

The Vintage Dancer

1940's Fashion for Your Body type



After writing the 1940's Style Guide-The complete Illustrated Guide to 1940's Fashion for Women I started to shop for 40's clothing online. I ordered a few dresses that looked great in pictures. The measurements were correct for my size and the colors were pretty. Unfortunately, once I tried them on I was disappointed. They fit but they made me look frumpy. My hips looked wide and my shoulders too square. My chest was covered up when it should have stood out. I realized that even after months of fashion research I had neglected to follow the timeless rules of body type profiling.

Just like shopping today, clothes in the 1940s were designed for one ideal body type. In the 1940s it was the tall hour glass shape. Women with other body types had to figure out what clothes could make them look like the 40's ideal woman.

I went back to researching both 1940s dressing advice and modern dressing advice and I found they were very similar. Fashion rules have not changed much in 70 years but the fashionable shape of the era has. This booklet explains what your body type is and how to achieve the ideal 40's figure. Knowing these fashion rules will help you apply the fashion history you learn in the 1940's Style Guide to your own vintage wardrobe.

The style guide lists over 160 different shopping sites for 1940's clothing from dresses to swimsuits to underwear. These are just a few of my favorite sites to help you get started:

BlueVelvetVintage- Both vintage and new 40's and 50's clothes.

<u>ShabbyApple</u>- and <u>ModCloth</u> - Vintage Inspired dresses and swimsuits.

<u>ChicStar-</u> Very affordable vintage inspired 40's pinup dresses.

TaraStarlet (UK) - Best reproduction 40's clothing in the UK

RevampVintage.com - Best reproduction 40's clothing in the USA

More 1940's fashion shopping sources at Vintagedancer.com:

1940's Shoes- Modern shoes with 40's styling.

1940's Clothing- Vintage Inspired Clothing.

1940's Swimsuits – Swimsuit history and shopping guide.

1940's Formal Dresses - Vintage inspired formal dresses .

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1940'S CLOTHING TO FIT YOUR BODY TYPE

Most of us were not blessed with the ideal 1940's thin hourglass figure that was so popular during the war times and on the silver screen. In reality neither were most women in the 1940's. Just like today, women came in all shapes and sizes and they wore the same 1940's styles that so-called "natural" women were wearing. The secret to fashion is not to force yourself to look like Batty Garble or Rita Hayworth but to embrace your uniqueness and let the 1940's fashion style show off your best features!

With this little booklet we will discuss your body type and what 1940's style clothes will look best on you.

WHAT'S YOUR BODY TYPE?

	1. Apple Shape- Most of your body mass is centered around your core. Your best feature is your ultra sexy legs.
	2. Pear Shape- Your body mass hovers mostly around your hips and thighs leaving your arms and chest your best features.
[] flat	3. Straight Shape- You measurements are nearly identical from ches to hip. All your features are great on their own but sometimes feel t all together.
\bigvee	4. Hourglass Shape- Your chest and hips are almost identical in size
X	with your narrow middle being your best feature.

Some women feel that they are in between shapes or that they have changed shapes overtime. That is perfectly normal. Read both shape guides and mix and match until you find the right combination.

THE APPLE SHAPE

With your centered shape you want to draw attention to your full body length by either drawing the eye up or down.



Day Wear: 1940's wide legged trousers will do wonders for your figure. Top them with a light color blouse that is not fitted too tightly. You will want to choose solid, muted colors on top with the option for fun patterns and textures on the bottom. A hat with height will draw your bodyline up along with a pearl necklace to accentuate your neckline. Add a pair of pumps to draw attention back down to your legs.

A second option would be a solid colored dress with a plain top in a V or slit neckline, a wrap bodice front, and a long a-line skirt with some swing. This will give the appearance of a defined waistline. Long and narrow sleeves will be a better look for you then short puffy sleeves.

Evening Wear: You will shine best in a full-length evening dress with an empire waistline and thin shoulder straps. A halter-top will also work well with a plunging neckline (a modest plunging neckline - proper with 1940's conservatism.) Choose crepe rayon fabrics and avoid shiny satins and silks.

Swimsuits: A one-piece suit will be your best choice. Low neckline, thin straps, and many gathers pulling to one side will accentuate your shape nicely. If you want a two-piece suit, choose one with a halter-top and skirt bottom with bows or ties to add interest to your hips.

Why the 1940's style loves you: You are the only body style that can pull off high waist, straight-legged trousers, and look feminine. Go for it!

Why the 1940's style is not your friend: Shoulder pads and you do not mix. They will make you look to boxy. That is why a Victory suit will be harder to pull off. If you do try a suit make sure the jacket is long with a simple one or two button closure.

PEAR SHAPE



Pears have the envy of every other shape because of your slim sexy arms, small waist, and proportionate chest. The 1940's style is great for showing these features at their best.

Day Wear- A Victory suit is designed for you. Your jacket should hang just at your wait and feature a wide collar and big colorful brooch below one shoulder. With or without a jacket aim for a bright, colorful, striped or patterned blouse with big puffy sleeves. If you knit a sweater, add lots of pretty decoration around the neckline and down the button up front.

For dresses stick to ruched tops with high necklines and a-line skirts. Avoid skirts with gathers or pleating.

Evening wear- You will look stunning in a two-piece long dress and matching bolero jacket. You can even have contrasting pieces as long as the pattern stays on the top. Spaghetti straps or strapless tops will draw the eye up to you luscious neck and glamorous face.

Swimsuits- One piece suits with lots of ruching, bows, ties, or other neckline accents with help you feel confident on the beach. You will look best in bold prints and darker colors. A little extra padding in the bra area can't hurt either.

Why the 1940's style loves you: While most women look better with muted colors you sparkle with bright colors and patterns. With your body you can show the word that 1940's fashions were fun!

Why the 1940's style is not your friend: The 40's really favored your shape- but those fun colors are going to be harder to find in vintage clothing. You may have to make or buy reproduction clothes.

THE STRAIGHT SHAPE-

Your shape makes you versatile. You can wear any style and look good in the modern world. However to look really good in the 40's you will need to add some curves to your figure.



Day Wear- A one or two piece dress with padded shoulders, puffy sleeves and narrow a line skirt is ideal for you. You would look best in a long pencil skirt but since these didn't come around till the 60's- a very narrow, minimal swing skirt will do best. Late 40's skirts with pleats at the bottom will draw attention to your sexy legs. Choose a blouse with a fun side tie or cute peter pan collar for some whimsy. Accent your dress with a narrow belt, ideally in a contrasting color or solid color with interesting belt clasp.

A second choice is a Kitty Foyle Dress because of its contrasting trims at the neck, puffy shoulders that add width, and shirtwaist detailing down the front, it will keep the attention on your upper body. Nip that waist in as much as you can and let the fullness of the skirt give you some hip.

Evening wear- Go for the red carpet with a halter-top and full gathered skirt. Avoid dresses that are bias cut- the 1930's were not good for you. Instead, keep the decoration up top and the waistline accentuated or free and flowing.

Swimsuits- A two-piece bikini has your shape written all over it. Add padding to your top if you are small chested or add bows and ties to give the illusion of volume. Bottoms with short ruffled skirts are a better choice then low leg, high hipped shorts. Go for the "girly" cute look and you will always have fun at the pool.

Why the 1940's style loves you: Because you can wear anything! Seriously, nothing is going to look bad on you if you choose the right playful accents to draw the eye up or down and away from your subtle

middle. Vintage pieces will be easy to find in your size so enjoy all the options you have.

Why the 1940's style is not your friend: Without the hourglass figure, you may not feel truly 1940's. Fortunately, modern vintage clothes love your shape and you will have a fun time dressing with 40's flair every day.

THE HOURGLASS SHAPE-

Ahhh, how the 1940's love you. Designers designed for you and other women fought to make your shape. Almost all styles will look good on you so have fun and try them all.



A Victory suit with a nipped in jacket and accented belt will also draw in your center curves. A peplum shirt or jacket may add too much hip volume so be careful with these style.

Evening wear- Look for a full-length wrap dress or a princess cut bodice. Add lots of sparkle with vintage jewelry or tons of sequins and beads all over. Avoid too much decoration on top. Keep your neckline open with a V or sweetheart cut. Strapless dresses will not add anything for you so avoid them and embrace everything else you can wear.

Swimsuit- You can pull off a one piece or two-piece. If you go with a one-piece then look for one that emphasizes an open chest with contrast trim piping. For a two-piece, try a bandeau top with high waist bottoms. Retro swimsuits love your body.



Why the 1940's style loves you: Because they are made for you!

Why the 1940's style is not your friend: Although it was made for you you still need to be careful with how clothing fits in order not to hide your ideal shape.

OTHER SHAPE CHALLENGES:

Short- The key to gaining height is usually to wear shorter dresses and skirts but that would put them above the knee which is a no-no for 1940's fashion. Instead, just focus on accenting your shape and wear a pair of wedgies or pumps.

Tall- Keep your waistline a bit lower than is normal for the 40's. Height is usually a welcome gift with 1940's fashion.

Large busted- Wear simple tops with high necks. Avoid button downs and instead find plain fronted blouses or knit cardigans. Long coats will also help keep your chest in proportion to your body center.

Small busted- Look for dresses and blouses with gathers at the shoulder. This extra bit of frontal puffiness will add volume to your chest.

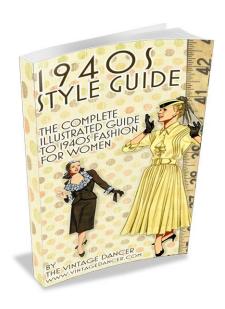
Thick Arms- The elbow length sleeve is ideal for you. Vintage clothes may not have wide enough arms so you may have to custom make your dress or blouse. Late 40's style had capped sleeves, which will give you the room but may show off what you rather hide.

Do you have another shape challenge? Just contact me and I'll help you find the right outfit.

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1940's STYLE GUIDE:

THE COMPLETE ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO 1940'S FASHION FOR WOMEN



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