

Dressing with Dignity

Outfit Check*

***"There is a difference between dressing attractively,
and dressing to attract."***

1. Is my blouse well-designed?

- a. Try on the blouse and bend over. If the neckline drops too far away from your body and gives you a "view through", it's not a well-designed blouse!
FASHION TIP: Unless you plan to tape it to your chest, this blouse has to go.
- b. Take the tips of your fingers and press into your blouse right where your ribs come together in the middle of your chest. When you take your fingers away does your blouse immediately spring back like a trampoline? If so, your blouse is too tight! (Well-endowed ladies need to be extra careful!)
FASHION TIP: Get rid of the blouse. It's not going to get bigger overnight!
- c. When wearing a blouse that buttons down the front, stand sideways and look in the mirror. Is the space between the buttons gaping open, even just a little bit? Now, put your hands on your hips like "chicken wings" and try to touch your elbows together behind your back. If your blouse is tight enough to cause a gap, you're in danger of exposing too much—not to mention being in danger of losing a button and exposing even more!
FASHION TIP: Blouses that are too tight are unbecoming, especially for a lady who dresses with dignity. Modesty is not just about how much of our skin is showing, but how much of our feminine shape is showing! Try buying a blouse a size or two larger. Or, try a camisole (or a plain, loose t-shirt) under the buttoned blouse and leave it open for a layered look. (Make sure camisole or t-shirt passes the Outfit Check, too!)
- d. Does your blouse plunge too low in the front? A blouse is not attractive or demure if it dips lower than two fingers widths below the pit of your throat. It should also have sleeves that cover your shoulders and upper arms, and doesn't expose your upper back.
FASHION TIP: Use a fashion scarf to fill in the low spots of your blouse.
- e. Does my top have any wording on the front?
FASHION TIP: Insist on others treating you with dignity, and don't make your chest (or bottom) a billboard.

2. Am I showing my belly?

- a. Stand and reach up as high as you can, as if you're getting something off the top shelf. Does that expose any belly skin?
FASHION TIP: Go for layers and put a camisole (or a plain, loose t-shirt) under a shorter blouse. A ladies secret: a camisole or t-shirt from the women's department. They're nice and long and stay tucked in under a beautiful blouse. (Again, make sure the camisole or t-shirt passes the Outfit Check, too!)

3. Am I showing my back?

- a. Sit "Indian style" on the floor. Lean forward and put your elbows on the floor, as if you're about to read a great magazine. Now, reach behind you and get a feel of what might be showing. (Or ask a girlfriend to check your back view out for you!)
FASHION TIP: If any of the skin on your back is exposed, then you'll want to wear a longer blouse. If you don't have a longer blouse, wear that camisole of yours until you can get a longer blouse!

4. How short is too short?

- a. Before you buy a skirt or dress, try this test. Sit in a chair in front of a full-length mirror and cross your legs. What do you see? If you see any of your thigh (or worse yet, your panties!), guess what? So can everyone else. Watch out for slits!
FASHION TIP: Today's skirts are either extremely long, or extremely short. Go for extremely long, flowing and graceful skirts and dresses, and pass on the extremely short ones. Be careful about those skirts and dresses that have slits. If it's so tight it needs a slit for you to move, then it's too tight. Period. Keep the kneecaps covered, and don't forget a slip!

5. Can I see my undergarments, or undergarment lines?

- a. Can you see an outline of your panties or bra through your clothing—either because your clothing is too tight, too clingy, or too sheer? Are any undergarments hanging out of your outer clothing?
FASHION TIP: Trash any clothing that is tight, clingy or transparent. It's unattractive, unappealing, and ugly!



Before you leave the house, here's a little poem my daughter came up with as an "Outfit-Check":

"Heads, shoulders, knees and toes. Doesn't work? Than out it goes!"

- a. Put both of your hands on your head. Does the skin around your waist show (stomach or back)?
- b. Put your hands on your shoulders. Are they covered? Check your neckline, too.
- c. Bend over and put your hands on your knees. Are your knees covered?
- d. Bend down and touch your toes. Does your blouse hang open? Does your back show?

(Abbreviated and taken from "Dressing with Dignity", by Colleen Hammond.)

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**Based on the guidelines developed by Donato Cardinal Sbarretti, the Prefect of the Congregation of the Council under Pope Pius XI. "A dress cannot be called decent which is cut deeper than two fingers breadth under the pit of the throat, which does not cover the arms at least to the elbows, and scarcely reaches a bit beyond the knees. Furthermore, dresses of transparent material are improper."*