



Dear Men- How To Dress For Your Body Type

Just like we cannot choose the family we are born into, we also cannot choose the bodies we are born with. The good news however, is that we can choose how we dress the bodies we are born with. Fashion changes but your body type may not change as much remains. So how do you adopt fashion to suit your body type?

First of all, understand that not all fashions will suit your body type. If a trend does not agree with your body type, it's best to sit it out. Secondly, dressing well consists of several factors including good fit, color and pattern choice. Before we delve into this, let's talk about the 5 main body types for men.

The 5 Common Body Types for Men



The Rectangle - This is the most common body types for men. This body type is straight up and down i.e chest, waist and hips are the same width.

The Triangle - This body type for men has narrow shoulders and wider waist and hips.

The Trapezoid - This is the body shape of many male models. With broad shoulders, narrow waist and hips, this shape is “well balanced”. Since society celebrates this body type, most

men in this category rarely have to worry about proportions because they can pull off most looks.

The Oval - This shape has narrow shoulders, round belly and waist. A lot of African/African American men fall into this body bracket due to genetics and diet.



The Inverted Triangle - This is the much celebrated and admired gym man. He has very broad shoulders and chest and a narrow waist. As desirable as this body type may seem, it is the least common body type for men and not as easy to find the right fit.

Having understood the common body types for men, let's look at the 3 most important things to consider in dressing for your body type.

Color - How Color Affects You

Hair, Eye and Face Coloring

There are basically three types of coloring for both men and women - low, medium and high contrast. Contrast simply means the depth of color in the hair, eyes and skin. Low contrast means that the color of the hair and skin are the same, medium contrast means that the color

of the hair and skin are slightly different while high contrast means that the color of the hair and skin are vastly different.

A high contrast face thrives on bright colors while a low contrast complexion thrives on neutral or muted colors and a medium contrast face can play with a wide range of colors. African-American men are usually low to medium contrast. This can change if the hair is dyed red, white, blue or any other color different from his natural brown/black skin color, then the person would be high contrast. Look for colors that mirror your contrast so as to call attention to your face.

Also note that light colors have an enlarging effect and dark colors have a slimming effect. So, note your body type, rectangle, triangle, trapezoid, oval and inverted triangle. We already said the ideal body type is the trapezoid so your goal would be to use color in a way that balances you out to look like a trapezoid body type. If you are wider at the top, use light colors for your bottoms and dark colors on top and if you are narrow at the top use light colors at the top and dark colors at the bottom. The exception is the rectangle body type. This body type will use color to emphasize his waist and break up the rectangle.



PATTERN - USE PATTERNS TO HIDE OR SPOTLIGHT FEATURES

Patterns can be used to create a point of interest in outfits and to camouflage flaws. Vertical stripes create a slimming illusion while horizontal stripes give a wider illusion. Just like color, use patterns to call attention to places you want to highlight or conceal. The goal is to give each body type a balanced silhouette.

The Triangle body type who are wider at the bottom can use bold prints at the top to give a semblance of wide shoulders but should avoid shirts with horizontal stripes around the midsection or statement belts because they add bulk to an already bulky place. Vertical stripes are this body type's best friend.

The Trapezoid already has balanced proportions so this body type can use patterns just for fun to create a signature style.

The Rectangle body should use horizontal stripes to give the illusion of width. This body type can play with different pattern scales on top and bottom to create dimension and contrast as well as break up this body type's straight block.

The Inverted Triangle has to downplay the shoulders breadth and emphasize his lower half using plaids or horizontal stripes.

The Oval body should use vertical stripes to give a slimming effect and avoid large print, horizontal stripes as they make him look bigger (of course if the goal is to look slimmer).

FIT - HOW TO GET YOUR PERFECT FIT

Fit is everything when it comes to good dressing. A million-dollar suit will look cheap if it hangs wrongly on the man while a 100 dollar suit will make the man feel like a million bucks if it sits perfectly on his frame.

For Jackets, start with the shoulder - This is the most important part in a man's outfit because a bad cut in the shoulders cannot be adjusted unlike sleeves and hems which can be taken in. A well fitted shoulder will lay perfectly flat and not bulge but must have enough room for movement and flexing.

Next the buttons – Close up the jacket and see how it goes over the body. If it makes an X shape in front, it is too tight. If the lapels hang too far forward, it's too loose.

Then the cuffs - A half-inch of shirt cuff should be visible beyond the jacket cuff. The jacket should never hide the entire sleeve cuff.

Down to the length - The jacket should not cover the backside entirely. It should drape over the top of the curve formed by the backside.

Move up to the collar – A jacket collar should rest against the shirt collar with no gaps in between. If there are gaps, it means the collar is too big. A too tight jacket collar will appear as folds and bunching at the back of the jacket.

For Shirts - Shoulder seams should hug the shoulder and cuffs should reach just past the wrists.

For Pants - The backside of a trouser should hang in a smooth drape over the rear end. It should not hang too loose at the thighs or pull too tightly over the rear. The rule is never to buy pants that are too tight because it can almost never be adjusted. For pant breaks (the line that forms when your trouser touches your shoe) the no break silhouette is trendy but it is mainly a matter of preference. The standard pants should give just a small horizontal dimple on top of your shoes.

HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT CLOTHES FOR YOUR BODY TYPE

KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS AND FIND THE RIGHT BRAND FOR YOU.

This requires a little digging around online. Some brands are known for making the best shirts for tall men, some for crafting the best blazers and others for well-fitting pants in different fabrics. Start your search by checking online and then you can go in-store to check the selection. Once you identify the brands that work for your body type, stick with it.

IF YOU CAN'T FIND THE RIGHT FIT, ALTER IT!

While some people may be lucky to have universal size and fits, others may not be as lucky. Minor alterations may be the way to go for such folks. Dressing for your body type is a clearly a matter of understanding. Understanding color, proportions and how clothes should fit.

If you want to find the right cloths for your body shape and body type, check out our new premium collection of **Robe Kente** fashion and clothing.