

HOW
TO
DRESS

TEN
POUNDS
THINNER



You know that weight you can't lose? O's downsizing team has surprising fashion strategies that

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARC ROYCE

The Butt Stops Here

"I'm crazed about my hips, bottom, and thighs," says former Wall Street trader Heather Gerner, 29. But going undercover in a loose-fitting, skin-baring dress, *below*, makes her look depressingly fleshy, and the splashy print isn't exactly camouflage material. A solid color—even one as incandescent as hot pink—is automatically more flattering. The shift dress (Michael Kors, \$1,495) and jacket (Michael Kors) have a slim, covered-up cut and vertical seaming, plus a bit of stretch to hold her in; undercover shaping (Body by Bali Thigh Slimmer, \$25) helps, too (for more lingerie info, see page 119). Heather, who often hides out in black clothes, was inspired: "I need to experiment with brighter colors." JCPenney faux-gold hoops. Iraj Moini emerald and ruby bracelet. Kate Spade velvet heels.



make your body look as if you gave up dessert for a month. Eight women put them to the test.



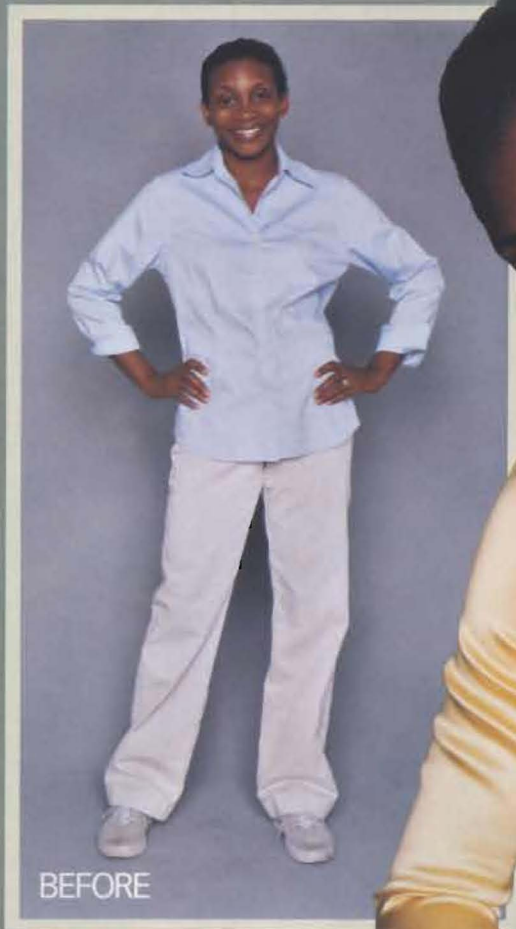
The Thin Blue Line

"I wasn't happy when I was 40 pounds lighter," says jewelry designer and photographer Lucy Kova, 32. "I like that my body is curvy and sexy." Still, sloppy separates—cropped jacket, low-slung trousers, skimpy tee, *far left*, only draw attention to her middle and sabotage a clean, lean line. A better way to layer: Take a minimizing base of black turtleneck (Club Monaco, \$79) and pants (Dana Buchman, \$250); add bold color on top. The structured peacock blue jacket (Citrine, \$242) offers coverage without too much volume; long, slim earrings (Anthony Nak) and satin heels (Rickard Shah) give a sense of head-to-toe stretch. Lambertson Truex beaded clutch. Nancey Chapman 24kt-gold and turquoise ring.



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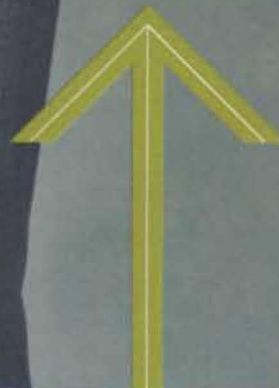
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A Low-Fat Wrap

Think of your clothes as new, improved packaging for your body: A glamorous silk charmeuse top (Charles Chang Lima, \$595) gives the illusion of a bigger bust and tinier waist for 39-year-old mom Karen Marie Norris. (The shapeless shirt and too-long khakis, *far left*, made her look dowdy.) Another spotlight for her décolletage: a multistrand pyrite necklace (Janis Savitt for Tory by TRB). Meanwhile, flat-front, straight-and-narrow pants (Lauren by Ralph Lauren, \$129) deflect attention from her hips, creating a better balance between upper and lower half. Karen's verdict: "I wish I could wear it home." Diane von Furstenberg by H. Stern 24kt-gold and quartz ring. Badgley Mischka beaded flats.



Slender Threads

The jeans, droopy jacket, and tucked-in shirt, *far right*, are a white-collar crime for what PR agency owner Bambi Levine describes as "hips that could sink battleships." But, she adds, as you age (she's 61), "you accept yourself more. I no longer think I'll get the guy or lose him on the basis of my weight." The pencil skirt (Linda Allard Ellen Tracy, \$198) is a surprisingly favorable shape for the broad of beam, particularly with the bonus of vertical topstitching. When the skirt is paired with matching black hose, hips do a disappearing act. Another minimizing idea: ruching. The gathers on Bambi's shirt (Thomas Pink, \$195) visually whittle her waist. John Hardy 18kt-yellow-gold earrings. Longines leather watch with diamond bezel. Demner platinum, sapphire, and diamond bracelets.



NOW

Small World

"Size 12 is who I am."

Although yoga studio manager Casey McCabe, 27, isn't fazed by her lush, full-breasted figure, her clothes don't do it justice. *Far right*, the turtleneck is too tight and pale (the lighter the color, the bigger you look); the limp print skirt just hangs there. But when we put Casey in a tunic (Tory by TRB, \$825), wow is the word: The easy fit obscures any top-heaviness, and gives lower-body coverage; the vertical geometric pattern and crystal trim increase the sleekness factor. Slim pants—here, a boot-cut pair (Moschino, \$650)—and heels (Stuart Weitzman) are a necessary balance for any loose top. DiModolo 18kt-white-gold and diamond lanyard necklace.



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Skirting the Bulge

"I've been working out, so I finally have a waistline," says Renée Yates Cooper, 54, a professor at New York City's Fashion Institute of Technology. "But my lower abs have a long way to go." It's a myth that flowing garments are the safest way to play down a stubborn belly—more fabric tends to generate an impression of more inches (and the giant pattern on her "before" dress, *far right*, didn't do Renée any favors, either). Instead, try unbasic black with a flared skirt that skims the stomach and a slightly raised waist to make the torso look narrower (Jill Sander, \$1,070). Tamara Comolli 18kt-gold and coral earrings. Kara Ross jeweled cuff. Diane von Furstenberg by H. Stern 18kt-yellow-gold link bracelet. Manolo Blahnik alligator shoes.



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The Right Stripes

Our svelteness experts were shocked by how many intelligent women believe their figures can survive horizontal stripes or seaming: Witness the brash top and way-too-mini skirt, *far right*, on Caitlin Rose, 21, a knitwear design assistant. Most of us need the leanness of vertical lines, here on a fitted shirt (Thomas Pink, \$195) and swingy skirt (Club Monaco, \$99). Pleats are good for thigh anxiety, but only when they're stitched down and don't bunch at the waist or add unnecessary thickness. "Although my waist is my favorite body part, nobody sees it because I usually wear long, loose tops," Caitlin says. "It's nice to show it off." K.C. Thompson 18kt-gold, pearl, and diamond earrings. Iraj Moini Swarovski-crystal cuff links. Valentino beaded belt.



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Middle Management

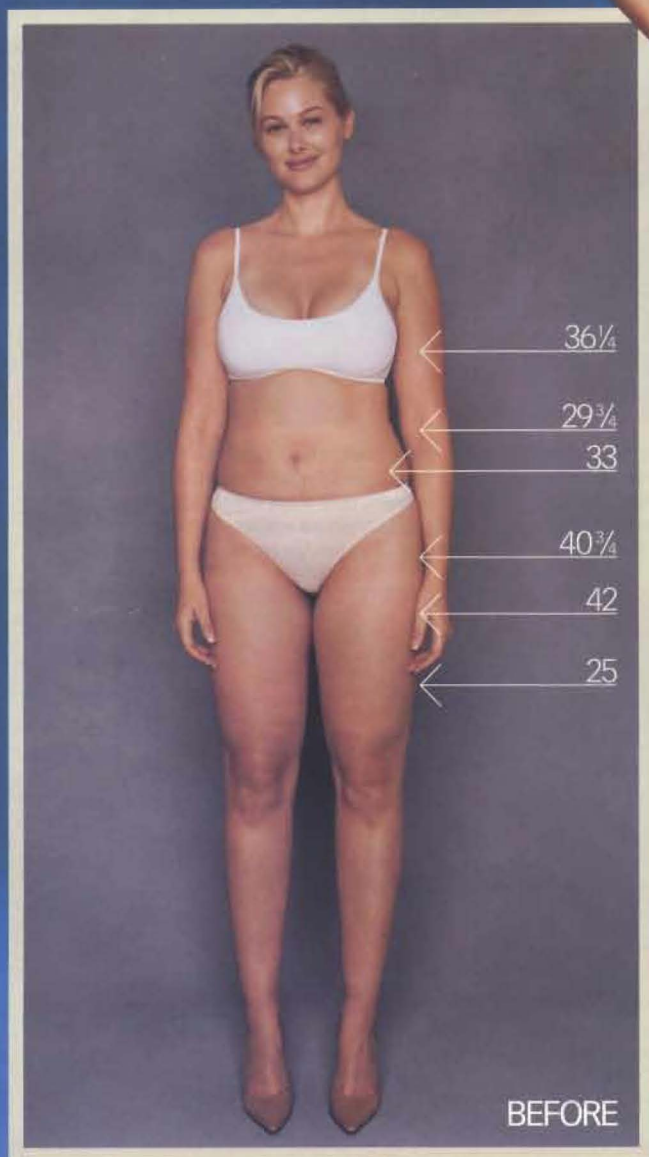
"If I lost ten pounds, it would take away my breasts and butt—and I really like those curves," says TV-radio host Danielle Brooks, 37. "But it would be fabulous to be a little leaner in the torso." Wish granted: The trimly belted suit (Charles Chang Lima jacket, \$600, and skirt, \$410) puts her waist front and center (in the chubby-textured sweater and skirt, *above right*, it's missing in action). Other pluses: Matching pieces are a lot more elongating than separates; the jacket's shapely topstitching makes her middle look leaner; the short skirt showcases great legs. Francesca Visconti 18kt-yellow-gold, turquoise, and wood cuff. Nancey Chapman aquamarine and tourmaline necklace. Manolo Blahnik brocade shoes.

Inside Info: O's Shaping Secrets

MEASURING UP: If your underthings don't fit right, what goes over them—no matter how chic—*isn't* going to look good. Heather Gerner's bikinis, *below*, are skimpy, and her bra doesn't provide enough support. Give your own lingerie a checkup: If you're bulging anywhere, it's probably too small or tight. (For detailed tips, consult "What's My Size?" at herroom.com—there are photos to help diagnose problems, even a tape measure you can print out.)

SLIMMING DOWN: Thanks to the stomach panel and contouring bands on this black lace all-in-one (Rago Shapewear long leg body briefer, \$46), Heather got statistically smaller (her waist went from 33 inches to 30 and a half inches; her hips lost an inch and a half) and dramatically sleeker. The bra on this bodysuit is fine if you need only moderate support, but the better endowed might try a style with underwire, like the Bali Body Briefer or Le Mystère's bodysuit. Burberry leather pumps. *For details see Shop Guide.*

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Presto, You're Slimmer

Tummy shapers and waist nippers are not instruments of torture (with lighter, smoother materials, all-day comfort isn't an impossible dream); they're part of the shapewear revolution. The Body Wrap, Body Nancy Ganz, and Spanx make underthings designed to spot-reduce wherever necessary. New for 2005: Spanx's Slim Cognito line, seamless and exceptionally soft, includes control briefs that lift the derriere and bodysuits that attach to the bra of your choice. (Preorder at spanx.com; in stores February 1.)