

CURRENT/ELLIOTT

# PERFECT DENIM

## ➔ HOW TO FIND YOUR

PERFECT DENIM

FROM THE HOLY GRAIL OF JEANS TO THE NEW DENIM TRENDS – AND EVERYTHING IN-BETWEEN



SIENNA MILLER

HAILEY BALDWIN

CANDICE HUFFINE

KATE MOSS

GWYNETH PALTROW

**GOOD FOR APPLE SHAPES**

**WORDS** NATALIE HAMMOND

FILING A TAX return, figuring out what's happening in *Game Of Thrones*' murky AF battle scenes, trying to organise a friend's hen party where the guests span City bankers and yoga instructors... All are tricky. And all pale in comparison to the task of finding your perfect jeans. It's a feat that requires the patience of a saint, the stamina of a marathon runner and the determination, in the face of repeated failure, of the Maybot.

So why is it so difficult? There's the fact that sizing is as changeable as the British climate. Then there's the problem of fit. It needs to be just right at the bum, hips, waist *and* legs, and that's before you've factored in the length. Add in decisions like stretch or no-stretch, blue or black, cropped or boot-leg, straight or flared, and going shopping for jeans suddenly seems like way too much effort. No wonder many of us are still wearing the skinny jeans from our university days that have faded to hangover grey and have a hole in the crotch.

The first problem, says former buyer and personal stylist Anna Berkeley, is that ▶



TOPSHOP



ARKET

**BEST FOR BOYISH FIGURES**



**BEST FOR PEAR SHAPES**



works on most body shapes, a flare is good for pears, wide legs look good on the taller among us, skinny isn't best friends with a bigger calf – but what you really need to do is set aside a few hours (yes, hours) and go to a department store. Rachael Proud, Raey's creative director and a denim aficionado, says it's important to not get fixated on size. In fact, she recommends, 'trying on the biggest the shop has and working down from there.' Anna agrees. 'You have to fit the problem area first and you have to size up.'

The fun doesn't stop once you, and your mountain of jeans, get to the changing room. 'I always do a few star jumps, sit down cross-legged and try to walk around to see how comfortable they are,' says Ellie.

There's more. Put in the hours and you still might not be able to find a pair of jeans that sits right on every body part. This is where buying jeans becomes a bit like therapy, the next step being accepting the fact that you might have to get your new pair tailored. Anna suggests investigating your local dry-cleaner. 'Some are amazing and it's actually a very simple alteration if you're taking the waist in because you just need to take a V out of the back.' Another tip is to ask boutiques in your area where they take their clothes for alterations.

finding the perfect pair is the holy grail. 'Jeans are always on that list of the 10 things you've got to own. People feel, whether they want them or not, that they should have them,' she says. Even Anna, a consummate pro, sometimes gets stumped. 'Trying on jeans is quite heinous, actually,' she says. 'There's a lot of back and forth. Even for me, and I know which brands to look at, it doesn't always work.' You might think *Vogue* editors are precluded from shopping-related strife, but they're much like us mortals when it comes to jeans. 'I absolutely hate shopping for jeans. It's exhausting and depressing,' admits fashion features editor Ellie Pithers. 'I really struggle to find ones long enough, as I have a 36in inner leg.'

Fit is at the crux of the whole fandango. And unlike figuring out what hem length suits your shape, there's no failsafe formula. Sure, there are basic guidelines – straight

Remember, there is a way to save yourself long-term hassle. 'When I find a pair I like, I usually buy a second pair within a week,' says Ellie. Anna agrees. 'I don't advocate this with many items of clothing, but buy two when you find a style you really love. But only do it with classic styles,' she warns. 'You'll have gone off fashion ones by the time it comes to wearing the second pair.'

Speaking of classic, both Ellie and street-style star Veronika Heilbrunner name vintage Levi's as their favourites. 'I always buy 501s whenever I find them,' says Veronika. Design doyenne Mary Quant, currently the subject of a V&A retrospective, was similarly taken and used 501s as a benchmark. 'I say, "Is this as good as a pair of Levi's blue jeans?" Which, to me, are the perfect design. They're wearable, they're tough, they're casual and they're terrifically sexy.' If they're good enough for Mary Quant, you can deal