

# GOOD JEANS

**Pants that trim your tummy and boost your booty? We test the claims.**

**WE LOVE JEANS.** We'd live in them if we could! That's what women told ShopSmart when we recently conducted a national poll asking how they feel about their denim. More than half said they'd wear jeans every day if they could get away with it, but most limit their jeans-wearing to about three days a week.

As much as we're hooked on those weekend faves turned fashion staple, most of the women we polled said they have trouble finding jeans that

fit and flatter. So we decided to use real women as guinea pigs to test brands with tummy-tucking, booty-boosting, or overall-slimming claims. Then we hired a fit pro, Jill Staats, who has designed jeans for Banana Republic and Eileen Fisher, and asked her to assess whether the figure-correcting jeans really made a difference. The results were amazing, as you'll see on the next six pages.

In addition to our jeans makeovers, we had our staff textile expert pit

superexpensive jeans against pairs for a fraction of the price from the Gap, Levi's, and other brands to see whether you get what you pay for. We also collected fit tips from experts (below), got the scoop on fashion trends, and gathered DIY info on fixing an unwanted rip. Good jeans can make all the difference not only in how you look but also in how you feel. So here's everything you need to know to find the perfect pair!

## fit tips for every body

If your jeans are more than three years old, it's time to take a good look at them—and probably buy some new ones, Staats says. We asked her and Marybeth Luber, of [indiDenim.com](http://indiDenim.com), a website that lets you create your own custom jeans, for their best advice on finding the ideal jeans for you.

■ Boot-cut jeans look good on just about everybody. So does dark denim because everything looks smaller in dark colors!

■ Surprisingly, straight-cut jeans are better for curvy women, and so are lower rises. As long as they cover your tummy, lower-rise pairs elongate your torso and make you look slimmer.

■ "Boyfriend" jeans are comfy, but they're best on slim women because they can add bulk.

■ A little stretch is everybody's friend, so look at material labels.

■ You shouldn't have to suck in when you zip your jeans! And if you've got a muffin top, chances are your jeans are too tight in the waist or too low in the rise. A higher rise will usually eliminate any overhang and make the waist look smaller.

“Wow! I see some curves I didn't know I had.”

**THE JEANS** Calvin Klein Sculpt, \$79.50

**THE CLAIM** Lifts and sculpts rear, shapes thighs

**THE VERDICT** Linda always thought she looked like a boy in jeans. Looking at her in her “before” jeans, a pair of pricey Lucky Brand jeans, our fit consultant said, “There's a nice butt in there. We just need to find it.” When Linda put on these size 6 Calvins, you couldn't miss it! Even better, instead of thinking her legs were too skinny, Linda saw how a pair of slim-cut jeans could actually make her look more shapely. “I'm going to trash my old jeans now!” she told us.



BEFORE



Rear seams add shape.

LAURA JOHANSEN; PROP STYLING: LYNDA WHITE

AIMEE HERRING; FASHION STYLIST: KIM FIELD; HAIR STYLIST: JASON HAYES; MAKEUP ARTIST: NOELLE MARINELLI



“My butt got smaller after my second kid.”

**THE JEANS** Lee Jeans Perfectly Lifts You Midrise, \$42

**THE CLAIM** Gives your booty extra lift

**THE VERDICT** Melissa is a young mom, but it was time for her to graduate from the juniors' department. Her old jeans looked tight even though they were the same size 4 as the Lees we put her in. Darts in the back do what they claim: lift up the rear. And the boot cut makes Melissa look taller than her 5'1" height. Overall, the fit was great and the jeans were very flattering, our expert said. "I love these," Melissa said. "They're more comfortable than stretch pants."

Pocket design can be uplifting.



BEFORE

AIMEE HERRING; FASHION STYLIST: KIM FIELD; HAIR STYLIST: JASON HAYES; MAKEUP ARTIST: NOELLE MARINELLI



“Normally I cut out the front pockets so the front lays flat.”

A subtle control panel trims but doesn't bind.



BEFORE

**THE JEANS** L.L.Bean Slimming Jeans, \$49.50

**THE CLAIM** Trims tummy, making you look a size smaller

**THE VERDICT** Jen has been losing weight, so all of her old jeans are too big and baggy. Plus she's never found a pair that make her feel sexy—and that's her goal now that she's dating again. "I like my butt a lot in these!" she said. Our fit pro thought they really did make Jen look a size smaller. And at less than \$50, they're a bargain. "I don't think you could look better in \$200 jeans," Staats said.

## trends what's in, what's out, what's next

Certain styles are timeless, like dark denim, boot-cut jeans, and work-appropriate trouser jeans. But other styles come and go. We talked to fashion pros Susan Woo, a designer for Level 99, and Greg Abbou, of Salsa Jeans USA, about trends in denim.

### WHAT'S IN

- **Skinny jeans.** Yep, they're still here.
- **Jeggings.** Another skinny style that's not going anywhere, at least this season. Look for fun shades like bright

pastels and Army green and funky patterns like tie-dye.

- **Boyfriend jeans.** These looser, slouchy bottoms are great for weekends.
- **Lighter denim.** Dark washes are always in, but lighter shades come back into vogue in warmer weather.

### WHAT'S OUT

- **Super-low-waisted jeans.** Whew!
- **Crazy studs, whiskering, and other over-the-top embellishments.**

### WHAT'S NEXT

- **Retro washes** like colored denim, from pastels to brights and acid wash (hello again, 1980s).
- **Ripped and patched jeans.** Look for more retro inspiration—distressed denim à la the '90s and '70s-style patchwork pants.
- **Military-inspired styles,** with dark green denim and lots of pockets.
- **Drop-crotch tapered jeans.** Call them harem pants or Hammer pants, but they're definitely not for everyone!

# fancy pants

what you get for \$200 & more

We took a close look at seven pairs of women's boot-cut jeans, ranging in price from \$20 to \$240, from the Gap, Levi's, Lucky Brand, Old Navy, 7 for All Mankind, and True Religion. According to our textiles expert Pat Slaven, the \$20 Levi's from Walmart were built a little better than the True Religion jeans that cost 10 times more! All pairs were cotton with 1 or

2 percent spandex, except for the Lucky jeans, which also had a touch of polyester. The Lucky pair was also the only one that didn't shrink after washing. Some shrank as much as an inch in length and width, which can be almost a whole size. So buy jeans on the longer side. But if you've got your eye on a \$200 pair, don't shell out unless you really love the fit or styling.



**Signature by Levi Strauss & Co. Totally Slimming** have top-quality construction.

**True Religion Becky Silver Chainball** didn't stay zipped.



A higher waist adds height.

“I don't look short anymore. I feel taller and slimmer.”

**THE JEANS** Levi Strauss & Co. Perfectly Slimming 512, \$44

**THE CLAIM** Flattens tummy, shapes and smooths curves

**THE VERDICT** Our fit pro thought Antonietta was our biggest success story. Her old jeans were so low-waisted that they were giving her a muffin top and making her legs look very short. But these Levi's added inches to her 5'3" frame and, best of all, made her legs look longer. Antonietta had been wearing petite jeans, but our consultant said that was a mistake. This higher-waist style made her muffin top disappear. (Antonietta and the other women in this story also tried on Target brand Merona jeans, which also claim to trim the tummy. But they made her look “dumpy” and didn't flatter any of the others.)

JEANS: LAURA JOHANSEN; STYLING: SHARON PENDANA; ANTONIETTA: AIMEE HERRING; FASHION STYLIST: KIM FIELD; HAIR STYLIST: JASON HAYES; MAKEUP ARTIST: NOELLE MARINELLI

## DIY denim

### How to fix unwanted rips

It's easy enough to do it yourself, says designer Becky Sullivan, of Becky Sullivan Designs. You just need a few supplies and a few minutes.

#### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Black, lightweight, fusible interfacing (a gauze-like fabric with adhesive on one side, sold at fabric stores)
- Sewing machine and/or needle
- Scissors
- Thread to match your jeans
- Iron and ironing board

**Step 1** Cut a piece of the interfacing about 1 inch larger on all sides than the tear in your jeans.

**Step 2** Turn jeans inside out. Place interfacing on top of the tear with the adhesive side down, making sure the edges of the tear are touching each other. Place a piece of lightweight scrap fabric between the interfacing and your iron. That will ensure that you don't get any adhesive residue on the iron. Be careful not to move the interfacing as you place your scrap fabric on top of it. Hold the iron on top of the interfacing for 30 seconds (or follow the directions) and repeat until the interfacing is completely adhered to the denim.

**Step 3** Let jeans cool, then turn them right side out.

**Step 4** If you can access the tear with your sewing machine, sew a zigzag stitch over the line where the tear is. If not, hand sew small and neat stitches to close the tear.

NEEDLE AND THREAD: C SQUARED STUDIOS/PHOTODISC/GETTYIMAGES; CYNTHIA: AIMEE HERRING; FASHION STYLING: KIM FIELD; HAIR STYLING: JASON HAYES; MAKEUP ARTIST: NOELLE MARINELLI

“They're tighter than I'm used to, but I love them!”

**THE JEANS** Calvin Klein Sculpt, \$79.50

**THE CLAIM** Lifts and sculpts rear, shapes thighs

**THE VERDICT** Cynthia is a Levi's gal, but her old faves made her butt look flatter and wider than it really is. When she put on these Calvins—vavoom! Her butt was instantly transformed. And although these jeans don't claim to make you look a size smaller, our fit pro thought Cynthia definitely did. The tighter fit took some getting used to, but she loved them so much that she ran out and bought a pair!



Slim legs flatter her shape.

“These make my stomach look flat!”

“I don’t have to worry when I bend over.”

A lighter denim stripe elongates legs.

A dark wash is slimming.



**THE JEANS** Miraclesuit Miraclebody “Samantha” Jeans, \$110

**THE CLAIM** Lifts the rear and controls the tummy, making you look 10 pounds lighter

**THE VERDICT** Miraclesuit, known for swimsuits, makes jeans with the same body-cinching effect. These hugged Denise’s curves, and our fit pro thought she looked a size smaller. (She also tried Not Your Daughter’s Jeans, but our consultant thought they’d look better on someone taller than Denise, who is 5’2”.)

**THE JEANS** Levi Strauss & Co. Perfectly Slimming 512, \$44

**THE CLAIM** Flattens tummy, shapes and smooths curves

**THE VERDICT** Jen recently had a baby, so she’s dealing with a new body and a new life. “I’m constantly bending over and don’t want to have to worry about what’s showing!” she said. “Plus I’m at an age where I can’t do young but I don’t want to go too old.” Our consultant loved this great-fitting dark-wash pair and how it slimmed Jen all over.

AIMEE HERRING; FASHION STYLIST: KIM FIELD; HAIR STYLIST: JASON HAYES; MAKEUP ARTIST: NOELLE MARINELLI

## the truth unzipped

We asked more than 1,000 women nationwide about jeans—what they love and hate, how much they spend on them, and more. Here’s what they told us.

### BIGGEST COMPLAINTS

the top 10 things that make it difficult to find the perfect pair

1. My tummy looks too big.
2. I have a muffin top.
3. My legs look too short.
4. Jeans are too long or too short.
5. My thighs look too big.
6. My butt looks too big.
7. My butt looks too flat.
8. My hips look too wide.
9. I look too lumpy or too large overall.
10. I look too straight and have no curves.

### WE LIKE THE WAY WE LOOK (MOSTLY) ...

**54%** of women like or love the way they look in their jeans.

**40%** of women admit they feel sexy in their jeans.

**8%** dislike or hate the way they look.

### ... BUT WE HAVE OUR ISSUES

**31%** say they refuse to go up a size to find jeans that fit.

**50%** are holding onto a pair of their “skinny jeans” in hopes of squeezing into them again.

**62%** use their jeans as a measure of whether they need to lose weight.



### THE #1 TREND WE WISH WOULD GO AWAY AND NEVER COME BACK:

**Super-low-waisted jeans**  
(others include ripped jeans, jeggings, and skinny jeans)

## Fashion police!

the worst denim offenses

1. Butt cleavage or visible underwear or thong
2. Muffin top on top of low-cut or too-tight jeans
3. Jeans that are way too tight
4. Jeans with too many holes or with holes in the wrong places
5. Mom jeans



**How many we own** 7 pairs on average (1 in 4 women owns 10 or more), but we wear just 4 pairs on a regular basis.

**How long we own them** 6 years on average.

**What we spend** \$34 per pair on average, but 1 in 10 women has blown more than \$100 on jeans.



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