

HOW TO WEAR BELTS

Far from being purely utilitarian, belts can be the final touch that completes and polishes your total look. The addition of a belt can be the equivalent of adding a period to the end of a sentence. In addition, they can add shape and aid in improving the garment's fit. Of course like any other accessory, there are factors and elements that come into play to successfully pull off and integrate a belt into your look.

Here's a guide to wearing belts and looking amazing in them.

Types of Belts

Being knowledgeable about the types of belts available will better equip you when it comes to figuring out which one to choose for particular occasions and whether a certain belt style will suit your personal style and body type. Knowing the belt lingo will also make it easier for you to shop and find exactly what you're looking for.

Classic

Whether it comes in black or in brown, the classic belt is a must-have in every woman's wardrobe. This belt is a versatile piece that exceeds its practicality. With a simple design and buckle, the simplicity of this belt makes it adaptable to any type of occasion. This belt, when in a good quality leather, will add polish to your office separates and your denim.

But don't stop there...why not try some bright colored belts? They are the perfect choice to pep up your little black or navy dress or a predominantly monochromatic look. Go to neon belts and you'll add some youthful vigor and dose of trendy style to classic looks. If you're up for getting noticed, match one accessory such as a bag or scarf to the color of your belt. The next step up is the metallic belt. In finishes such as gold and silver they are as versatile and easy to style as your traditional neutrals such as nude, navy, black, and white. If you want to add glam to your look, reach for a metallic belt and watch your glam instantly shine through. Whether you opt for a skinny or wide metallic belt, the versatility of this piece remains constant. A trendy and of-the-moment take on this belt is to buy a belt with a metallic piece on the front; this type of metallic belt gives more structure to your overall look.



Woven/Braided

Typically a boho accessory, the woven/braided leather belt has crossed over to more traditional styles. Leather is the usual material of choice for this type of belt given its earthy style connotations. However the ease with which this belt can be styled has made it an easy pick for fashionistas to cross over to style even their preppy looks. Many times this belt looks best when worn over flowing tunic tops and maxi dresses as well as more polished pieces like pencil skirts and sheath dresses.



Statement

This belt is especially appropriate for evening occasions and can be relied upon to make a major impression. From a belt that sparkles for all you glam queens, to a studded belt if you're more of a rock chick and an animal print if you're a dramatic woman, the choices are endless.

The key here is to find a style that resonates with your style so you can wear it with confidence.



Skinny

Skinny belts are subtle accessories that can easily spruce up your outfit and make it look complete. It's also easier to play around with colorful hues and bolder prints since it's width makes it understated.

When styling this belt take note of proportion, since the belt is so skinny wear it with jeans or skirts that are more fitted. Loose and flowing pieces will drown out the belt and it will lose its chic appeal.



Wide

Wide belts are another kind of statement belt; from an Obi sash to add a little oriental flavor to a sexy corset style or a classic wide sash style, each makes unique statement. A wide belt is perfect for creating an amazing hourglass shape and will work wonders for most waistlines. If you want to cinch in your waist when wearing shapeless shift dresses or empire waist pieces, a wide belt is your best bet. Invest in a neutral wide belt that you can style different options with, and invest in a fun, trendier version for nights when you're feeling a little bit funkier.



Rope

Tying a rope around your waist says effortless style to a T. They are an easy way to add structure and shape to your more casual looks. You can tie your rope belt in multiple ways, either in the middle front, the back, or even asymmetrical to one side. It's just a one-of-a-kind way to finish up a look. This rope belt works especially well for the warmer months with lighter fabrics. You can even personalize this type of belt even further with the way you decide to knot it.



Elastic

Elasticized belts can have a tendency to look 80's-inspired, especially if they sport an ornate buckle. Fight against that by making sure that your elastic belts serve as a seamless component of your look instead of a focal point. If you do decide to let your beautiful waist and elasticized belt take center stage, keep the rest of your look simple and let the attention be on the belt.



Fabric

Fabric belts or sash belts are another hot trend that emerged from street style. Scarves used as belts, either tied at the waist or slung low on the hips, is the ultimate in “cool” styling. This styling insider trick will give you a definite fashion feel.



The Right Belt for You

If you are high-waisted with long legs

Your aim is to visually elongate your torso so narrow belts and/or those that sit below your waist is often the best way to go.

You can also:

- A. Wear a single color above and below the waist and a narrow belt in the same color.
- B. Continue the visual length of your torso by wearing a belt in the color of your top.
- C. Wear a single color above and below your waist and then add a narrow belt at the waist.
- D. Wear a hipster belt.



If you are low-waisted with short legs

You have plenty of torso to experiment with all types of belts with medium to wide styles being your best. Avoid wearing belts too low as this will emphasize your long torso.

- A. Wear belts that match your pants to extend your leg length.
- B. Wide belts.
- C. Contrasting belts.
- D. Obi and corset belts.



If you have little waist definition

The goal here will be to create the illusion of a waist. This can be achieved by:

- A. Wearing a medium to narrow width belt in a darker color than the garment you are wearing.
- B. Wearing a belt in a color matching your top or dress.
- C. Calling attention to your waist with a belt peeping out from an open jacket or sweater.
- D. Teaming the belt with tops and bottoms with volume to create the illusion of a waist.



If you have a large bust

Often your bust sits lower creating the appearance of being short waisted having little to no waist definition.

You can counter this with:

- A. Medium to narrow width belts in the same or darker color than the garment you are wearing and positioned.
- B. Belts that sit on the hips.
- C. Belts peaking out from under open jackets.



If you are full hipped

You are blessed with a waist so belts are a great accessory for showing off your figure and improving the fit of many garments. However, they can also emphasize the size of your hips and buttocks.

Your best belts include:

- A. Those that sit slightly above your natural waist.
- B. Styles in the same color as your pants or skirt.
- C. Belts under open jackets and vests.



Do's and Don'ts of Wearing a Belt

Do you think you're ready to conquer belts now? Before you go armed with your newfound knowledge, here are some do's and don'ts to bear in mind:

- Do wear the same color of belt as your dress...it will make your look more streamlined.
- Do store your belts and clean them properly. A little bit of care goes a long way in making your accessories last.
- Do create shape and curves using belts.
- Do get colorful and bold when shopping for belts. It's a great way to bring some life into your more basic pieces.
- Do show off your belt. Put the attention on this great accessory and your amazing figure.
- Do declutter your closet and swap 'out of style' belts each year.
- Don't fold your belts or curl them tightly when storing them.
- Don't match every single accessory to the color of your belt.
- Don't wear your belt too tight.
- Don't be afraid to wear your belt over your cardigan or cover up. It's a chic and refreshing way to add shape while wearing outerwear.
- Don't overshadow a statement belt with other large and/or prominent accessories.
- Don't wear lighter belt fabrications (fabric, rope) for the colder seasons. Leather can be worn all year round.
- Don't be afraid to show off your fun personality with an equally fun and fabulous belt.