated skirts with fitted tops that nip at the waist with a contrasting belt.
- Wrap dresses and skirts are very flattering.
- Avoid loose and baggy tops.
- Wear soft designs like a floral or paisley.
- Necklines should be draped, round, crossover, or ruffled.
- Avoid set-in sleeves (unless in a soft fabric) and opt instead for gathered, raglan, or eased shapes.

Pear Shape

You are smaller on top, and large on the bottom. Think of a tear drop shape that is larger at the bottom. Chances are, your pant and skirt size is 2 or more sizes bigger than your shirt size.

The goal of a woman with a pear shaped form should be to draw attention to the upper body.



TIPS:

- Avoid side pockets and pleats that will accentuate your lower body.
- Wear skirts that end at or below the knee.
- Wear belts to accentuate your waist.
- One button jackets are best, preferably with shoulder pads, to balance your figure.
- Jackets should end at the waist or below the hips.
- Avoid large patterns in skirts and pants.
- Boat neck shirts and square necklines make your shoulders look wider.
- Wear handbags above the hip.
- Don't wear embellishments around the hips such as a belt that rests on the hip.

Apple Shape

You're top heavy and smaller from the waist down. You have broad shoulders with narrower hips.,

The goal of a woman with an apple shaped figure should be to balance the shoulders with the narrower bottom half.



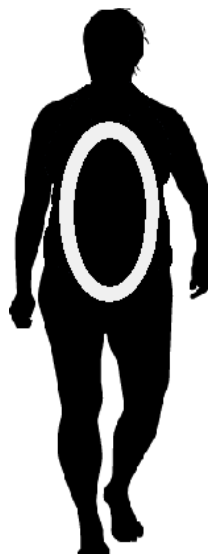
TIPS:

- Wear tightly woven and crisp fabrics.
- Choose simple designs and colors and avoid patterns.
- Raglan and dolman sleeves narrow wide shoulders.
- Flared pants and skirts and low slung belts will attract attention to the hips and balance your figure.
- Avoid detail stitching and pleats in the bust-line region and don't wear shoulder pads.

Round Shape

Most of your weight is in your tummy and you probably have a generous bust. You have an overall rounded body shape with a wide waist.

The goal of a round shaped woman should be to draw attention away from the bust and waist, down to the legs.



TIPS:

- V-necklines will make your neck appear longer.
- To draw attention away from the waist, wear longer jackets, drop waistlines and long tunics.
- Tops, jackets and dresses should drop in a simple unstructured straight line from the shoulder.
- Choose tailored pieces with minimal fabric, pleats and embellishments (trim).
- Keep collars and lapels narrow and small.
- Short skirts will draw attention to your legs.
- Wear narrow, vertical stripes.
- Wear handbags at hip level or lower.