

DEFINING YOUR LOOK

For our first experiment, let's do an assessment. Take out your camera and tripod, strip down to your underwear, and take a full body shot of yourself, both frontal and side. Stand with your legs together and hands on your hips. Hopefully, you did this with a digital camera so you'll save making a trip to your local camera shop! Now, examine your figure carefully. Place your pictures next to a picture of a scantily clad woman in a magazine. Britney Spears, Madonna, and Cindy Crawford are good candidates. For a more hippy figure, try Mira Sorvino or Sandra Bullock.

Does your figure look like any of these women? Probably not, but don't be discouraged because 99% of the women out there probably don't look like Britney, Madonna, Cindy, Mira, or Sandra, either. Most women look more like Kate Winslet (Rose from "Titanic") or even Ricki Lake. As a transgender woman, I strive to look more like Britney or Madonna rather than Kate or Ricki, and I'm sure most of you do, too. My goal with this book is to impart some of the necessary knowledge to help you look more like a Britney or a Madonna rather than a Kate or a Ricki. Given our genetic limitations, it may not be possible to look like our fantasy vision of ourselves, but that shouldn't stop us from trying because if we don't try, we'll never know if we could succeed.

Looking like a man on a part-time basis is not such a bad thing. A lot of genetic women look like men. In fact, it's not very hard to look like a man if you've been a man most of your life. Looking like a woman on a part-time basis will depend on 66% hair, 33% makeup, and 1% "oomph." By oomph, I'm talking about that little extra something that will take your look over the top. You'll learn more about oomph as we move forward. Looking like a woman on a full-time basis requires constant attention to detail on your appearance and behavior in the beginning and practicing certain behaviors that will help you erase or subjugate old behaviors.

Most transgender women think their legs are their best assets. This is, for the most part, true. The average man's legs are shapelier than the average woman's legs. When I see a genetic or transgender woman with bad legs wearing short skirts, it makes me wonder what the hell she is doing. If you have bad legs, do not show them off unless you want to be the subject of ridicule. The perfect legs are toned, tanned, and smooth. If you do not have all three, then hit the gym, go to a tanning salon or use tanning cream, and/or shave and moisturize your legs every day. If you don't do these things, your legs may look like unshapely pale tree trunks with blotchy red bumps and blisters. Off-black pantyhose will hide the paleness. Support pantyhose will give you a little more shape. Wearing two pairs of pantyhose, one over the other, will hide the blotchy red bumps and blisters. You can get away with wearing pantyhose in cooler weather, but you should strive to get your legs in top shape if you plan on showing them off in the hot summer months. When selecting pantyhose, go one size above the recommended size for your height and weight. In my experience, I have found that even with the stretchy qualities of pantyhose, wearing pantyhose that is supposedly for my size always feels too tight and constrictive. You will appreciate the more relaxed fit and feel of the larger size pantyhose, especially if you wish to wear hip and butt enhancers.

A 15-inch skirt is probably the shortest skirt you should wear. Anything shorter and your crotch will show. 16- and 17-inch skirts are better for transgender women who do not wish to convey a "slutty" image. 19-inch and longer skirts convey a more conservative image. Many transgender women want to look slutty, so they wear clothing that is quite revealing. I feel this taints the art of looking like a woman and actually inhibits the progress of the transgender woman wishing to pass. Quick compliments from people can impair a transgender woman's judgement of her true appearance and skill level. Remember that not all compliments are good ones. Sometimes a man will compliment a woman just because he is a horny bastard, not because she actually looks good. Don't be any man's "last resort" or "desperation time bimbo."

Being a genetic male, you will probably need to pad out your hips to obtain the same proportions as a woman of your age and build, however, hip padding can be cumbersome and unrealistic to the touch. If someone grabs your ass, he or she will feel a handful of foam rather than flesh. I said back in 2002 that when someone finally produces silicone butt padding, that will be a revolutionary thing. In 2006, I began

seeing such padding available and now it is a very popular option for part-time crossdressers. If you really wish to try hip padding, you can create your own using foam padding from a furniture upholstery store. Use a soft grade of foam that is easily shapeable using an electric carving knife. Step-by-step instructions on how to create an inexpensive pair of hip pads can be found in my tutorial, **Lower Torso Enhancement**. Creating your own hip pads can save you a lot of money. There are places that sell padded girdles, such as Classic Curves at www.clcrv.com, but why pay \$160 for something that you can create yourself for just a few dollars?

If you want to get away with not wearing hip padding, you will need to find an a-line skirt that flares out and creates the illusion of looking like you have hips. Avoid straight skirts, body-hugging skirts, and miniskirts because they will not help you create the look of having hips. If you're thin, you will find it easy to get away with not wearing hip padding because skinny girls are usually not very hippy. I used to wear hip padding religiously because I didn't have much shape. I was basically stick thin from head to toe. Finding and wearing the right kinds of clothes, however, has enabled me to discard the need to wear hip padding. It feels very liberating not to have two pieces of foam pressed against my hips and outer thighs all night long. There are no longer any adjustments that need to be made and when someone places his or her hand on my hip, he or she will feel flesh and bone rather than foam.

Petticoats are the ultimate example of a-line skirts. The very nature of a petticoat gives every person who wears one the sprouting hips they desire. Crossdressers seem to love petticoats for this reason, however, let me warn you that normal people do not wear petticoats in public. They're great for a babydoll or can-can girl look, but for everyday nightclubs, do not embarrass yourself or tarnish the efforts of other transgender women by wearing a petticoat. Save it for a fetish ball or costume party.

Try to find skirts that do not hug your hips because if a skirt hugs your hips, you will probably need to wear hip padding for shape. You can wear a corset to whittle inches off of your waist and help you attain an hourglass shape, but let's do a reality check. How many women do you know wear a corset when they go out to a bar, club, or restaurant? None. Avoid wearing corsets if you can. Corsets are hard to hide and display the obvious: a fat person trying to look skinny. When someone touches your waist, he or she wants to feel flesh and bone, not body armor.

Most genetic males will find that their chests are much larger than their waists, so they will need to wear clothes that give them the illusion of a smaller chest and shoulders. If your chest and shoulders are very large, it is next to impossible to hide them if you wear tight-fitting clothes. The solution is to wear loose-fitting jackets that are tapered at the waist. Remove the shoulder pads as they are not needed. Find a jacket that feels comfortably loose. Snug is not good when you are large because then you will look like all of the large women out there who try to squeeze themselves into clothes that are too small for them. Go for a dark colored jacket. Wear a light colored blouse underneath the jacket. A navy jacket with a white blouse is a good combination. So is a black jacket with a cream colored blouse.

If your waist is larger than your chest, it will be extremely difficult to pass. Not impossible, but extremely difficult. I recommend slimming down your waist to a reasonable size before you try to pass in public. For genetic males, the average chest is eight inches larger than the average waist. For genetic females, it's ten inches. For really sexy-looking women, it's twelve inches (as in 36-24-36), but most genetic males (and even genetic females) know that it is quite difficult to achieve these proportions without the use of a corset, but, as I had already mentioned, corsets are hard to hide and scream out "Hey! This is a fat person trying to look skinny!"

If you look closely at specialty clothing catalogs showing women wearing corsets, you'll notice that the women are skinny to begin with, so there's a bit of false advertising there. My advice is to train hard to slim your waist down to a reasonable size. If it took you ten years to get out of shape, it will take you ten more to get back into shape, however, if you have enough desire, you can reduce your waistline in a much faster time than ten years. It all depends on how badly you want to achieve your goals. A great article on an

immediate two-inch waist reduction exists on my web site, TransVamp.com, and is reprinted in the appendices for your reference. Please read it and try to follow the article's advice.

If you are thin or relatively thin, you will find many different women's fashions that are accessible to you. I recommend buying one or more of the following tops:

- long-sleeved turtleneck
- long-sleeved ribbed top
- something made of silk (just so you can get a feel for what it's like)
- "shell" blouse (basically a simple sleeveless top with a U-shaped neckline)
- cable knit sweater

Select colors that match your style and personality. A safe choice is black. There is nothing wrong with owning clothes that are all the same color, but you'll probably get bored with wearing the same color all the time, so stick with the same or similar colors at first and gradually add other colors to your wardrobe over time. You may find that you look better in some colors than others. If so, make notes on which colors look good on you so you can concentrate on buying clothes in those colors in the future. Pay attention to compliments on the clothes you wear. If everyone keeps giving you positive feedback on certain colored outfits you wore, then buy more outfits in that color. Do not do the guy thing of buying ten of the same exact item just because it looks good on you. Your friends and acquaintances will think you're a bumpkin for wearing the same thing all the time.

If you have thin arms, buy a number of sleeveless tops. If you are under 30, buy a number of tee shirts. bebe, XOXO, Wet Seal, and EXPRESS make really cool tee shirts that are great for wearing in clubs. Never ever wear gloves as part of your outfit unless it's a formal affair where your date is wearing a tuxedo and you're wearing a ball gown. Don't wear a boa. I've seen a woman at a holiday party for CPAs who wore a boa and she was the talk of the party... negative talk, that is. How embarrassing! Make sure your bag, shoes, and jewelry match your outfit. Don't mix and match silver and gold jewelry unless you have jewelry items that contain both. Don't ever wear blue or pastel eye shadows. If you don't believe me, try wearing these colors and see what happens. I have never seen a woman, genetic or transgender, look good in blue or pastel eye shadows. Save those shades for private pictures, not for public outings.

Do NOT wear catsuits or jumpsuits if you're a crossdresser. These are one-piece outfits that require a lot of work to take off and put back on. Going to the bathroom won't be fun if you need to adjust your breast forms, hip padding, or whatever it is you wish to wear underneath the outfit every time you need to go to the restroom. I recommend wearing something that keeps things in place so you can go to the restroom and do your business with minimal fuss. Perhaps that is why most crossdressers prefer skirts. Besides showing off your legs, skirts are very practical when it comes to going to the restroom quickly.

A number of breast forms are readily available to crossdressers. There are breast forms made of foam padding and ones made of silicone. I recommend the latter because silicone feels more real than foam and warms to your body temperature. There are many different manufacturers of silicone breast forms. You can buy a relatively inexpensive pair for \$159 or you can buy attachable ones for as much as \$499. My recommendation is if you are a crossdresser and you are serious about looking like a convincing female, save up all of your money and buy the attachable ones (the Amoena Classic Contact 351). If you don't have a lot of money to spend, then check out the foam pad breast forms for \$79 a pair. A good source for breast forms is www.thebreastformstore.com.

What size breast form is right you? You obviously don't want breasts that are too big or too small. Too big and they will make you look comical, like a caricature of a woman. Too small and you have to wonder why you bothered wearing them in the first place. Breast forms have two measurements: chest size and cup size. I recommend never going above a C cup no matter what chest size you are. I used to have an infatuation with big breasts, especially on myself, but as I grew older and wiser, I discovered that large breasts look kind of silly on a thin girl, so I stopped wearing C and D cups and started wearing A and B

cups instead. Cup both of your hands as if you are holding a breast in each hand. Place your left hand over your left pectoral and your right hand over your right pectoral. This will give you an idea of how small you can go. This is about an A cup for your body. Don't buy breast forms smaller than this. By the same token, don't buy breast forms much larger than this, either.

What I have learned after many years of being a crossdresser is smaller breasts imply youth. There is no better way to look ten years younger than by having breasts that look small, perky, and youthful. This tip won't work on everyone, especially if you're overweight, so, like I said before, get your waist down through exercise! Once you whittle your waist down and lose some weight, you might notice some unsightly cellulite and loose skin. If you have the money, there is a new innovative procedure called Accent RF (Radio Frequency) technique for cellulite reduction and skin tightening. It is a non-surgical, non-invasive procedure that can be applied to the legs, buttocks, hips, abdomen, love handles, arms, neckline, jowls, cheek lines, forehead, and eyes. Each body area costs \$2,000 to \$3,000 to improve and treatments usually take about 30 to 45 minutes.

The end goal of losing weight or maintaining an optimal thin weight for your build is to not just look as thin as possible, but to look good while thin. Many transgender women make the mistake of losing so much weight that they look like skeletons or, just as worse, skinny men! Study your progress daily. Be obsessed with not just being thin, but looking good while thin. Female hormones are most effective when you start on them in your teenage years. Given your age, current build, and past dietary habits, you will likely gain weight with hormones and find it terribly difficult to lose weight without daily exercise.

Many transgender women love wearing high heels, but are these the best choices if they want to pass? The short answer is no. Do not wear high heels unless you have mastered walking in them. People will think that you are an oaf or a drunk if you wobble while you walk. Why give the jesters an excuse to poke fun of you? Make sure you master walking in heels at home before you walk in heels in public. Master walking in them on hard surfaces because you will be walking on mostly concrete and hardwood in public. I understand the temptation to walk around in heels may be strong at first, but you must resist the temptation. The most common errors I see when transgender women walk in heels are:

- they slouch when they walk
- they wobble when they walk
- they walk too rigidly
- they walk like something is hanging between their legs
- they walk over anything, not knowing that a grate or an uneven surface might spell their doom

The great thing about shoes is you can buy them anywhere: in a mall, in a boutique, or via mail order. Mall stores are usually frequented by lots of people and if you are brave enough to try shoes on in front of people, then great. Go for it. Just don't buy the first thing you try on unless it's really, really cool. Usually, crossdressers will go to mall stores during the day when it is less crowded and more anonymous. Boutique stores are usually frequented by far less people than mall stores, but the problem here is nosy sales staff. Sometimes I may want to browse without being bothered. In a boutique, the sales staff will be watching you closely. If you don't mind wearing shoes in front of sales staff, then great. Go for it. Just remember not to buy the first thing you try on unless it's really, really cool.

Mail order is the third option and it's the safest one if you want to remain anonymous, but returns are a hassle. In a store, if something doesn't fit, you don't have to buy it. In a mail order transaction, you get to try the shoes on in the convenience of your own home, but if you have to return something, you might be responsible for return shipping and insurance. It is always better to buy a pair of shoes in person than via mail order. Zappos and Shoebuy.com give you free return shipping, but there is still the hassle of waiting for exchanges.

Inspect any pair of shoes you want to buy for quality, fit, style, and value. A really fancy pair of shoes may look great, but if they can only be worn once, then they have limited value. Shoes, like any type of