

In Fashion: Dreaming of the perfect swimwear

by Sharon_Mosley

Whether you're planning to step out around the pool or lounge on the sand at the beach or just suit up for water aerobics at the local YWCA, chances are you are going to be shopping soon for that elusive "perfect" swimsuit. Yes, that means one that hopefully fits. In your dreams right?

SWIM SEASON - Chances are you are going to be shopping soon for a swimsuit. You're in luck this year because swimwear manufacturers now help match their suits with your particular body shape. CNS Photo courtesy of Lands' End.

Well, one popular destination for fashionable swimwear - Lands' End - gets better every year with giving women, and men, the tools to find the "perfect" suit that fits and flatters. Let's face it, it's what we all want if we're going to face the world half naked. And yes, we'll take it over a date with Dr. Shepherd.

At least that's what 90 percent of the women polled by Lands' End revealed in a recent survey when asked if they would rather find a "perfect" fitting suit than have a beach date with McDreamy, also known as Dr. Shepherd on "Grey's Anatomy."

Well, you probably don't have to worry about baring it all in front of this particular doctor, but what about everyone else on the beach? Here are a few tips to get you swimming in style this summer from Barbara Wagner, senior swim merchandise manager at Lands' End.

"Identifying the right size and silhouette, as well as a suit that addresses particular anxiety zones should be top priority when shopping," Wagner says.

Many swimwear manufacturers now offer help in finding the right suits that deal with consumers' anxieties: problems with the waist, hips, thighs, bust and legs whether it's with attached tags and diagrams or online shopping services. There are hundreds of different colors and styles to flatter every body from petites to plus sizes in tanks, tankinis and bikinis.

Before you start shopping for the perfect suit, it's important to identify your specific body shape, says Wagner. She breaks body styles down into four "zones."

Zone 1 - Inverted Triangle

This shape looks best if you add volume to the lower half of the body to balance or minimize a larger top. Look for suits with wider straps, keyhole backs, skirts, tone-on-tone color, side stripes, endurance and high backs as well as "boy-cut" legs. Bust support is important.

Suits to consider: Three-piece, high-neck tankini which includes a pull-on cover-up skirt; elegant keyhole tank suit with a high neckline.

Zone 2 - Rectangle

With this body shape, the goal is to define a waistline, create some curves and balance the hips and shoulders with details such as princess seams, draping, surplice and shirring. Suits for this shape will feature skirts with a shirred waist, ruching, lingerie straps, diagonal lines and prints, special detailing and patterns that define the waist.

Suits to consider: A glamorous, solid-colored, ruched princess seam tank; side-tie suit with a softly draped overlay of fabric at the waist; or a tankini that has princess seams and ruching down the front.

Zone 3 Triangle

Triangle shapes should work to draw eyes up and away from hips. Look for suits that slim the hips and thighs, and draw attention to the upper body with shapely necklines, bust detailing and shirring. Details to look for include surplice or V-necklines, empire-style waist, darker colors on bottom and patterns on top. Skirted suits and swim minis help to camouflage hips and thighs. Suits to consider: Empire halter with shirred waist; all-over control V-neck, solid-colored swim dress.

Zone 4 - Star

The star body shape that's equally proportioned is lucky. You can generally wear almost any suit. Try to find a suit that has an all-over pattern. If the suit has flowers, for example, the eyes will move from flower to flower, never focusing on any one area.

Suits to consider: Striped bikinis, floral print tanks.

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