

Make Over

BACKGROUND

MONICA HAMBURG

Occupation: *Actress*

An aspiring actress, Monica is aware of the importance of first impressions. Since acting careers can depend on image, she decided to add some style and flair to her talent.

"I want to put more energy and effort into how I look, but I don't want it to become a chore either," Monica says.

Her wardrobe is casual, and shopping is no easy task. "I find pants particularly hard to fit properly. I'm curvy, and most pants are built straight (for a thinner, boyish figure), or are big in the hips and all over, which looks too big on me," she adds.

Let's start Monica's makeover this month by talking about styles of clothing best suited to her body type, wardrobe choices, appropriate colours for her skin tone and accessories.

STRATEGY

Height: 5'4

Size: Full Hips, Fullness is Tummy

Body Shape: O

Wear unstructured jackets.

Look for styles with an undefined waist.

Keep details on top.

Wear straight skirts. Avoid pleats on bottom.



EVENING

There's nothing quite like a black dress for evening. Especially for Monica, whose curves are better camouflaged in this dress. The silver diagonal lines that make up the design element of the dress create the optical illusion of a slimmer tummy. Dresses with an empire waist deflect the eye upward towards the chest and away from the natural waist. The emphasis is on the top of the rib cage, which is the narrowest part of the torso.

The shawl completes the look, making her look stylish and versatile.

The metallic sandal balances the dress, adding elegance and sophistication to the entire look.

WORK



When Monica is not acting, she works in an office setting, so I wanted to find an outfit that would be appropriate for both her work environment and her body type.

The white shirt paired with a straight short skirt is a great combination for Monica. I intentionally avoided tucking the top into the waistband, as we don't want the visual focus to be the midriff area. If you have Monica's body type, look for unstructured pieces with an open third layer, like this outfit. The coat is great for spring's mixed temperatures, and can go with anything from jeans to dresses.

Note the stylish black and white patterned shoe. The mid-height skinny heel with a pointy toe elongates the leg line, helping to balance a wider midsection.

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Denisa brings her clients over five years of experience in image-related fields. Denisa appeared on Breakfast TV, Urban Rush and Shaw Express, as the expert in image related topics. Denisa was also quoted in The Province, Vancouver Sun, 24 Hours, and was a guest on BC Almanac at CBC Radio.

WEEKEND

When you have a tummy, it's important to find clothes that deemphasize that width and create a more hourglass-like silhouette. One word: jackets. And when you're petite, that becomes three words: structured, short jackets. They will make up for any bodyline imbalance.

The short, unstructured denim blazer is perfect for Monica's body type, camouflaging the waist and torso area. The bright-coloured top raises the eye to a higher part of the torso, and gives the illusion of a longer line on the body. This is particularly helpful if you're petite. Plus, the rose pink matches Monica's cool complexion, giving her skin a beautiful glow.

The black trouser is a flat-front pant in a style that can be dressed up or down by combining different tops and accessories. They needed to be hemmed in order to fit properly, but if your body type is similar to Monica's, alteration is not your enemy. Until manufacturers make a wider variety of petite sizes, you will have to develop a good relationship with your tailor.



Read next month's issue to see Monica's dramatic makeover results, including skin, hair and make up.

Shoes for this column provided by Nine West in Pacific Centre.

Photo credit: Eydis S. Luna Einarsdottir, www.eydis.com