

essential

Wardrobe 101

#10 Jeans

Words **Diana Bulian**

FASHION PEDIGREE

Jeans started life as sturdy workwear in the 16th century but it was Levi's and Wrangler that pioneered the denim revolution in the 1950s. These days, no wardrobe can be considered complete without a handful of trusted favourites.

WHY YOU NEED THEM NOW

The hunt for the perfect pair of jeans has become the stuff of legend. Get it right and they'll become your ultimate wardrobe staple. The trouble, however, is denim is particularly hot right now and with such a hip assortment vying for your attention – '80s wash, distressed, skinny, high-waisted, cropped and the boyfriend – choosing can be a nightmare.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Buying the wrong pair of jeans can be an expensive mistake although, thankfully, the cult of overpriced jeans is being threatened by great cuts and purse-friendly prices on the high street. The high waist is still big news and it can (really it can) look good, unless you're pear-shaped. Skinny Minnies should look for skinny cuts (tight from top to toe) and slim fit (firm at top then close to leg). Generally flattering styles include tailored (like pants), flared (firm on the thigh and widening at the ankle), bootleg (slightly wider below the knee) and the boyfriend (loose and



slouchy – avoid your actual boyfriend's unless they fit). The new take on '80s acid is fashion's current favourite.

STYLE TO SUIT YOU

The trick with denim is to try on many different cuts and styles. Look to denim divas such as Kate Moss (blue, black, grey, skinny, flared) for inspiration. And the No.1 rule is to dress for your body shape. General Pants has a great variety of styles or log on to zafu.com and use the fit filter to find the best pair for you. Basic truths: longer lengths elongate the body and slim the leg. Avoid waist gaps and definitely no crass butt cleavage allowed. When wearing on-trend cuts think about styling them with classic elements to keep the look chic. Combine skinny jeans with #2 blazer or #9 trench coat, white denim with bright colours, acid wash with monochrome and boyfriend cut with ruffled tops. Pear shapes should embrace slim-fit, boot-cut, tailored jeans and flares to help balance those hips. Petites (small waist and narrow hip), you can go for any style. Fuller figures

should look for cuts in softer denims that mould and hold the thighs rather than strain over them. Avoid fussy pockets, fancy embroidery and excessive hardware.

WHERE TO SHOP

Replay, Levi's and RM Williams for timeless styles, sass & bide and Ksubi give good edge. Arnsdorf for high waists. Maise for a wide leg.

PERSONAL STYLIST

Replay Maryann jeans, \$290, 9319 3199, nmi.com.au; Little Joe Chelsea silk shirt, \$250, 9328 0799; Ralph Lauren Blue Label Lady Princeton blazer, \$1395, 1800 501 201; littlejoeny.com; Manzoni leather bag, \$269, 8569 5555; Gucci clog in dark gold leather, \$980, 9282 4299.

FIVE MORE WAYS TO WEAR

- Hip = bootleg + #3 classic white shirt + high boots and edgy belt.
- '80s disco = acid wash + black batwing top + armful of bangles + metallic heels.
- Chic = high-waisted trouser cut + wide belt + scoop-neck tee + tote.
- Cool = wide leg + pretty shirt + classic belt + leather jacket + solid pump.
- Polished = slim-fit + #2 blazer + frill shirt + sneakers.

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