

JEAN CRIMES & MISDEMEANORS

O SOLVES THE MYSTERY OF GOOD FIT



Baggy. Skintight. So low on the hips, it's illegal. With denim offenses on the rise, our the wrong pairs. An eight-page guide to nabbing the jeans of your dreams (when you



rehab team stepped in, getting six women to stop punishing their bodies with
do, buy two). PHOTOGRAPHS BY HENRY LEUTWYLER



Veronica Frazier age 56
Sales associate

BEFORE When jeans fit Veronica's hips, they usually squeeze her waist—which is why she took scissors to her old pair and wore shirts untucked to hide the damage. But what her boyish figure needs is more waist definition, not less, as well as a bit of abdominal camouflage.

AFTER Subtle control via a stretch-fabric panel in front (Tummy Tuck Jeans by Not Your Daughter's Jeans, \$118) and a midrange waistband give Veronica instant sophistication. Add a little sparkle, and she's set for the evening. Craig Taylor shirt. Reinstein/Ross earrings. Marnie Rocks necklace. Avignon belt. Kate Spade shoes.



First Aid for Jeans

From too-worn-to-wear to born-again: New York City-based denimtherapy.com reconstructs jeans with denim thread—no patches—in two weeks (estimated cost: \$7 per inch). **Denim Revival** (323-852-7117), which ships nationwide, is a California vintage-clothing boutique as well as a repair business. And if you're in Los Angeles, take your tired and poor denim oldies to be resurrected at the legendary **Simon Master Tailor** (8042 West Third Street; no mail orders).

DENIM INTELLIGENCE

If you choose jeans well and treat them right, they'll look better and last longer. A few smart rules:

- **GO SLOWLY** when you shop. Quality time in the fitting room—45 minutes to an hour—pays off. Pick a store with lots of inventory.
- **SIT OR SQUAT** while you're trying on jeans to make sure not too much butt is showing (and to gauge comfort level).
- **BE FLEXIBLE** about size. An 8 in one brand may be more like a 10 (or a 6) in another; when in doubt, take more than one size into the dressing room.
- **BUY TWO PAIRS** when you find great jeans—one to hem for heels, the other to hem for flats. You'd be surprised how fast styles get discontinued.
- **TONE DOWN** to a dark blue wash; it's most slimming. Special fabric treatments (whiskering, abraded texture) make sense only on areas of the body you want to spotlight.
- **THINK WARDROBE**, rather than one grubby pair you wear to death (that's so college). Three to five jeans are the minimum: one or two for work or going out (dark, straight-legged denim looks most polished), one or two for weekends (with sneakers or flats), and one with extra give or stretch for "fat" days.
- **SEE A TAILOR** if jeans aren't precisely right (but never buy them too small, or there won't be enough fabric to work with). Some stores—Banana Republic, Club Monaco—offer free alterations; Nordstrom does only basic hems gratis.
- **PREVENT FADE-OUT** by washing dark jeans inside out in cold water. Dry-clean your dress-up jeans (the ones you wear with heels) from time to time: It's pricey, but you'll look crisp and immaculate.
- **SHOP ONLINE** if there are no local stores you like—it can be tricky, but good Web sites help: Shopbop.com has an interactive guide that shows you different styles on four figure types; at landsend.com you can see how jeans fit on a virtual model of your body.



age 26 **Alysia Zoidis**
Visual merchandiser
(arranges store displays)

BEFORE The deep-dipping waistband gives her lousy coverage, and droopy hems look sloppy ("Most jeans are too long for me," says 5'4" Alysia). And about that visible thong: Underthings should always match the cut of your jeans. (Try a no-show version like Jeanious by Barely There low-rise panties, \$9).

AFTER Hitting just below the waist, sleek denims (the Club by AG Adriano Goldschmied, \$172) easily accommodate Alysia's curves. Higher pockets with subtle tone-on-tone stitching improve her back view; in front, vertical whiskering (simulated creases) adds length to her legs. Thomas Pink shirt. Valentino belt. Hermès bracelets. Celine shoes.



Sheena Barr age 33
Attorney

BEFORE "I have a flat butt—most of my weight is in my upper body," Sheena says. These sag-prone jeans, with their low-lying pockets and excess fabric, just accentuate the imbalance between top and bottom.

AFTER Shapely stretch denim (Classic by Votre Nom Paris, \$150) with rear-end detail—back yoke, horizontal stitching on pockets—produces a higher, rounder-looking derriere. Before the shoot, Sheena's price limit for jeans was \$40; now she'd go up to \$200: "It makes more sense to have two pairs that fit than eight that don't." Agnola shirt. Kara Ross earrings and green cuff. Kentshire at Bergdorf Goodman bracelet. Cartier watch. Lambertson Truex belt. Jimmy Choo shoes.



THE BEST BRANDS

Pare down try-on time with these problem-solving styles (for buying info, see Shop Guide).

IF YOU'RE...PETITE

Look for low-rise, narrow-leg jeans. If you're small and curvy (petite plus), a flared leg helps to balance hips.

- BANANA REPUBLIC Premium Faded Low-Rise and Boot-Cut
- CHIP & PEPPER Pamela Straight
- LEE One True Fit Crisscross
- LEVI'S Red Tab Petite Straight Leg
- SAKURA JEANS AT JCPENNEY Harajuku
- 7 FOR ALL MANKIND Low-Rise Boot-Cut
- TALBOTS Classic 5-Pocket Boot-Cut Jean (petite and women's petite)

IF YOU'RE...TALL

Extralong inseams (34 to 36 inches) are increasingly available. If you're lean as well as tall, try the new ultraskinny jeans.

- GAP Long and Lean
- LEE Wide Band Boot-Cut and Crisscross
- LUCKY BRAND Lil' Maggie
- NOTIFY Anemone

IF YOU'RE...PLUS SIZE

Get stretch jeans with 2 percent spandex (more makes them too clingy). Steer clear of tricky textures; dark, solid washes are great minimizers.

- CHICO'S Platinum Denim Facet Jean
- GLO Flame ▶

FOR YOUR BODY

- ● **LANDS' END** Stretch Boot-Cut
- **LEVI'S** Boot-Cut 515
- **OLD NAVY** Plus Stretch Boot-Cut
- **THALIA SODI FOR KMART** Basic Jean
- **VICTORIA'S SECRET** the Hipster Tummy Tucker

IF YOU HAVE...WIDE HIPS

Best are jeans that sit just above hips. Stretch denim builds in "give" at hips while preventing waist from gapping.

- **EXPRESS X2** Curvy
- **FORTH & TOWNE** Gap Edition Curvy
- **GAP** Curvy Flare
- **IIT JEANS** Diva
- **THEORY** Justine Trouser Jean

IF YOU HAVE...A FULL BUTT

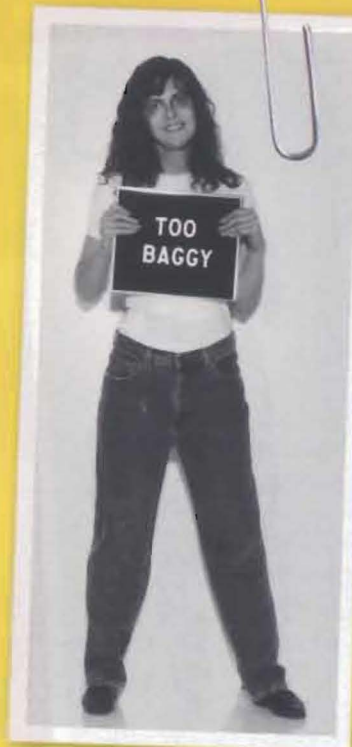
Accentuate a rounded "bubble" bottom with embellished pockets and darts, yokes, or topstitching.

- **APPLE BOTTOMS** Apple Yoke-Shaped Skinny Leg
- **HOUSE OF DEREON** Boot-Cut
- **JOE'S** the Starlet
- **JORDACHE** the Boyfriend
- **THALIA SODI FOR KMART** Basic Jean

IF YOU HAVE...STOMACH BULGE

Avoid pleats. A medium rise works best: Too low leads to "muffin top" (flesh spilling out over waistband); too high puts focus on the tummy.

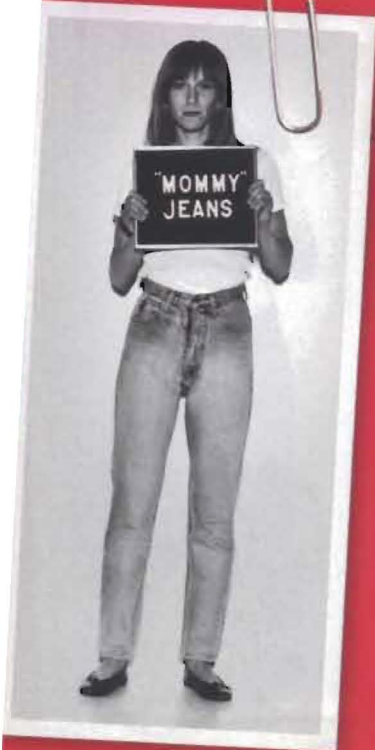
- **DKNY** East Village
- **J BRAND** 800's
- **JORDACHE** Legacy High-Rise



age 39 **Debby Skaler-Labendz, Actress**

BEFORE "If my jeans fit right, I feel sexier, happier, livelier," Debby says. But here she is hiding a terrific body under a pair that's at least a size too large. You want comfortable, not baggy (most denim "gives" over time, so it's okay if jeans feel slightly tight at first).

AFTER Slim enough to tuck into boots, the hip new skinnies—narrow, tapered jeans that can be "scrunched" at the bottom (Lean Jean by CK39, \$183)—aren't for everyone (you definitely need good legs), but on Debby, they're smashing. Herion top. Temple St. Clair necklace. Nanette Lepore flats.



JULIE WOLFE age 32
Mother

BEFORE Julie has an 18-month-old son—but that's no reason to settle for frumpy denim.

The passé light acid wash makes her lean thighs seem bulkier, and the high-rise style emphasizes the tummy (not that she has much postpartum bulge). She looks older and heavier than she is.

AFTER The slim, clean lines of these dark jeans (Hollywood Hills by Paige Premium Denim, \$169) are modern and elongating but not overly trendy (Julie isn't wild about ultralow rises). A slightly dropped waist and narrow belt slide right over any stomach trouble. Lucy Sykes blouse. Erickson Beamon necklace. Hermès belt. Chanel shoes.



\$500 JEANS— ARE THEY KIDDING?

What could possibly justify those wild prices?

For some of us, nothing. For big spenders, here's what you're getting for your money: **PRECISION FIT** Stella McCartney's skinny jeans (\$495) are so narrow, there's no margin for error, so the cut must be meticulously engineered.

SUPERIOR FABRIC Ring-spun denim produced on smaller looms (often in Japan or Italy) has a supertight weave that gives richer texture, greater durability.

LABOR-INTENSIVE HANDCRAFTING One pair of Evisu jeans (\$300 and up) takes 48 hours to make.

At Earnest Sewn (where custom-made jeans cost \$475), one worker completes an entire garment—and signs it.

**HIGH STYLE,
LOW PRICE**

O put hundreds of pairs to the test and found five true-blue buys.

● **!IT JEANS** When we tried these on O staffers, they worked superbly on a range of body types (Gayle loved the Hottie model, this Los Angeles-based company's best-seller; Oprah is wearing the Diva on our cover). \$68; itjeans.com.

● **JCPENNEY** The Sakura Jeans line, launched last month, is a collaboration with designers from hip, urban Salt Works Jeans. Although Sakura has many premium-denim hallmarks (Japanese fabric, subtle washes), the cost is a mere \$40; jcp.com.

● **VICTORIA'S SECRET** These are the jeans that models rave about. The inner stretch panel tummy tucker/thigh slimmer is good for the curvy (\$88); pick superskinny stretch jeans if you're slender (\$68). victoriasecret.com.

● **THALIA SODI JEANS** Designed by the Latina pop-music phenom, this Kmart collection uses high-quality stretch denim that gives just the right amount of sexy ease. We tried the jeans on women with bigger hips: nice fit, and nice price—\$25; kmart.com; 800-866-0086.

● **LANDS' END** This traditional source, known for sturdy construction and inclusive sizing, has updated the cut of its jeans (lower rises, but always with good butt coverage) and added meticulous hand-sanding for a distressed look. \$29 to \$59; landsend.com.

Fashion editor: Eve Feuer. Hair: Harry King for Halley Resources using Kiehl's products. Makeup: Lea Siegel for Giorgio Armani Cosmetics. Manicure: Tatyana Molot for Mark Edward. Prop stylist: Sergio Estevez.



age 23 Tamara Holmes
Concert producer

BEFORE "Ooh, these are hurting me!" Although Tamara says having too-small jeans in her closet motivates her to shape up ("I'm trying to fight my way back into them"), this skimpy pair clings to the widest part of her body, then narrows at the ankle for an unflattering inverted-triangle effect.

AFTER Get jeans you can wear today, not someday. Crisp stretch denim (Gap Curvy Flares, \$58)—tailored specifically for bigger hips and butts—fits smoothly but not tightly. Boot-cut legs with slight fullness at the bottom help to balance broad hips. Ellen Tracy shirt. H. Stern earrings. David Yurman rings. Steve Madden shoes. For details see Shop Guide.

