



CREATE THE LOOK YOU LIKE-WITH LINE

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CREATE THE LOOK YOU LIKE-WITH LINE

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Becoming clothes influence the way you look and feel. Visible lines in your clothes create illusions of size and shape, making you look taller, shorter, heavier or thinner. Decide how you want to look, keeping in mind your physical proportions and posture, and create the look you like with the clothes you wear.

Lines in clothing have direction, length and width. They create the silhouette with the shape of a skirt, length of a hem or how tightly or loosely a garment fits. Structural lines give shape to clothes through seams and darts. Some lines are decorative and add to the attractiveness of a garment, such as contrasting trims or figured, striped or plaid fabrics. Consider the total effect of the garment's silhouette combined with structural and decorative lines when choosing your clothes.

Color and texture also can be powerful in creating illusions of size and shape. However, to explain the illusions created by line, references to color and texture have been excluded from this publication. Remember that the basic principles of line remain consistent only when color or texture is minimized.

KNOW THE BASICS

How many times have you or your friends said, "That dress is me" or "I've never felt right wearing this?" Line is one important factor in either situation. Knowing the basic principles of line can help you select becoming clothes that you enjoy wearing.

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Direction

Simple vertical lines often convey a mood of directness and formality (figure 1). They usually have a slimming effect and add height to the figure.

Simple horizontal lines tend to result in a mood of calmness and restfulness (figure 2). They usually have a shortening and widening effect on the figure.

Simple diagonal lines frequently create a mood of activity and drama (figure 3). Depending on their angle, they have an effect similar to either a vertical or horizontal line.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Combinations

When several horizontal lines are used together, they have a softening effect on the figure. The curves and height added by width.

Simple curved lines usually convey moods of softness, romance and grace (figure 4). When gently curved in a horizontal or vertical direction, they have the same effect as the horizontal or vertical line. Sharply curved lines add extra fullness and weight to the figure.

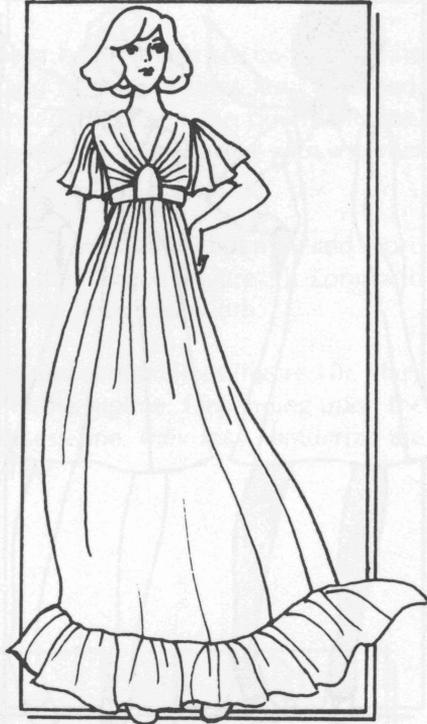


Figure 4

Spacing

Line spacing can reverse the principle that vertical lines are slimming and lengthening and horizontal lines are widening and shortening (figure 5). The eye moves across or up and down evenly spaced lines, similar to stairs. Evenly spaced vertical lines add width as well as height while evenly spaced horizontal lines add height as well as width. These lines may be decorative or structurally formed by several seams, tucks, pleats, rows of buttons or striped fabrics.



Figure 5

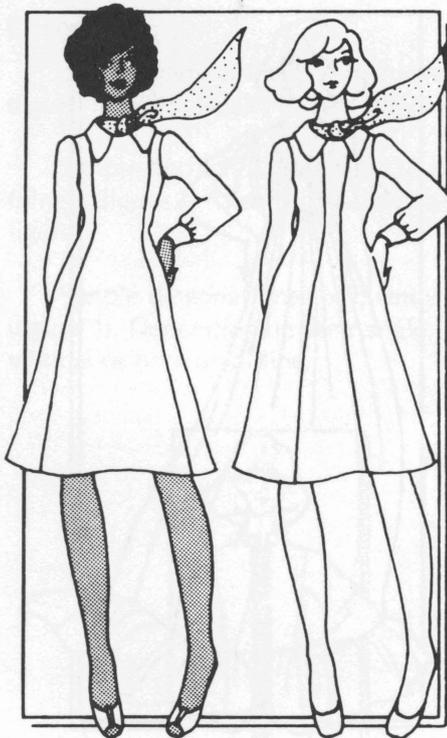


Figure 6

When the distance between two lines is widened, the eye travels from line to line as well as in the direction of the line (figure 6). Two vertical lines close together are more slenderizing and lengthening than two placed further apart.

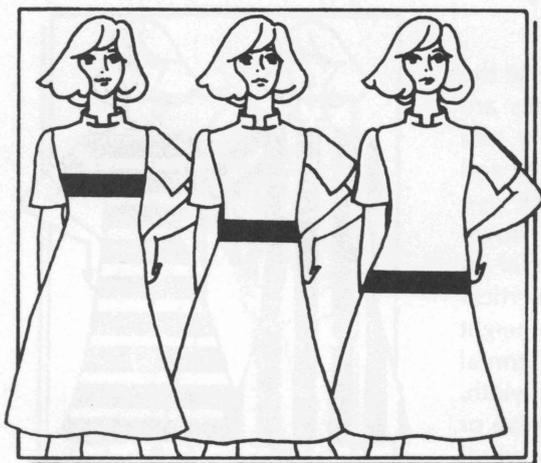


Figure 7

Placement

Line placement can be used to accent a certain area or detract from others (figure 7). For example, a dominant horizontal line at the bustline adds emphasis and width in that area. It would be flattering to a figure with a slender bustline and heavier hips.

A vertical line placed to one side of the figure adds height and slenderizes. A side placement is usually considered more interesting than a center placement and often disguises figure faults.

Combinations

When vertical, horizontal, diagonal or curved lines are combined, the effect varies (figure 8). When vertical and horizontal lines are combined, they often add height and/or width depending upon the dominant line. Examples include plaid fabrics and a belted shirt-waist dress with a center front closing.

T and V or L and A lines also add height and width, but may add more height or more width, depending upon their shape (figure 9). Long and narrow lines add height and short and wide lines add width.

Princess lines combine gentle curves and vertical lines (figure 10). They are usually flattering, add height and slim the hipline. Depending upon the fit of the garment and curve of the princess line, they may slenderize the waistline and/or widen or slim the bustline.



Figure 8

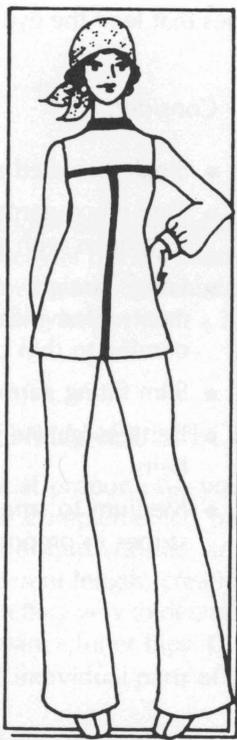


Figure 9



Figure 10

Proportion

The combination of lines creates a pleasing proportion when areas within the garment are divided into sizes that look good together and look good on the person. For example, unequal divisions of space are more interesting than equal divisions, such as two-thirds to one-third. When combining separates, notice individual garment shapes and the relationship of each individual garment size to the total outfit. The size of decorative details such as collars, belts, pockets and patterned fabrics is also more attractive if in proportion to the size of the wearer. Large details look best on persons with large body proportions while small persons look best when wearing lines scaled to smaller figures.

WHAT'S YOUR LINE?

Decide on the look you want. If you're short, you may not automatically want to look taller or if you're thin, you may not want to look heavier. Consider what silhouette, structural or decorative lines do for you. Your favorite garments are good clues.

If you want to look taller or slimmer, choose designs with unbroken and unevenly spaced vertical lines that lead the eye up and down (figure 11).

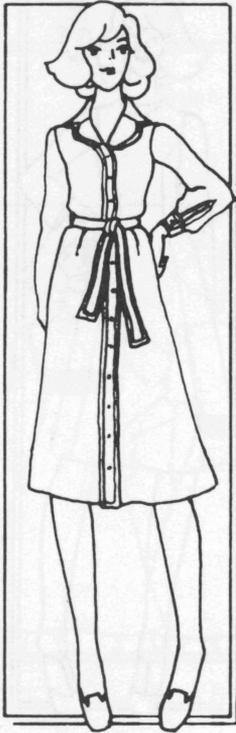


Figure 11

Consider:

- Single breasted and side closings
- One-piece garments with slim lines such as a dress with princess lines.
- Long, straight sleeves or sleeveless garments. Sleeveless garments may be unbecoming to thin or heavy arms.
- Slim fitting garments and silhouettes
- Beltless garments; matching or narrow belts
- Medium to small-scale plaids, prints and stripes in proportion to the figure

If you want to look shorter or heavier, choose designs with unbroken and unevenly spaced horizontal lines that lead the eye across (figure 12).

Consider:

- Double-breasted closings; the wider apart horizontally, the more width added
- Medium to large-scale plaids, prints and stripes in proportion to the figure
- Wide or contrasting belts
- Wide, full sleeves
- Short garments or separates with full lines, such as boxy jackets and gathered skirts
- Layers of garments and fabrics



Figure 12

Combinations of horizontal and vertical lines are ideal if you want to look thinner but not taller, heavier but not shorter or vice versa. The T line is ideal for a tall heavy person who wants to minimize her size by slenderizing with a vertical line and cutting height with a horizontal line.

LINES TO ENHANCE SPECIFIC AREAS

In studying your physical proportions, you may discover that certain parts of your figure can be complemented more effectively with certain lines. For example, if you are short-waisted, an obvious vertical line in the bodice area would add apparent length, creating a more balanced proportion. Lines can also be used effectively to deemphasize certain areas such as widening the bustline to balance fuller hips. Consider physical proportions for the size and shape of the individual parts of your body in relation to your overall figure.

If you want to look taller or slimmer from the waist up, consider:

- Lines such as a \perp that draw attention away from this area

- Vertical-shaped V or scooped U necklines
- Vertical-shaped, long, narrow-pointed collars or lapels
- Princess seams that extend from the shoulder or armhole above the bustline.
- Vertical-shaped bodice seams or insets
- Long-waisted, fitted garments

To look taller from the waist down, consider:

- Bodice lines that draw attention away from this area, such as a Y
- Easy fitting pants with straight legs, sharp creases, no cuffs
- Skirts with a slight flare such as gored or with center front stitching or center front and/or back single pleats

If you want to look shorter or heavier from the waist up, consider:

- Bloused or drawstring waistlines
- High, rounded or horizontal necklines, such as square, strapless or off-the-shoulder
- Wide or high collars, such as high-bias roll, mandarin or tie
- Ruffles, flounces or smocking
- Horizontal-shaped yokes or insets
- Large or wide patch pockets on both sides of the bodice forming a horizontal line
- Wide, empire or raised waistlines
- Cap, puffed or short full sleeves; cuffs that form horizontal lines
- Bolero and short jackets, vests
- Horizontal-shaped Λ seams such as raglan sleeves or yokes

To look shorter or heavier from the waist down, consider:

- Gathered; full-flared; evenly spaced or hip-stitched, pleated skirts
- Low waistlines or peplums
- Capes, tunics
- Full legged pants, bellbottoms, cuffed pants, shorts
- Large or wide patch pockets on both sides forming a horizontal line
- Horizontal-shaped yokes or insets

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Color and texture can minimize or maximize the effect of line through contrast, camouflage or simplicity. For lines to work for you in the way you want, they must be noticeable. It is often impossible for all lines of a garment to be vertical or horizontal or to even have the same effect. The most dominant ones will overshadow the others with their effect being the most pronounced on your appearance. A poorly fitting garment also can alter the effect of various lines with obvious horizontal or diagonal wrinkles or vertical folds of extra fabric. Before adding any garment to your wardrobe, evaluate or visualize its effect on your physical proportions and posture. Ask yourself if it makes you seem taller, thinner, shorter or heavier? Is it the look you really want and will enjoy wearing?

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