

How do I find a jacket that suits my shape?

Anna Berkeley

Ask a stylist



Is there a jacket that suits all women? I'm struggling to find one for myself – I have a full bust and a tummy, by the way.

Jackets are one of the most useful pieces in your wardrobe. I own more than 17, and I wear one most days. They're versatile and great for covering bellies, busts and arms and for flattering rounded shoulders. Unfortunately, this does not mean that they are easy to find! If we were all using tailors to create bespoke jackets then things would be a lot more straightforward – and as it is the most sustainable option, please consider it. The Seam will hook you up with a tried and tested tailor in your area. They've all been fully assessed so you know you're getting a reliable service – many of the tailors on their books are ex-couture.

As to that "flatters all" style, this is tricky to answer. There is a shape that works for both straight and curvy, which is a simple, single-breasted, one-button, semi-fitted, classic blazer style. The Etienne from Theory, pictured above, is the closest to perfect you can get but it's best on taller figures.

With off-the-peg there are a few things to understand. The line of the revers (in layman's terms, the shaped lapels on your jacket) or opening creates a vertical line that the eye duly follows down the body. This streamlines everything effectively, shrinking the focus into the middle section of your torso and making it appear slimmer and longer than it actually is. Keep all detail minimal for further enhancement. This is the reason



Theory jacket, £320, uk.theory.com

the jacket, as a single piece, is so useful. Let's tackle that tummy first. What sort of stomach are we dealing with? If it's wide and round you will want soft fabrics that mould and flex around your body. You don't want to be pulling and fussing when it doesn't sit right. If you are angular with a belly, go for a structured shape and material.

For those with more curve to the body, softer fabrics are best. Look at jersey, crepe, silks, light flannels and wool mixes. Seek out vented backs or sides as they give room for movement and avoid bulky pockets. These details

accommodate a wider bottom whilst you're at it. Max Mara Leisure's jersey jacket is super useful as a casual option, but you could smarten up with a winter white sweater underneath or black or navy for contrast (£205, gb.maxmara.com).

For a relaxed-smart look, Paul Smith's jersey jacket is a gem (£555, paulsmith.com). Don't wear it zipped up on the chest with a full bust, unless you want to look like Dolly Parton. Max Mara's sleek bomber (£1,120, gb.maxmara.com) features a flattering double zip. Zip up from the hem and take it to the smallest part of the waist or just leave it unzipped. When seen from the side you won't notice the tummy.

For stiffer fabrics and cuts, Balmain does one of the best shapes. The smart padded shoulder is balanced by the kick out from the waist and it's a hell of a waist creator for those who are straight through the middle – which,



Veronica Beard jacket, £599, veronicabeard.com

in my experience, is most women over 45. It helps a rounded shoulder to look straighter and more poised (£2,050, matchesfashion.com). It's a top-end item, but for a similar look try Veronica Beard's Miller Dickey Jacket, pictured below.

For a large chest, double-breasted styles can be trickier. You need unfussy designs to skim over the bust. Opt for a simple, open shape (or the edge-to-edge Max Mara). Stella McCartney and Totême offer a clean line, no button edge-to-edge blazer this season (Stella McCartney £1,295, selfridges.com). Or look to Eileen Fisher, the queen of the clean line, and her relaxed look (\$199 on sale, eileenfisher.com). Try a couple of sizes as you want the jacket to remain neat but not tight.

One of my big bugbears is crazy tight sleeves. As the size goes up, the garment won't necessarily address that you are likely to have a curvier arm. Margaret Howell sleeves tend to be roomier than most – try its velvet blazer for relaxed luxury (£825, margarethowell.co.uk). The cut is straight so it's easiest for straight-line figures.

Wear all of these jackets with jersey tees or simple sweaters and don't force them over anything too bulky. Whichever jacket you choose, ensure it's long enough to cover the tummy on the side and roomy enough to stretch your arms up and across without impeding blood flow. Good luck!

Anna Berkeley is a personal stylist with 25 years experience in the fashion industry. Each month she will answer questions about fashion and what to wear. Email anna.berkeley@ft.com



Why we're all seeing green

Trend | Two years after 'Bottega Green'

sprouted on the runway, the colour is still

resonating at retail. Kate Finnigan reports



In December 2020, when parts of the world were still in lockdown, Daniel Lee, then creative director at Bottega Veneta, opened his spring/summer 2021 show with a skirt suit and matching mules in a saturated bright green, the colour of the most artificial of artificial lawns.

It wasn't the first time that he had used green for the Kering-owned fashion house, but the yowzer shade stood out in those sad beige times, a booster jab of a colour that became instantly known as Bottega Green. It looked great on social media too. A flash of the hue on an Instagram feed announced that even if you hadn't left the house you were still, yes, relevant.

Colour trends still sometimes follow the path described by Meryl Streep's fashion magazine editor Miranda Priestly in *The Devil Wears Prada*. "In 2002, Oscar de la Renta did a collection of cerulean gowns," Priestly tells Anne Hathaway's fashion-indifferent Andy, "and then cerulean quickly showed up in the collections of eight different designers. And then it filtered down through the department stores, and then trickled on down into some tragic Casual Corner where you, no doubt, fished it out of some clearance bin."

But green has not been consigned to the clearance bin. It is still very much with us.

Almost two years on, statement greens have continued to sprout – most notably at Fendi's show in New York in September, where a vivid pistachio dominated. Bright green has been widely worn during this autumn's fashion weeks by front-row regulars such as Tank magazine fashion director Caroline Issa and Canadian stylist and Instagram influencer Neelam Ahooja. Ahooja is best known for wearing monochrome looks by minimalist brand The Row, but since The Row now also does green she has been experimenting. She likes to wear them both with black for contrast.

Green has spread across menswear too. Last month, Harry Styles attended the film premiere of *My Policeman* in a trinity of bold Gucci greens – a dark emerald jacket and silk corsage, lime trousers and a 1947 vintage green leather top-handle bag. Less theatrically, the Irish actor Andrew Scott donned a zingy peppermint suit by Paul Smith to the London premiere of *Catherine Called Birdy*.

Green has become so popular in the past few years that it has taken the place of Millennial Pink as a generational colour, dubbed "Gen Z Green". Outside of fashion, the hue is also performing well. In March, Apple released two new foresty shades called Green and Alpine Green for the iPhone 13. In June, Elle Decor declared: "Green has become the colour *du jour* in recent years, popping up in kitchens and living rooms in various hues from emerald and acid."

Perhaps the product category green is most suited to is wellness. When at the end of this summer, Kate Moss launched her new beauty and wellbeing brand Cosmoss, it was in a triumph of pond-



From top: statement greens on the street; stylist Neelam Ahooja; Vanity Fair Italia editor-in-chief Simone Marchetti; former Grazia.it editor-in-chief Tamu McPherson; a guest at Milan Fashion Week
Getty Images

weed-coloured glass packaging. OK, maybe moss green, but had it launched three years ago, would it have been quite so mossy? Perhaps not.

Why are we still obsessed with green? It probably has its roots in the pandemic when, forced to stay in our homes for weeks at a time, our desire for nature increased. "I think on a deep level that's how green has become a core colour," says Joanne Thomas, head of content at Coloro, a colour trend forecaster. "People were emerging from their homes with this renewed appreciation of nature, a lust for the outdoors to almost ensure survival. Green links to that and to so much that many people are striving for now – nature, organic living, wellness."

Thomas says that Priestly's monologue about how colour trends work is

'People had a renewed appreciation of nature, a lust for the outdoors. Green links to that'

dated. Because of the internet, trends are now more led by consumer behaviour. "Brands and the catwalk don't dictate the trends," says Thomas. "It's more about looking at what the consumer wants and what they're showing emotionally and how brands can cater to those emotions more."

The fashion industry didn't invent our desire for green, it just read the room. It is surely not a coincidence that green is the decreed colour of environmentalism, something the fashion industry has an awkward relationship with. The spring/summer 2023 Loewe menswear show in June saw a collection that included "living" garments and accessories. Soaked and scattered with chia and catwort seeds six weeks previously, the clothes sprouted vivid green plants.

A statement of optimism or an exercise in denial? Perhaps both. "It's like a safety blanket, a comfort blanket," says Thomas. "If we're dressing in the tones of the Earth that we're trying to protect, even while not doing a very good job of it, that offers us some sort of comfort."

Coloro forecasts two years ahead and, having recently worked on trends for autumn/winter 24/25, Thomas can report that "green is still there. It's moving into more lime, mint iterations, softer hues, after the really bold shades, but it isn't going anywhere." For some time to come, then, green will continue growing on us.

TOM

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