

Karyna Shuliak

The Vogue Guide to Tailoring Your Denim

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Why The Best-Fitting Pair of Jeans You'll Ever Own May Already Be in Your Closet

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It has always seemed to me that there are just some people out there who possess perfect jeans-bodies—lower hemispheres that somehow always look their best in the jeans you always want but can never seem to find, whether that's flared or ultra-high or ultra-low or cropped or mid-rise or vintage Levi's 501s (not "new," exactly, but you'd be forgiven for thinking so considering how many people have suddenly begun sporting them)—and I was just not ever going to be one of those people. Don't get me wrong, I had my handful of silhouettes down: a small stable of brands and styles that worked, but that was it—not unlucky in denim love, exactly, but aware of my limitations, every changing room experience a battlefield strewn with pairs of ill-fitting, unflattering, totally depressing denim that often left me uninspired, empty-handed, and endlessly covetous of the ideal-fitting jeans that seemed utterly beyond my grasp. Re/Done <<http://shopredone.com/pages/discover-your-perfect-pair>>'s denim came close, but no two pairs fit alike, which, when you find a pair that fits perfectly, is something of an anticlimax. Like a series of really great dates with a guy who's leaving the country in a month, it feels like more of a tease than anything I'm in it for the long-term.

<http://www.vogue.com/tag/misc/denim?intcid=inline_amp>

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And then a colleague took pity on me. Vogue, you see, is perhaps unsurprisingly full of these perfect-jeans-wearers, and rather than a specific brand or site or store, the universal explanation all came down to one idea: tailoring. Oh, come on, I'd say, you really tailor your jeans? Who has the time? Who wants to spend the money? Well, my friends, it turns out I have enough of the former to investigate. And what I found may shock you: No one, actually, has a perfect jeans-body. We are all jeans-bodies: We just need to help our jeans along. Which is where tailoring comes in. Here, your guide to finding your ideal pair—chances are that they've been in your closet all along—

Here's what you need to know.

1. Proportion is key. Be aware of pockets and zippers; neither will be moved without a fight. Beware of too-long zippers (often on men's vintage styles picked up at the flea market) or too-big, unflatteringly placed pockets: If these are relocated, the denim underneath will be a different color.

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2. This feels obvious, but isn't: Jeans that are too big are easier to fix than jeans that are too small. It's always easier for a tailor to take things a size smaller than the opposite. (Though denim panels can be added to give you some additional wiggle room, it's not ideal.) You want the jeans to fit comfortably over your largest body part (thigh, waist, hip)—everything else can be taken in to your liking.

3. Be honest with yourself. Some things will never be what you want them to be. Admit defeat and open your mind to other possibilities—we are almost in cut-off season, after all!

4. Shockingly easy (and really quite inexpensive) fixes: Do your jeans fit well, other than that waistband gap? That's always the easiest adjustment of all. Crave the new crop <http://www.vogue.com/85=5393/cropped-pant-trend-spring-2015/?intcid=inline_amp>? Have those suckers hemmed. Inner thighs worn through on your skinnies? They're an inset panel away from a totally reconstructed (and stronger for it!) pair. The options are, if not endless, surprisingly varied.

5. Really, everyone looks better when their clothes are tailored. "It's addictive," says tailor Erin Hogan-Braker. "Once your clothes fit really well, you never look back."

Denim experts to rely on:

Stitched Up Owner Erin Hogan-Braker has a pair of tailoring-based businesses under her belt—7th Bone Tailoring, for commercial clients like Brooks Brothers, and Stitched Up, which specializes in alterations for everyone (and will be at the Williamsburg Flea market on May 3 and 17)—and her experience includes draping runway samples for Proenza Schouler and Calvin Klein; with a killer combination of a sunny disposition and the candor to tell you when your jeans are hopeless, she's the ultimate in all things alteration-related.

7thbonetailoring.com <<http://7thbonetailoring.com/>>

Denim Therapy

From basic repairs for holes and tears to monogramming, hardware replacement and basic tailoring needs, you can either ship or drop off your TLC-requiring blues in person to Denim Therapy, then simply wait for an emailed estimate—and a whole new world to open up.

denimtherapy.com <<http://denimtherapy.com/how-it-works/>>

Denim Surgeon

Can't make an in-person fitting? You can mail your jeans—along with the measurements for how you'd like them to fit, from rise to inseam and thigh circumference—to Denim Surgeon's studio, and expect a factory-fresh feeling return in around a week.

denimsurgeon.com <<http://www.denimsurgeon.com/>>

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