

The right wedding dress for your body type
September 3, 2015.
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Gay Weddings Magazine

Finding the right gown to suit your frame can seem a little daunting at first, especially if you're one of the many who are unable to afford tailoring after all other wedding expenses are considered. Defining your silhouette can aid tremendously in the process, paired with the right lingerie of course!

Lingerie provides the foundation for a great fitting gown. It supports, lifting you in all of the right places; it helps give a smooth surface for your gown to lay better against your body; and it helps to shape your body by enhancing your natural curves.

Slips are beneficial with styles like the trumpet gown, where you want it to go from slim-fitting to poufy one it hits the knees. A fit-and-flare slip can aid in enhancing the best in both the dress and yourself!

Bras are an important item as it prevents lumps, bumps, and the waistline of the slip from making an unwanted appearance beneath your dress. A longline bra not only smoothens, but also contours and defines your waist so the dress fits sleekly.

Shapewear is a savior for the clingy, body-hugging gowns we love so much but unfortunately show a little too much panty line. A high-waist, mid-thigh shaper helps create a smooth surface for the gown to glide over, which gives any curves a gorgeous effect.

Moving into silhouettes, hourglass figures have hips and shoulders similar in size with a well-defined waist. Just about any silhouette will work to optimize curves, but there are a few that really bring out your best assets. Sheath gowns offer streamlined silhouettes to optimize curves; ball gowns have a structured bodice and full skirt that give you an elegant look; and mermaid/trumpet gowns play up your figure with it's curve-and-fit flare.

Triangle figures, also known as pear shaped, are curvy with fuller hips and thighs. You can create flattering curves with a fitted bodice in multiple ways! A-line gowns have a fitted bodice with skirt that is gently angled away from the body to showcase the strengths in your figure; short gowns offer a fitted bodice or flowing sheath that give graceful lines; and ball gowns give you a natural waist to flatter a slim upper body with a skirt that flows away from the hips and thighs.

Inverted triangle figures have shoulders broader than their waist and hips; therefore the key is to balance both. Ball gowns have the full skirt that creates symmetry with wider shoulders, and a structured bodice that accents a trim waist. Short gowns balance the top by drawing attention to your legs and a great pair of shoes; mermaid/trumpet have a slim bodice and flared skirt that give a flattering counterpoint to strong and shapely shoulders.

Rectangle figures have their shoulders, waist, and hips in-line (for the most part), so adding curves is the mission for your straight up-and-down figure! Short gowns give graceful lines with fitted bodices or a flowing sheath and fitted skirt; A-line gowns give an hourglass shape with a style that cinches at the waist and flows

out gracefully with a floor-length skirt; and sheath gowns offer a bias-cut in soft, flowing fabrics and can create curves where they're needed.

Certain designers cater to certain silhouettes, making your shopping a little less stressful. For those that have a full bust, designer Dennis Basso incorporates a lot of ruching into his designs that help slim and balance a larger bust. If you have broad shoulders and have your heart set on a halter-style gown, Lela Rose is recommended due to her designs being accommodating for broad shoulders.

Triangle, or pear shaped silhouettes gravitate towards Alita Graham, who carries an assortment of A-line gown options. Full-figured women can try on Pnina Tornai who is noted for her fitted designs and sensual styling, with many of her gowns having corsets to help define your shape. Monique Lhuillier is also an excellent choice, as she offers sexy silhouettes with fuller coverage.

We all have our "problem areas" so if you're self-conscious about your arms, designers like Reem Acra, Augusta Jones, Marchesa, and Oscar de la Renta offer sheer overlays that only add to your look. Lastly, for those radiant soon-to-be mothers, Kenneth Pool and Lazaro both have Empire-waist design options that are ideal for a healthy, growing bump of joy!

While there may be certain styles that work better with certain silhouettes, never let the "rules" prevent you from finding the dress of your dreams. Try on a variety of dresses and make your decision, ultimately, on which style you look and feel the best in.