

Budget Smart Girl's



The Budget Girl's Guide to Buying Jeans

Jeans, probably one of the key essentials in everyone's wardrobe, but yet sometimes the hardest thing to buy. I've had my share of jeans over the years. Some have been so comfortable that I've worn and worn them until my knees popped out of them. Other times I've bought jeans, worn them a few times and realized I'd made one big mistake. The last pair I bought I didn't realize were the low riding ones. After mysterious pains in the hips, and nearly losing consciousness when I sat down, they ended up in the charity donation bag, and sadly, as a waste of money. So for all you Budget Smart Girls who are about to embark on the great jean hunting expedition, I asked Amy Cafazzo, Marshalls style expert, and Jamie Yasko-Mangum President of Successful Style and Image Inc. <http://www.successfulstyle-image.com> to offer us some tips before we hit the stores.

1. What should you look for in when you're buying jeans?

"First, don't look at the length. As long as they graze the top of your foot and are long enough, you can always hem them to the right length - it's difficult to find a pair that's the perfect length, plus you'll want to decide if you're primarily wearing them with flats or heels. From there, look at the way the jeans hug your seat - are you going to stop traffic in these jeans? This season, you'll want at least two pairs of tried-and-true jeans: a skinnier pair, and a pair of trouser jeans with a wider leg that may be appropriate for casual days at work," says Cafazzo.

"Remember to try every pair on because they all fit differently. You do not want to buy one off the shelf without trying it on because when you get home, they might not fit. Women should look for jeans that have a waistband that is comfort fit (back hits on waist but front falls just slightly to the bottom of the belly button) or slightly below the waist; this will give them comfort in their torso and looks great. The fit should be comfortable and it shouldn't pinch your skin when you button them. From there the jeans need to fit the hips (not too tight), semi fit the thighs and cascade to the calves and hems. Some ladies look better with a slight flair, other a wider leg and some a straight leg. Popular cuts are the wide leg but make sure the wide leg looks complimentary on your body frame. Another key characteristic of a spectacular jean is the stretch fabric. When you have stretch in your jeans, many times you can drop a size. Don't only look for denim that is dark or slightly stonewashed; go outside your box and purchase some jeans that have some embellishment on them. Pair a complimentary top and you have a dynamic outfit! Beware of jeans that fit your hips great but the waistband is way too big; it is hard to alter those types of jeans," says Yasko-Mangum.

2. Should you ever consider buying them online, or through a catalog, or should you always try them on before you commit to buy?

"Unless it's a brand that you already own and love, it's smarter to try them on. We know when a pair of jeans really works when we try them on, but it's impossible to tell from a picture online or in a catalog.

Jeans can make you feel fabulous and sexy when they're the right pair - don't leave that feeling up to chance!" says Cafazzo.

"Yes, you should always try them on, however, when you purchase online, most companies will allow you to try on and if they do not fit, you can send back and they provide the postage to return the merchandise. Online buys usually are good and now there are companies that make jeans specifically for your body type. They are a little expensive but worth it," says Yasko-Mangum.

3. Any particular brands you like and can recommend?

"I don't pay attention to brands when it comes to jeans. If you know the trends, and you find a pair that really works with your figure, then go for it! The \$20 pair might be more flattering than the \$120 pair," says Cafazzo.

"Lucky, DKNY, Ralph Lauren, Michael Kors," says Yasko-Mangum.

4. Any bargain brands that are good buys?

"Lee and Levi's," says Yasko-Mangum.

5. Any Other Tips You Can Offer?

"There are so many different brands of jeans the selection can be overwhelming. A suggestion to finding a great pair of jeans is ask friends, colleagues, family members what types of jeans they wear and why? This can help with your selection but remember what might be good for them may not be good for you. You want a jean that makes you look wonderful!" says Yasko-Mangum.

"Darker jeans will help slim your figure. Straight leg jeans help lengthen the body to make you appear taller and don't hug your body as much to cover problem areas. Flare or boot cut jeans help balance larger thighs," says Cafazzo.

The Budget Smart Girl's Tip

Just like every piece of clothing you buy, jeans are an investment. Take care of them, store them properly, and make sure you read the care label before you wash them.

~Susan Palmquist

Susan Palmquist is a freelance writer who specializes in food, health and money saving topics. She writes a monthly column called Budget Smart and is a food editor for an online publication. She also has another Web site with Garden and Hearth called Eating Well on a Budget.