

How to Style Denim

OK so denim *is* the hardest look to pull off properly. It's become such a ubiquitous fashion(less) staple that its application can lead the wearer down the path to irrelevance. It's hard work for older folk, sometimes numbing on blondes, tricky with running and smart shoes (you might have to go with [Nike's Denim Air Forces](#)) not allowed to work (no 'just been to the gym excuses' here) swamped in Vaquero-era mythology that – despite Lil Nas' validation – still brings forth images of Bolo tied Republicans and - ironically - the 70s disco set with whom they share a *Wrangler* fetish. Denim is, in some sense, so damn hard because it's too damn easy, too damn soft, comfortable, blue and let's face it, so damn common.

Go To

But for those who are *very* serious about their fashion, denim is *the* place to go. Why? Well, it's still (*just*) the right side of the black-shoes-brown-belt line of fashion no-no's; it's what supermodels wear when they leave Knightsbridge abodes in the early hours if they're not rocking athleisure all out. It's what those pretending they don't really care can wow you with.

Point Guard

A key point is that denim (pants or otherwise) isn't *the* thing; it directs you *towards* the thing, but there's absolutely *no* reason why it shouldn't help you look fantastic in the process. Whether it's [Zendaya/Tommy Hilfiger boot-cut swankiness](#), anyone exiting the [Polo Lounge](#) in 501s + business jacket + [Converse purple Lucky Stars](#), [Hayley Baldwin's Vivienne Westwood take on the Canadian tuxedo](#), added floral bandana or look-at-my-tattoos white t-shirt, it's not primarily the blue assist we tally. Unlike your (ahem) [Burberry leopard print sneakers](#) or [NoKaOi](#) illusion outfit, jeans are a base - they diffuse, draw attention to a standout piece, or frame your badass self.

Blue Truth

Unless they're dark blue. In which case a slimmer silhouette becomes the rule of thumb: a suitable hip-fit (high is fine for girls but too low hasn't been too good for either gender since [TLC](#) stopped making hand signals) minus any mod-referencing white sock-bearing- buttock-clenching action, means dark blue denim (that deep pool of wisdom just short of linen) works as well as smart trousers for all but sober work settings.

Rip the Script

There are (many extremely intelligent) folks who'll argue politically that shredded denim knees still have a place at the table. Well if you can cross that Rubicon you're basically beyond advice and you've (possibly) failed entry to [The Peppermint Club](#). Unless you're French. The seventies were the apotheosis of denim as a hip-centric fashion statement and *Paris Fashion Week* this September was glitter-balling with Jane Birkin-like Joie de vivre. Much maligned (Paris is a dangerous place *not* to make radical statements) but actually most on-the-seventies-money were Givenchy's denim minis, reversibles, ripped skirts and two tone dresses. By the close we'd seen a kind of heroin-chic denouncement of everything cut and polished and a signal that with denim you have to work-with or let your hair down.

Custom Crayon

Or you can prepare proper for the 22nd century with [Levi's Jacquard](#) - a trucker-jacket with wireless connection to your smartphone via subtle taps to the cuff. Levis are, like [Le Fruit Defendu New York](#) and [Calvin Klein](#), busting on customization. But why not sit down with your sister and ask where you want to take this? Then DIY. Simply prep by listening to *Cro-Mags*, and rifle through images of paintings by Jean Michele Basquiat while you magic marker. If you dare you can tell everyone the finished product is a [Balenciaga](#).

Stretch and Go

If it's a sharpened pencil-thin take on jeans that rocks your horse then [Replay's Hyperflex](#) is for size six runway models who need to sit down between rehearsals, while [Diesel's D-Ramy](#) two tones show that grey and black can make a magnetic statement north of the colour line. Lycra mixes have given denim even greater flexibility, but despite interesting riffs in the mid 2010s, jeans and athleisure have only occasionally squared off. Diesel's [Jogg Jeans](#) re-engage with Kung Fu aplomb while brands like [Mimi Fitwear](#) stick to Pilates. Once again you could wear any of this with flip flops or heels, puff jacket or leather, because denim trades like blue gold.

Denim Days (and Nights)

Regardless of how you respond to denim's transformation from bar garb to tabbed icon to hybrid multi-eventer, you can rest assured that as long as there are days in the week and not enough things to wear, we will be wearing jeans to go and buy new things, and might just stay in them past sundown.