Fashion Maven 101: Finding the Best Swimwear for Your Body and Personality

I apologize, dear Divas. This post is way overdue, and most of us have long since undergone the torturous process of choosing a swimsuit for the summer. My only excuse is that the weather in my area has been so rainy this summer that my own new suit has yet to see the light of day. It's tragic, I tell ya. Whether you're still in the market for a new swimsuit (and now is a great time for swimwear clearance sales), or you want to get a jumpstart for next year, knowing the best styles and patterns for your body can drastically reduce the agony of swimsuit shopping.

Decide how much you want to bare.

Yeah, swimsuit models can make even the teeniest bikini look awesome, but they're not actually swimming, are they? This isn't just a question of modesty. If you plan to be very active in the water, you'll want a suit that will stay with you through diving, cannonballs and vigorous laps. That doesn't mean you have to get an athletic one-piece, though. I find that as long as I get both the top and bottom in the right size, I can do anything--even dive through an inner tube--in a halter top and bikini bottom combo, such as these Victoria's Secret offerings.

Certain body types will look better in some swimsuit styles than others.

If you have a very **petite** figure, for instance, you can wear just about any cut of suit you want, but you'll need to pay attention to color and pattern. Bright colors help you stand out, but cute floral or polka-dot prints could make you look like a little girl. No one over the age of twelve wants that. There's nothing wrong with looking athletic though, especially if you are. A sporty, streamlined bikini or tankini, such as this Linda Mar halter tankini, can be a good choice.

The bathing suit shopping experience can be especially unpleasant for women with **plus-sized** figures, but it doesn't have to be. A form-fitting suit with a structured midsection, such as this Victoria's Secret Magicsuit, accentuates cleavage and helps to create a sleek silhouette.

For a **boyish** figure, follow almost exactly the opposite advice for a petite one. The more girly the print and cut, the better. Bandeau styles, while cute, also draw attention to the fact that you don't need straps. Avoid them in favor of suits that create the illusion of curves, such as a one-piece with stripes that angle toward your waist, or a cute bikini with a bold pattern and clever detailing. This cherry print shirred bikini from oasap.com is a good example.

Tall ladies will want to avoid one-piece suits in solid colors, as they emphasize your long torso. Go with a bikini or maillot, in as bold and bright a print as you want. Tall figures can't really overdo a strong pattern, such as the tropical print on this Seafolly bandeau maillot suit.


If you're **top-heavy**, you need to support your bust and draw attention toward your waist and hips. Patterned halter tops are great for this, since they provide coverage and lift in a stylish cut that doesn't look like your grandma's swimsuit. This Victoria's Secret paisley push-up halter top bikini fits the bill nicely.
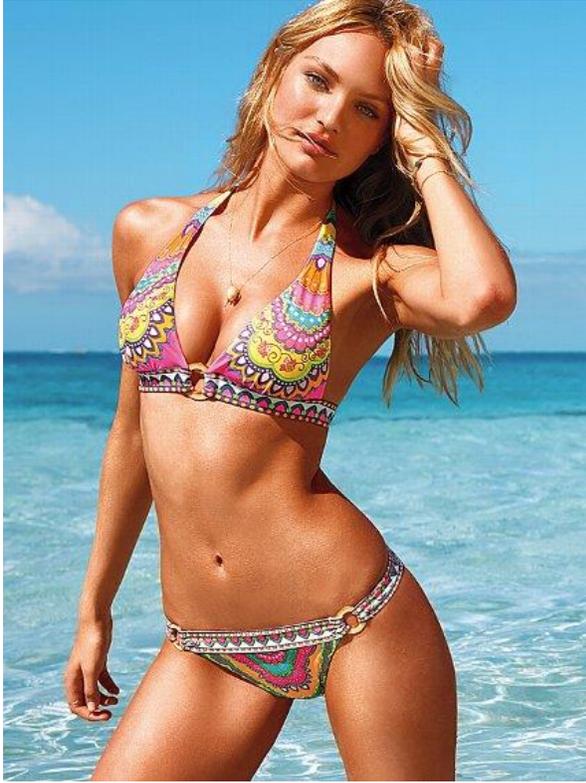
To suit a **bottom-heavy** figure, reverse the advice above. You'll need more coverage on your bottom half, and plenty of detail on top, to draw eyes upward. A colorful, sporty tankini paired with solid boyshort bottoms is a good choice, and so are underbust stripes on a one-piece. A cute bikini top and board shorts, such as this set featured at swimspot.com work well, too.
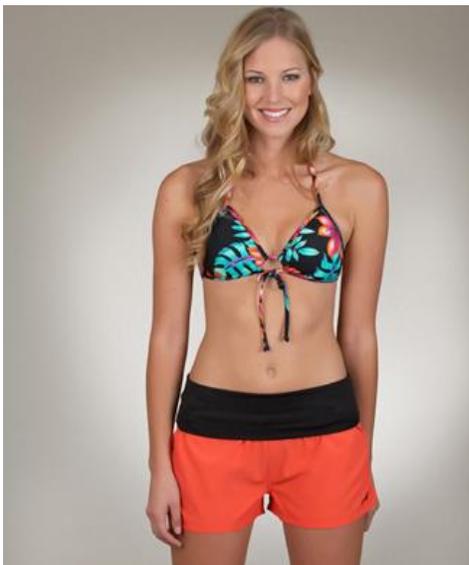
Some women feel uncomfortable in bikinis.

We've listed a couple of one-piece and tankini styles that are quite trendy and fashionable, but here's another option for you: vintage-inspired suits. Figure-flattering and elegant, these styles have the advantage of being timeless, unlike yearly trends. If you think old-school pinups and 1950s dresses are adorable, you might appreciate this Audrey Hepburn-inspired Ann suit from [Rey Swimwear](#).

Remember, fashion is no fun if, well, you're not having fun. Swimsuit shopping shouldn't be an ordeal, and there's no point in wearing a suit that you can't be comfortable in. I hope the foregoing pointers will help you to find a suit you love to wear and be seen in. After all, being seen is half the point, isn't it?

What's your favorite swimsuit style? Do you dread swimsuit shopping, or have you figured out how to make it fun? Share your swimsuit shopping secrets in the comments section.