

Do's and don'ts of plus-size dressing

by Sharon_Mosley

When it comes to winterizing the full-figured wardrobe, many of us just want to hide beneath layers of bulky sweaters and puffy parkas. But Christine Alt, style consultant to the plus-sized collection, Woman Within, has a few things to say about coming out from undercover and showing off those curves.

PLUS SIZES DOS AND DON'TS - Don't hide under dark clothing in the winter. Do brighten up your wardrobe with colorful tops. This spicy color-infused cashmere-blend shawl-collar sweater is from the Woman Within collection. CNS Photo courtesy of womenwithin.com - Do brighten up your winter blues with some colorful new tops, says Alt.

"Deep rich tones will spice up your wardrobe. Set off black pants and a white tee with a bright blue pullover, or pair your everyday jeans with a deep rich brown sequined tee."

"Don't be afraid of color!" says the fashion expert. "I try to mix my basic pieces with more colorful tops. Winter blues don't have to be dreary and sad."

- Do look for flattering winter jackets. Alt admits it can be hard for women with plus-size figures to find flattering winter jackets.

"Look for a piece that's tailored, form-fitting and that will keep you warm when the temperatures drop."

Don't be afraid of double-breasted coats, she adds, as she finds they can actually be one of the most slenderizing looks for fuller-figured women.

- Do stay warm and fashionable through the winter, even though it may seem like a real challenge.

"That is why I always aim for comfort," says Alt. "Throughout the winter, I like to wear spicy browns and oranges, sparkling emerald green or ruby red, and any bright colors that beat away the blues."

- Don't be afraid to layer.

"The convenient thing about layering up is you can peel the layers off to reveal a great indoor look," she says. "You can wear a light blouse, warm it up with one of this season's cute vests, and top it all off with a gorgeous coat."

- Do make an effort to dress fashionably even at the gym or when going to the grocery store. Leave the baggy sweats and oversized T-shirts at home. There are many stylish clothes now designed to give you support where you need it and when you need it.

- Don't be wary of belts. I know this is a tough one for many curvy women to stomach, but often wearing a belt can define a waist and make you look slimmer than wearing clothes that are too big and dumpy. Match your belt to your top and you will create one clean line.

- Do experiment with different trends. If you steered clear of dresses because the top and the bottom never seem to fit, try one of the new wrap dresses that gently flow over waist, hips and thighs. Empire-waist tops and dresses can also be flattering to plus-size figures.

- Don't be shy. Remember bold accessories are perfect for bigger women. So forget the tiny earrings and the little bracelets. Go for the big dangles and the big bangles.

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