

It's All in the Jeans

Denim trends for spring are breaking the skinny barrier

BY SHERI RADFORD

“Skinny jeans are dead, dead in the water.” That’s according to personal stylist Michelle Addison, who also offers personal shopping and wardrobe editing. She rattles off the styles that are on trend right now: “Baggy jeans that are a little high-waisted, loose jeans, barrel-cut jeans, wide-leg denim.”

Overall the move is toward “bigger, baggier pants with a crop top,” Addison says. For those who don’t feel comfortable wearing a cropped tee or short sweater, she recommends tucking in a shirt and perhaps adding a belt, to avoid looking bulky or boxy. As for footwear, she suggests “wider shoes or chunkier boots, or even chunky loafers.”

Not only do these wider-legged jeans look good, they feel great, too. “When we move into the straight-leg denim and a little bit of a higher waist, and it’s a little bit more forgiving, we will have a hard time going back and putting those skin-tight skinny jeans on,” she says.

Addison acknowledges that some shoppers may feel nervous about abandoning the familiar (read: skinny) and trying something looser, “because they can feel like, ‘Oh, I’m wearing my dad’s pants.’” She offers a solution: “Always get the jean tailored to your own body.”

Stacy Gerritse, marketing director for Mavi, agrees that “wider silhouettes and higher rises” are hot for spring 2022. “They are very reminiscent of styles that were popular in the ‘90s,” she says. “We’re seeing a lot of crop tops paired with these really voluminous silhouettes.” She mentions a few other noteworthy trends this spring: shackets (denim shirt jackets), utility onesies and the denim-on-denim look. (Yes, really, the Canadian tuxedo is on trend.) But, she cautions, the goal is not to hop on the fast-fashion train. “I think we’re all a lot more careful about how much we’re consuming, so we’re buying better-quality pieces that we feel have a longer relevancy.”

Balancing fashion with longevity and comfort is also a major concern for Elizabeth Davey, director of product for Duer. “Women’s fashion historically moves faster than men’s, and the challenge with that is meeting the demand for relevant styling while integrating performance attributes and comfort,” she says. “Our newest styles, like the Girlfriend and the Wide Leg, are designed to be worn for a number of seasons and to be malleable enough to rotate into any outfit.”

And don’t expect these wider styles to disappear any time soon. According to Nico Antonopoulos, brand manager of Yoga Jeans, “Wider legs have taken over the denim world.” She says, “What is fun is that now, women have more choices in terms of fit and can really dress according to their body shape.” Her prediction for the rest of the year? “I do believe that wide legs will continue into summer. The key is to either make them long in a lighter fabric or make them cropped.”

Addison, too, is thinking ahead to warmer and warmer weather. “These types of jeans look great with sandals because most of the straight-leg denim is a bit cropped, so we can see a lot of the ankle,” she says. “A sandal with a slight heel looks even better.”

Citizens of Humanity, Levi’s, Gap, Reformation, AG, Naked & Famous, G. Label, R13, Paige, Mother, Frame—pretty much any brand you can think of is stocking a huge range of denim styles right now, including straight legs, flares, dad jeans, crops and balloon cuts. If you’re ready to test out the wide-legged world, the boyfriend or girlfriend fits at Mavi are a good place to start. Gerritse describes them as “sort of like a baby step into these wider fits.”



Addison also has advice for nervous newcomers: “Lots and lots of brands will have different types of wide denim, so don’t get discouraged if you try one wide-leg denim on and it looks terrible. There’s going to be a certain style that will fit your body.” She also recommends scouring vintage stores for treasures from the 1990s. “And even if they aren’t exactly right for you, you can always alter them to be great.”

Of course there is one other option. Addison says, “If you love your skinny jeans, and you want to keep wearing them, feel free. You don’t have to follow this fashion trend, and you don’t have to be like everybody else, at all.”



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