

PURPOSE

One of the keys to a successful session is wearing a well-fitting wardrobe that flatters your body. This booklet will help educate you on undergarments and lingerie so you know what to look for when shopping, as well as addresses the common body shapes, and offers suggestions on what to wear for your session.

Shopping guidance offered toward the end.



BODY SHAPES



The internet is full of information regarding a woman's body shape—some websites state there are four common shapes, while others state up to eight!

To be honest, it can be very overwhelming trying to dig through all of the information out there BUT knowing your shape will help you select the most flattering outfit and/or lingerie. (And this goes not only for your session, but for day-to-day life.)

I encourage you to enter your bust/waist/hip measurements into the [Body Shape Calculator](#) to find out your shape, as well as more [tips to styling your body](#)*.

*I am not a paid sponsor of their site, nor do I endorse products they sell.



WHAT SHAPE ARE YOU?

Shannon Hemaier Photography | PaBoudoir.com

First things first—figure out your body shape.

To do this, you will need to take measurements of your bust, waist, and hips, then plug your measurements into the [Body Shape Calculator](#)*. (Be sure you have selected ‘inches.’)

After you click “Calculate Your Body Shape,” you will be taken to a new screen that gives you your body shape.

Once you know your shape, come back to the booklet and review your shape. You will find the most common body shapes listed: rectangle, pear, inverted triangle, hourglass, and diamond/apple.

Interesting tidbit: your body shape is not determined by your weight, but by how your body distributes the weight. So a women who weighs 140 pounds and a women who weighs 200 pounds can both be the same body shape.

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RECTANGLE

No defined waist, hips & shoulders are same width, and little-to-no

GOAL

Create a waist, while balancing top and bottom by adding curves.

Suggestions to wear:

- Tops in light or bold colors with belted or cinched-in waists to add fullness to your shoulders and hips.
- Blouses with 3/4 sleeves.
- Tuck in tops to define the waist.
- Necklines with V, U, boatneck, or high neck.
- Embellishments at the bust and shoulders, such as puffy or ruffled sleeves, details at the bust like ruffles, pockets or pleating.
- A-line skirts, knee-length pencil skirts, or fitted pants.
- Shift dresses, halter dresses, or dresses that give the illusion of an hourglass shape.
- Jackets or blazers that have a defined waist or belted at the waist.
- Larger or long earrings.



BODY SHAPES

The widest part of your body is below your waist.

GOAL

Add to upper body and deemphasize lower body to elongate fig-

Suggestions to wear:

- Light or bright colored tops. Prints are fine.
- Detailed or plunging necklines.
- Waist-length tops or tuck in tops to define the waist.
- Loose tunic tops that go past the hips.
- Solid, dark, and slimming knee-length pencil skirts or pants with flared bottoms.
- Dresses or tops with off-the-shoulder or one-shoulder.
- Puffy or ruffled sleeves are perfect for pear body shapes.
- Jackets or blazers that go past your hips.
- Accessories that will draw the eye to the top of your body like chunky necklaces or a scarf.
- Thin belts that match the color of your bottoms and set them at the high part of your waistline.



INVERTED TRIANGLE

Wider shoulders than hips with a straight mid-section and little-to-no-defined waist.

GOAL

Add volume to lower half.

Suggestions to wear:

- Dresses, skirts, or pants that make your hips appear fuller or curvier.
- Light or bold colored bottoms paired with dark color tops.
- A-line or fuller ballerina type skirts with ruffles, tiers, like peplum skirts or dresses.
- Pants with embellishments at the hips or have hip pockets with bootcut, flare or wide leg.
- Collarless shirts, wide straps, deep V or U necks.
- Jackets or blazers with deep V-necks and cinched-in waist that flare at the hips or have pockets.



HOURGLASS

A full bust, rounded hips and shoulders that are nearly the same width, and a well-defined waist.

GOAL

Accentuate natural waist and maintain the balance of hips and shoulders.

Suggestions to wear:

- Form-fitting tops that are wrapped, belted or have a cinched-in waist.
- Tailored blouses and jackets that accentuate your waist.
- Full or flounce skirts. V-neck or deep neckline tops.
- Peplum tops and dresses are perfect for this body shape!
- For a more dramatic hourglass effect, add volume to your bust, shoulders, and hips with a fitted waist.
- Wrapped dresses, dressed with darting, ruching at one side or the waist.
- Jackets or blazers with fitted waist, flared at hips with a structured shoulder on top.
- Pants and pencil skirts with high waists.
- Skinny, wide, or boot leg pants.



DIAMOND/APPLE

Widest in the center. Tapering at the top and bottom with no defined waist.

GOAL

Define waist. Lean or lengthen lower body, add fullness to upper body.

Suggestions to wear:

- Tops with a cut-in or belted waist.
- Boatnecks or wide squared or scoop necklines with structured shoulders, capped, flutter or wider sleeves.
- Tops with embellishments at the bust and shoulders that are full, ruching or flowing fabric at the bust.
- Strapless or off-the-shoulder dresses or tops with empire waists.
- Tailored wraps or tunic tops with belted waists.
- Jackets with structured shoulders, cut-in waists that have pockets on the bust.
- Bottoms that lean and lengthen your lower body.
- A-line skirts, or straight skirts that fall from the widest part of your hips.
- Straight leg pants that fall from the hips with hip pockets.
- Bootcut or trouser cut pants in dark colors.

FOCUS ON FIT, NOT SIZE

The key here: get the best fit. Do not base what you wear off of the size on the garment, but by the fit. To achieve the best fit, you may need to go up a size or select a different style/fabric.

Fit is what matters.

THE MANY OPTIONS OF LINGERIE

Before you can determine what boudoir clothing styles work best for you, you first want to understand the many options there are to select from in terms of lingerie—the next few pages explain the most common types of lingerie.

Regardless of what you select to wear, focus on FIT, not size.

Reference the [Boudoir Clothing Guidance board](#) on Pinterest for dos and don'ts with heels, panties, fabrics, and lingerie.





BABYDOLL

Babydoll nighties are, in my opinion, the **least flattering style of lingerie**. It can [make your shape look rectangular](#), which no woman is. Most women wear this style because they are trying to conceal the midsection, but there are better ways to do that while also showing your shape.

Now, this is not true for all baby dolls—just be mindful as you're shopping.

BRA & PANTY SET (OR TWO-PIECE BATHING SUIT)

If you're not a fan of your midsection, but love the look of a bra & panty set, I'd recommend a matching set with a high-waisted, high-on-the-thigh panty. **No boyshorts!**

You can also pair the set with a high-waisted garter belt (with or without stockings), or an underbust corset to give your midsection more coverage without compromising shape.

Even a high-waisted two-piece bathing suit would work!

If you're comfortable with your midsection, you should still avoid boyshorts.

For the bra, you can consider wearing a pushup with padding, or going more natural with a pretty sheer/lace bra. If it looks like you have 'armpit fat' when the bra is on, that just means it's too small. Try going up either a band or cup size.



BUSTIER

A bustier is meant to "boost" the bust line and can come in different lengths and styles. A bustier will NOT cinch your waistline—the back of a bustier is made of eye/hooks like on your bra, or the back could be a solid piece of material and the front has the eye/hooks or zipper. Neither style is a corset.

A downfall of the bustier—the built-in-cups are usually deemed one-size-fits most, and clients often run into either their breasts don't fill in the cups and there is gapping (which may or may not be able to be resolved using "chicken cutlets," which I do have at the studio); or, the cups are too small and their breasts are spilling out (which can cause the illusion of "armpit fat," and there really isn't a way to remedy this problem. Sometimes wearing a robe can help hide that section of spillage, but not always.)

If the bustier has garter suspenders attached to the item, you may find you must wear thigh-high stockings to keep the bustier taut, otherwise it may ride up on you. If you are using garter suspenders, you MUST get a [true stocking](#)—you do NOT want the silicone lining on the inside of the stay-up thigh high stocking band, or the garter clasps may not attach (those with the silicone on the band can also cause muffin top). Depending on the outfit, consider getting nude vs black—I think nude stockings are so classy!

CHEMISE

If you want to show off your legs and tush, a chemise will help do that since it's usually just-barely long enough to cover the tush. A chemise should be form fitting—if it's too flowy, it could add bulk like a babydoll.

If the chemise has garter suspenders attached to the item, you may find you must wear thigh-high stockings to keep the chemise taut, otherwise it may ride up on you. If you are using garter suspenders, you **MUST** get a [true stocking](#)—you do NOT want the silicone lining on the inside of the stocking band or the garter clasps may not attach (those with the silicone on the band can also cause muffin top). Depending on the outfit, consider getting nude vs black—I think nude stockings are so classy!



CORSET

I encourage you to look at an [underbust corset](#)—I LOVE underbust corsets, and I feel they are edgier than a classic overbust corset. What's great about an underbust corset—you can wear it with a bra/panty set, a teddy, just panties and go topless, or even with jeans/great top.

If you want to do an [overbust corset](#), there are two necklines: [sweetheart](#) and [straight](#). If you try one style and are having a lot of gapping around the top, you may need a different size or a different neckline. Don't be discouraged if you order an overbust and you don't like how it fits... just order a different neckline and see if that helps with fit.

Here is what I do not like about overbust corsets:

- We are limited on posing options. It's difficult to sit in an overbust corset, and if you lay down, you often lose volume in the bust. This means we usually do standing-only poses.
- You can still lose volume in your bust even if you're standing.
- Overbust corsets can create 'back fat' that would not otherwise be there. This is from being cinched in so tight.
- Overbust corsets cause you to have extremely good posture, but that can also make you look overly stiff.
- If you get a size too large, it doesn't cinch correctly and/or causes gapping in the bust area.

Sites sometimes call a bustier a corset, but a [bustier has eye/hooks](#) along the back of the item like your bra, which does not cinch—you must have ties the entire length of the back of the item in order to cinch in the waist. Or sites will call it an underbust, but it's really a [waist cincher](#), and again, there are no strings in the back to cinch. It is the ties that cinch in the waist as you pull them tighter.

When looking for either style corset, make sure it has strings to tie the entire length of the item in the back, otherwise you cannot cinch in the waist. Even if the website calls it a corset, if there are not strings in the back, it is not a corset.

It does not matter if the front/side of the corset is a zipper, clasps, etc.



Shannon Hemauer Photography | PaBoudoir.com



ENHANCE BUST

[Deep-v/plunging necklines](#) will give you great side boob. Even if you're conscious of your midsection, a deep-v/plunging neckline is very flattering. We can always use fashion tape to secure the top if needed.

[Bustiers](#) boost the bustline, but don't always fit the breasts well—sometimes if the body of the item fits, then the cups are too small; but, then if you go up a size or two, then the body of the bustier is too large. So you may need to play around with trying a few different bustiers.

GARTER BELT

With garter belts, there are two styles: ones that sit at your belly button and those that sit lower on your abdomen.

The ones that sit at your belly button can offer more coverage ([HERE](#)) or less coverage ([HERE](#)). Those that sit lower on your abdomen ([HERE](#)) can hit women right below the "pooch"—if you don't like how one style fits, try the other. Many items, like teddies & corsets, often have removable garter suspenders that will enable you to wear stockings.

If you're conscious of your midsection, then I suggest a garter belt that sits at the belly button—I find this is a more-flattering place to have the garter belt.

If you are using garter suspenders and want to wear stockings, you **MUST** get a [true stocking](#)—you do NOT want the silicone lining on the inside of the stocking band or the garter clasps may not attach (those with the silicone on the band can also cause muffin top). Depending on the outfit, consider getting nude vs black—I think nude stockings are so classy!

THIGH HIGHS

If you want to wear thigh highs for your session (or for any occasion!), I 100% recommend [VienneMilano](#) stockings. I have personally worn their stay-up thigh highs and was amazed that they stayed put (I didn't have to adjust them at all from sitting/standing/squatting), and because they sit so high on the thigh (just under the tush), there was no muffin top! Clients have worn the thigh highs during their session and didn't have to be adjusted at all because the silicone is such a good quality. Most stockings come in XS to 3X.

The owner, Vienne, lives in Massachusetts and her stockings are made in Italy. Beautiful quality, from the stocking/band to the silicone used.

There are two kinds of thigh highs: those that are a [true stocking](#) and need a garter belt to stay up, and those that stay up on their own because of the silicone band.

Recommended Stay-Up Thigh High Styles:

- [ISABELLA Sheer Thigh Highs](#)
- [CLAUDIA Matte Thigh Highs](#)
- [GIORGIA Fishnets Thigh Highs](#)
- [REGINA Sheer Thigh Highs](#)
- [GRETA Rhinestone Fishnet Thigh Highs](#)
- [LUDOVICA Tall Floral Lace Top Thigh Highs](#)

Use code PABOUDOIR at checkout and save 15% on all stay-up thigh highs.* Code not valid on non-stay-up thigh highs, clothing, or other items.

Regardless of what style you wear, **the thigh high should sit high on the thigh, almost directly under the cupping of your tush.** A lot of women will wear thigh highs that only come up to the middle of the thigh or just above the knee—this means the thigh high is the wrong length, and may cause "muffin top." Oftentimes with cheaply made stay-up thigh highs, the silicon used is subpar and the band rolls down or doesn't stay up at all.

There is a lot of information on the website on how to wear thigh highs—it's worth checking out [HERE](#).

*I am an affiliate with this company, but I truly recommend their product.



LENGTHEN LEGS

For legs, get a pair of [classic pumps](#) (slip-on) to engage the legs muscles. A nude pair will lengthen the legs, but a black pair never goes out of style. Rule of thumb, the higher the heel, the longer the legs.

When it comes to panties/teddies, the higher the leg holes, the longer the legs. This is an extreme example, but compare how long the woman's legs look [HERE](#), vs [HERE](#).

NIGHTIE

[Nighties can make you look frumpy](#)—there usually isn't shape to them nor do that flatter the bustline. Instead, look for a [chemise](#) (short/form-fitting dress that hugs your shape), [full slip](#) (glosses over your shape and has a more flattering neckline than a nightie), or certain [sleep gowns](#) work well.

TEDDY

I love teddies—they flatter all body types and bust sizes! Be daring and consider at least one with a [deep-v/plunging neckline](#)—they are flattering. You usually get a natural bustline with a teddy (vs push up), which give you great side-boob shots.

TUSH

[Cheekies, thongs, and tangas](#) accent the tush nicely. A pair of heels will activate the leg/tush muscles. (Posing also helps.) Avoid boy shorts and go with panties that are high on the thigh.



PINTEREST: BOUDOIR CLOTHING GUIDANCE

On the private [Boudoir Clothing Guidance board](#), which you'll receive an invite to, you will find information on:

- Recommend Shoe Styles/Colors
- Shoe Styles to Avoid
- Lingerie Education on panty styles, necklines, and 101 on corsets.
- Recommend Lingerie Styles
- Recommend Panty Styles
- Recommend Fabrics
- Fabrics to Avoid
- Panty Styles to Avoid
- Lingerie Styles to Avoid

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

So now that you understand the many options of lingerie, it is now time to determine your goal of the lingerie—once you define the goal, you can select the best styles for you. And do not worry—I am here to help!

Want to show off those hard-earned abs and a little more skin?

Bra and panty sets are a great option. Things to think about are the style of panty you choose (the amount of coverage) and what type of bra suits you best.

Feel you need some lift in the breast department?

You may be tempted to go for a push-up bra, but resist the urge and look for demi-cup bras or underwire bras that offer strong support without adding too much size. This is typically more flattering proportion wise, and good support is more important than padding. This is not to say that there are not some good push-up bras out there, just be really aware of how any bra fits and flatters.

Need a lift but do not want to show too much skin?

Bustiers may be for you! They offer amazing support while giving you a little more coverage, all while flattering your shape. Bustiers do not cinch in the waist, though.

Want to diminish your midsection?

Corsets cinch in the waist and come in two styles: overbust and underbust. Over-bust styles with a straight top can sometimes smooch the breasts, so look for styles that have a sweetheart neckline. Underbusts allow you to wear your own bra—you get lift and coverage with an underbust corset!

Also consider teddies and bodysuits—they flatter just about everyone and provide coverage.





Want to enhance your tush?

Cheeky or Brazilian bottoms “frame” the tush and help make even a flat tush look great.

Want long, gorgeous legs?

Look for high-cut undies, teddies, and bodysuits to lengthen legs. The higher the leg opening the longer your legs will look. Skin-tone heels will make your legs look even longer than they are.

Concerned about your arms?

Look for long-sleeved body suits or throw a pretty robe over some great lingerie.

How to do coverage correctly?

If you are worried about showing your stomach, go for gorgeous shape wear, slips, teddies/bodysuits, bustiers, bathing suits, and corsets. Something as simple as a plain white tank top and lacy undies works, too. High-waisted panties, as well as high-waisted garter belts help conceal, too.

If you have stretch marks or scars, look for more opaque materials, but stick with a style that will still show off your shape—a bodysuit or a slip is a great pick. The worst thing you can do is hide behind a lot of fabric—for example, your man’s shirt. It will only add bulk to your frame. We want to see your gorgeous shape no matter what you wear or how covered you are.



SO MANY OPTIONS!

If you are like most of the women I photograph, this information is a bit overwhelming—with so many options, where does one begin?

Not to worry! Do not forget I include with every collection:

- a private Pinterest board where we will pin lingerie inspiration.
- a wardrobe consult to discuss items
- shopping guidance, i.e., where to shop, what to look for, etc.

because my goal is to help you feel confident that what you are wearing fits you well and will photograph great—that equates to stunning portraits of you!



WHERE TO SHOP





This list is by no means all-inclusive but is a great starting point.

Keep in mind many stores/sites do not allow you to return/refund intimate wear for hygienic reasons, so be sure to check their return policy.

LINGERIE BOUTIQUE

[Underneath It All](#): A boutique located in Camp Hill, PA, that sells lingerie from xs to 6x. The owner, Kim, specializes in bra fittings as well.

I highly suggest you use their complimentary one-on-one service—the boutique has worked closely to me for years, and I've educated them on what fabrics/styles photograph well.

WEBSITES

[Adore Me](#) Sizes XS–4X | A–I Cups | 30–46 Bands.

[Amazon](#) Cost-savvy lingerie. Good resource for heels.

[Bare Necessities](#) Lingerie fitted by band/bra size.

[Fredrick's of Hollywood](#) Items tend to run small.

[Hips and Curves](#) This site caters specifically to curvy women.

[Lane Bryant's Cacique Intimates](#) This site caters specifically to curvy women.

[Pour Moi](#) Lingerie fitted by band/bra size. Bands sizes that range from 30-44, and cup sizes from A to M.

[Savage X Fenty](#) Lingerie by Rihanna.

[Victoria's Secret](#)

[VienneMilano](#) Luxury stockings & stay-up thigh highs. Use code PABOUDOIR for 15% off stay-up thigh highs.

[What Katie Did](#) Vintage clothing.

[Yandy](#) Cost-savvy lingerie.



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SHANNON HEMAUER PHOTOGRAPHY