

The Most Flattering Long Pants

by Pamela Fay

Every woman should have at least three pair of basic pants in her closet — pants that make you feel like a million bucks. Selecting the best pants, though, isn't always easy. If you know what to look for, however, you can have the pants wardrobe of your dreams. Or, at least, you will have pants that take you from the office to the park to date night with equal ease.

The Hem

When you select long pants, make sure they are, well, long. Ankle length pants are considered a classic. But every few years they become a trend. Whatever they are in the current season, you are best served by leaving them on the rack. These iconic pants (think Jackie O and Audrey Hepburn) make your legs look shorter and your hips wider. Who needs that? Don't opt for crop pants, either. Crop pants, those that hit from just below the knee to just above the ankle, require mile-long legs. And even the leggy, skinny Cameron Diaz dons them with super high heels. Hem your long pants to the bottom of your heel. You will appear taller and slimmer than you already are.

Color and Fabric

Build your anchor wardrobe around neutrals and save the season's trendy colors for tops and accessories. If you tire of black, try cream, taupe, chocolate brown or charcoal grey. Navy and olive green work, as well. Don't be afraid to combine neutrals like black and navy. As for fabric, shop for seasonless choices like lightweight wool, wool gabardine, silk, cotton, dark denim and today's better polyester blends.

Flat Front

Pleats are not your friends. You may be tempted to believe that they disguise a tummy bulge. Not true. They add bulk to an area where most women don't need it. Look for flat front long pants without pleats, gathers or tucks. The fly front zipper should lay flat and unobtrusive. Side zippers are fun, but avoid them unless your stomach is concave every day of the month. Forego the contrasting stitching, whiskering, or any design detail that draws attention to the midsection.

Pockets

Stay away from patch pockets on the front of your pants. Your best pocket is a vertical pocket in the side seam or an inset pocket that is angled at the top toward your waist. Look for a front pocket design that is either hardly visible or enhances or suggests a slender waist with a gentle curve. Back pockets should ride low on the hips. Avoid flaps and small pockets because your bottom will look bigger when adorned with what is the design equivalent of flags and stickers!

Cut

Choose straight leg or boot-cut long pants with a medium rise in the waist. This means that your pants should fall straight from the widest part of the hip to the hem. Avoid skinny or tapered legs. These tend to emphasize the hip and thigh unless you want your

hips and thighs to figure more prominently. Wide leg long pants can work, but you will need to balance the volume on the bottom with a fitted top. But, if you have proportionally short legs, avoid wide legs. A medium rise is one that comes to just below the belly button. Low rise pants lengthen the torso and shorten the leg line.

References

“Style on a Shoestring”; Andy Paige, 2009