

---

# Dress Your Body Type: Short

---

**N**ot feelin' the love? Dressing a short body type doesn't have to be a nightmare. This one's for you, shorty.

By Farah Averill,

## Page 1: Dress Your Body Type: Short



Dress Your Body Type: Short

[Click here to follow AskMen Fashion on Twitter.](#)

*This article marks the third installment in our Dress Your Body Type series. For more, check out our advise for [large body types](#), [skinny body types](#) and [tall body types](#).*

Looking your best is largely about figuring out which garments, cuts, color combinations, and fabrics play up your best assets. Here we review what you should add to (and what you can toss from) your closet if you have a [short body type](#). We've also included an easy-to-use guide so that the next time you hit the stores, it will be crystal clear what you need to stock

up on in order to enhance your appearance.

### A short body type defined

In North America, a man is considered to have a short body type when his height is 5'6» or less. With regards to frame, men with short body types may be slim, muscular, athletic, or heavysset. A short body type also means that either your legs or your torso are shorter than average.

### Pros and cons of dressing a short body

Dressing any body type is always about accentuating what's great about yourself and downplaying features that you don't love. In several ways, dressing a short body type can be easier than one that's very tall as it's always easier to have clothing shortened to fit you but it's near impossible to have garments lengthened. Additionally, shorter men are in luck these days as shrunken coats and trimmer fits are not only back in vogue, but appear to be here to stay in some form or another, making it easier to find flattering, [fashion-forward](#) clothing. Particularly if you happen to be lean, there are a wide variety of designers that produce clothing suited to your body type. For example, to find really sharp, sophisticated clothes, seek out European labels; for cool, urban threads, look to Japanese designers who turn out style-conscious lines that fit the proportions of their countrymen, who are on average slightly shorter than their Western counterparts.

Having a short body type often means, however, that mass-market clothes, particularly those found in American chains, will be too large for you. This

---

## Dress Your Body Type: Short

---

clothing tends to be geared toward a restricted number of body shapes, so finding your size in these stores will prove more difficult. Additionally, the more you deviate from average height, the harder clothes shopping will be.

### dress your body type: the guide

#### Fit

At any size or height, the [fit](#) of a man's clothing is the determining factor in the impression his appearance leaves on others. Proper-fitting clothes convey professionalism, good taste, attention to detail, and a certain authority. Ill-fitting garments, alternatively, suggest character traits such as sloppiness and laziness, even if you don't actually possess those qualities.

To ensure your clothing belongs in the former category rather than the latter, hunt down the services of a reputable [tailor](#). Take every pair of pants you buy, including jeans, to him so that your bottoms are always the correct length. What you're aiming for is to avoid any bunching at the bottom and for your hemline to graze your shoes. Your pants should also have a plain hem, as cuffs have the effect of breaking a smooth seam, thus, visually cutting inches off your frame. At the store, forego extremely tapered or baggy pants, opting instead for pants that sit higher on your waist (without looking geeky) if you have short legs. Choose lower-rise boot-cut or straight-leg pants if you have a short torso relative to the rest of your body.

Can colors and patterns make you look taller (or even shorter)? That's next...

### Page 2: Short Body Type

For tops, begin by shopping for pieces that visually draw the eye up toward your face. These include dress shirts with straight-point collars and blazers with peak lapels. Avoid anything that focuses attention downward, such as deep V-necks or [double-breasted blazers](#) and sweaters. To help elongate a shorter torso, wear your shirts untucked whenever possible. Shirt cuffs that are too long will have the unfortunate effect of making you look like a boy, so ensure that only about half an inch of your shirt cuff is visible when you've layered a button-down underneath a blazer or sweater.

When shopping for blazers and structured coats, favor those that are ventless and cut short, meaning that they end at or just above the curve of your butt, as this style will extend the line of your legs. Finally, when in doubt, defer to your tailor and have your dress clothes [custom made](#). That way, your shirts will fit properly around your armpits and you can also ask your tailor to set your breast pocket higher on your blazers and your trouser pockets slightly lower for a superior, elongated look.

#### Colors and patterns

In terms of choosing [colors and patterns](#) for short body types, what will look best on you may be more determined by your weight and frame than your height. For example, short men can wear stripes between one-quarter to three-quarters of an inch, with wider-framed men wearing stripes spaced further apart. Short and stout men should also stay away from heavily textured weaves like herringbone or houndstooth, as they add bulk and draw the eye down, though slimmer men shouldn't feel shy about wearing these patterns. Dark, solid colors will help heavyset men look slimmer while lighter colors are more appropriate for lean men.

## Dress Your Body Type: Short

Regardless of what the number on your scale says, however, there are a few points related to color and pattern that short men can keep in mind. First, whether you're wearing dark or light colors, short men benefit from wearing ensembles in which all the garments come from the same color family as it creates a fluid, elongating line (this is called monochromatic). More specifically, a stark contrast between your top and bottom half is not recommended as it will visually cut you in half. Finally, short men should wear shirts with small prints and patterns, eschewing large windowpane checks or oversize plaid.

### dress your best: more tips

Short men can also make use of a few tricks in the accessories and grooming departments to help them look their best. To begin with, simple [accessories](#) are better because they won't overwhelm your shape, and this uncluttered look will also keep attention focused on your face. The best ties for short men are those that are narrow or midsize rather than broad. Wide belts are also a no-no for short men, so select narrower waistbands and belts. To lengthen the vertical line of your body, you can experiment with hats, dress shoes with a slight heel and short hairstyles. Finally, find inspiration for how to dress and what to wear by checking out shots of [style icons](#) from your grandfather's generation, as they tended to be shorter and you'll learn a lot from their classy sense of style (FYI: Sammy Davis, Jr. was 5'3«).

Need a checklist the next time you go shopping? That's next...

### Page 3: Dressing A Short Body Type



### checklist: your wardrobe staples

- Two-button coats and blazers
- Boot-cut or straight-leg jeans
- Slim ties
- Straight-point collar button-downs
- Narrow belt
- Single-breasted, ventless blazers
- Sleek suits
- Sweaters in thin fabrics
- [Leather jacket](#), motocross-style jackets or bomber jackets
- Shoes and boots with ½" to 1" heel

It's a rare man who can throw on virtually any outfit and seem as though he just stepped out of a [fashion](#) spread, so if you're like most men, you know that a bit of effort is involved in achieving a stylish look. Everyone has to take certain aspects of what they were born with into account when dressing each morning and if you have a short body type, now you know exactly what you need to do (or not do) to make the most of yourself.