

A woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a black lace strapless gown, stands in front of a large, ornate, gold-framed mirror. She is looking directly at the camera with one hand on her hip and the other touching the mirror frame. The mirror reflects her back and the interior of a room with a chandelier and architectural details.

Body-Smart **PARTY DRESSING**

Tall or short, big or small—
ANY BODY can look
sensuous this holiday season.

Armed with fashion
strategies that spotlight the
good stuff, eight women
of all sizes step out in style.

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CRYSTAL RENN

plus-size model

"I'm very proud of my hourglass figure now," says Renn, 23, author of the eating disorder memoir *Hungry*. In this gown (David Meister, \$440), no curve goes unnoticed. The black lace over a blush slip is sophisticated but sexy; the skirt's mermaid flare plays to Renn's love of dramatic shapes. Bracelets and ring, M.C.L. by Matthew Campbell Laurenza.

If you're curvy...

- **Show off your shoulders.** They're pretty no matter what size you are.
- **Lengthen the lower body.** This flared hem offsets the hips (they'd look wider if the skirt tapered all the way down).
- **Look for structure.** Don't let your small waist get lost in something loose or boxy.
- **Create a diversion.** A strapless or one-shoulder style draws the gaze upward—a smart tactic if you carry most of your weight on the bottom.



Busty

SHERRI SHEPHERD

actress

This flirty dress (Carmen Marc Valvo Collection, \$535) is brightly colored but discreetly cut. "It does not scream, 'Hey, big boobs!'" says Shepherd, 42, cohost of *The View*, star of *Sherri*, a new Lifetime sitcom; and author of *Permission Slips: Every Woman's Guide to Giving Herself a Break*. A skirt with inverted pleats keeps her hips looking narrow. Cuff, Badgley Mischka. Ring, Joan Rivers. Shoes, Moschino.

If you're busty...

- **Stick to one shade.** It creates a head-to-toe sweep of color, so you look longer and slimmer.
- **Contain yourself.** If wearing a tank, choose wider straps, which allow for a more supportive bra. Avoid strapless or backless dresses.
- **Don't go with the flow.** Tailored clothes that give the body a clear silhouette are more becoming.
- **Stretch out.** Establish a strong vertical line with pleats, seams, or long necklaces and scarves. ➤



Athletic


SOLEDAD O'BRIEN

TV newscaster

O'Brien's straight shape suddenly looks va-va-voom in a gold sheath (David Meister, \$500) and leopard-print trenchcoat (Carmen Marc Valvo Collection, \$840; check out a similar coat for less than \$100 in "Adam Says," page 128). "I'd never worn metallics before," says the 43-year-old CNN anchor and special correspondent, "and my trenches are black or navy." Earrings, Anna Ruth Henriques.

If you're athletic...

- **Take the plunge.** Deeper necklines create the illusion of more bust.
- **Cinch it in.** Belts add shape by "carving out" the waist.
- **Try gathers and texture.** The ruching and gleam on this dress give the body dimension.
- **Build curves.** Emphasize your top half with a dramatic collar, your hips with a slightly flared skirt.
- **Dress sexy.** A less voluptuous figure means you can indulge in high-glam fabrics without looking too Las Vegas.



"I like clothes that fall off the shoulder a bit," says Karolina Kurkova. "A little bare skin looks natural, earthy, and feminine."

Pregnant

KAROLINA KURKOVA
model

"I'm thrilled with my bump," says Kurkova, 25. She likes that her romantic dark teal dress (A Pea in the Pod Collection, \$325) is not skintight, but sexy, outlining her swelling belly. And the bias-cut velvet is stretchy enough to accommodate it. Bangles, Melinda Maria, Gara Danielle Fine Jewelry, Aurum Vitae by Tam Tam, Ippolita, and Jennifer Rose at Supplements NY. Two-finger ring, Avant Garde Jewelry. Shoes, Versace.

If you're pregnant...

- **Go Grecian.** Draping is good; you want to show off your belly, not broadcast every detail.
- **Define your shape.** Baggy makes you look bigger. Kurkova belts looser clothes under her stomach or beneath her breasts.
- **Don't cover up.** Bare skin is sensual; you don't have to be shy about exposing great legs or lovely arms.
- **Think colorfully.** Consider deep, rich shades—they're more flattering than brights or metallics.
- **Borrow his stuff.** Kurkova likes to go out for dinner in black leggings, a white shirt of her boyfriend's, and a tuxedo jacket. ♦

Long-waisted

LAUREN ZALAZNICK
TV executive

This tuxedo dress (Thread Social, \$605)—great over leggings (Riller & Fount, \$101) or opaque hose—reflects Zalaznick's preference for neutral shades and sculptural shapes. At 46, the president of NBC Universal Women and Lifestyle Entertainment Networks believes that dress-up clothes shouldn't stray too far from your everyday wardrobe. "My basic colors are gray and off-white," she says. "My evening look is a shinier version—metallic or satin—of that palette." Tank, Hanro, \$89. Bracelet, Iradj Molini. Ring, Club Monaco. Shoes, Chanel.

If you're long-waisted...

- **Sharpen color contrasts.** Break up the length of your body with a stark pairing, like black and white.
- **Relocate the waist.** The dress narrows to a deep vee just above her natural waist, then flares out, creating a whole new silhouette.
- **Think big.** Architectural construction—defined shoulders; sculptured-looking ruffles—won't swamp a tall, lean figure.
- **Play up the legs.** Let them be seen.
- **Go for bold jewels.** Delicate accessories disappear on a stretched-out body. Instead, think cocktail rings or chunky, extravagant bracelets.

Something black-and-white and decisively cut—a modern tuxedo look—can be just as sexy for evening as a flirty little dress.





Full-figured

GABOUREY SIDIBE actress

Sidibe, 26, the breakout star of *Precious*, the acclaimed indie film about an abused Harlem teenager, is discovering the difficulties of dressing for the red carpet. "There are not a lot of options for girls my size," she says. But this gorgeous dress (Igigi, \$152) and arm-camouflaging sequin capelet (Jovani, \$380) are youthful, chic, and slimming. "I feel sexy in clothes that cup me at the bust, then fly out," says Sidibe. Bracelet, Bounkit. Shoes, Payless.

If you're full-figured...

- **Draw the eye up.** A show of skin at the neck or chest shifts the focus from body to face.
- **Support yourself.** Invest in a good bra with convertible straps (so you can wear it invisibly under a variety of necklines).
- **Keep it simple.** Eschew ruffles and frills, which add bulk.
- **Stay in the black.** We're not saying zero color, but deeper, darker tones take off pounds.
- **Layer lightly.** A coat or jacket will make you look bigger; a capelet or shawl offers equally good coverage without tacking on inches. ➤

KRISTIN CHENOWETH

actress and singer

Being 4'11" and 92 pounds is a fashion challenge. "Women roll their eyes at this, but having boobs and no torso is tricky to dress," says Chenoweth, 41, who starred in Broadway's *Wicked* and the more recent TV series *Pushing Daisies*. This strapless satin number (Foley + Corinna, \$297) has a leg-lengthening Empire waist, and the skirt is poufy but scaled down, so it doesn't overwhelm her. Even boots (Pedro Garcia) can party if they're fancy enough. Bracelet and ring, Noir Jewelry. Stockings, Emilio Cavallini.

If you're petite...

- **Get leggy.** Embrace shorter skirts and sheerer hose (long hems and opaque tights can weigh you down).
- **Keep heels moderate.** Really high ones make small women look as if they're on stilts.
- **Accessorize discreetly.** Big, brash jewelry is too much for a pint-sized frame.
- **Be bare somewhere.** A strategic show of skin is essential. Covering up from head to foot is a fast route to Lilliputia.
- **Turn up the volume.** Modest puffery below the waist (pleats, flounces, bubble hem) can balance a larger bust or camouflage wide hips—or both.



Tall

L'WREN SCOTT
designer

"I've spent my life obsessing about silhouette, shape, and proportion," says fashion designer Scott, who is 40-something and 6'3". She believes in clothes that "transcend the day-night difference"—like this exquisitely fitted leaf-pattern sheath (L'Wren Scott). And a hemline at or below the knee is a Scott signature. Shoes, L'Wren Scott.

if you're tall...

- **Be fussy about fit.** Sleek is best; lots of fabric over a large area starts looking like a circus tent.
- **Experiment with prints.** They make a long, lean body seem curvier.
- **Be wary of minis.** They can make you look as if your skirt shrunk.
- **Choose eclectic shoes.** Stilettos? Sure, but kitten heels and pointy flats are cool, too.
- **Go wide.** Horizontal details that shorter women avoid—square necks, ankle-strap shoes, crosswise stripes—are fine for you.

*Fashion editor: Kym Canter.
Hair: Fred Van De Bunt and Benoit Moeyaert for Redken at Art Department. Makeup: Jeannia Robinette for Chanel at Art Department. Manicure: Dida at raybrownpro.com. For details see Shop Guide.*

"For me it's always about a waistline," says L'Wren Scott.
"I like to see a woman's figure no matter what her size."

