

Art and Illusion: a Guide to Crossdressing

by
JoAnn Roberts

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This book is dedicated to my wife. Without her love and understanding, none of this would have been possible.

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Preface

This is a chance for me to expound a little philosophy. My purpose in writing this book is to show you that you can create that inner woman. The first step is to believe that you can and will do it. Maybe not the first time nor the second, but eventually with practice she will appear. The key is practice and determination. There was a turning point in my life when I decided that I was not going to be ashamed of being a TV and that I wanted to be as good looking as I could within the boundaries of my physical being.

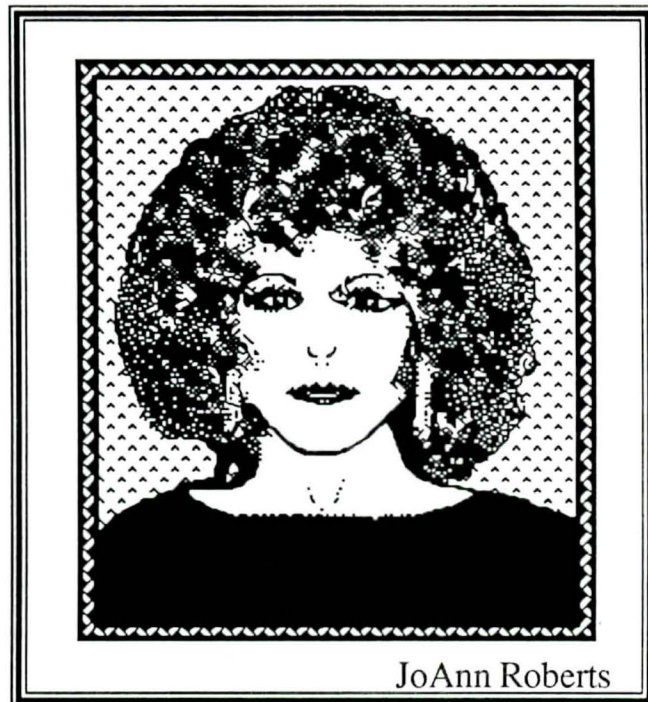
Each of us harbors a fantasy image of the ultimate women. When we dress, we subconsciously try to re-create that image. More often than not that image is heavily laden with erotic and sexual overtones; corsets, jet black seamed stockings, garter belts, spike heels, etc. You know what I mean! Well, in order to bring your inner female into the real world, you will have to learn to modify that image. There will be times and places for the sexy bitch to appear, but for the casual evening (or if you dare, day) out, you will have to subjugate that wild wanton women and dress her appropriately. It sounds easier than it is! It will take time. You have to want to do it.

Obviously, we cannot all look like Rachel Welch, so work with what you have. If you are large and bulky, you can still look very nice. Just look at the great variety of women around you. When you see some look or fashion you like make a mental note and try to duplicate it. Quite often clothing will not fit without some alteration. You will have to: a) learn how to sew or, b) find some way to have the alterations done for you. Similarly, you will learn how to do your own wig or take it to a shop to have it done. There is really no way around it. If you want to be the best women you can, it is going to take time and effort on your part and you will have to open up a little and let the real world in on your secret, discreetly of course! You might make up little stories to disguise your real purpose, but this is self-defeating in the long run because you give in to guilt again. I was able to strike up a nice business relationship with a young women at a department store cosmetics counter. She treated me with courtesy because I was a paying customer and her livelihood depended on commissions from sales. Likewise, I buy my own hosiery, shoes and clothes and no one ever asks any questions even though by the sizes they might suspect. The point is I am spending money in their store and if they want my business they will be nice to me. I do not shop dressed and I do not recommend that anyone do so. The risks are too great. But these days hardly anyone will question a man shopping ostensibly for his wife or girlfriend. If you have an air of confidence and show no embarrassment, you will do just fine when shopping.

This confidence must be carried over when you are dressed! If you appear nervous and fearful you will attract unwanted attention. If you are confident and your appearance is fine tuned, then everyone will assume that you are what you appear to be, a female. There is nothing quite like hearing, "Excuse me , Miss". Just do not do something so unfeminine as to warrant closer inspection. Always carry an ID and if you are stopped by police or are in an accident, tell the truth. It will also help to have the phone number of someone you can trust, just in case.

Confidence and determination are the keys to being the women you want to be. It is summed up nicely by the words of the song from the Rocky Horror Picture Show;

"Don't dream it, Be it!".



ENJOY!

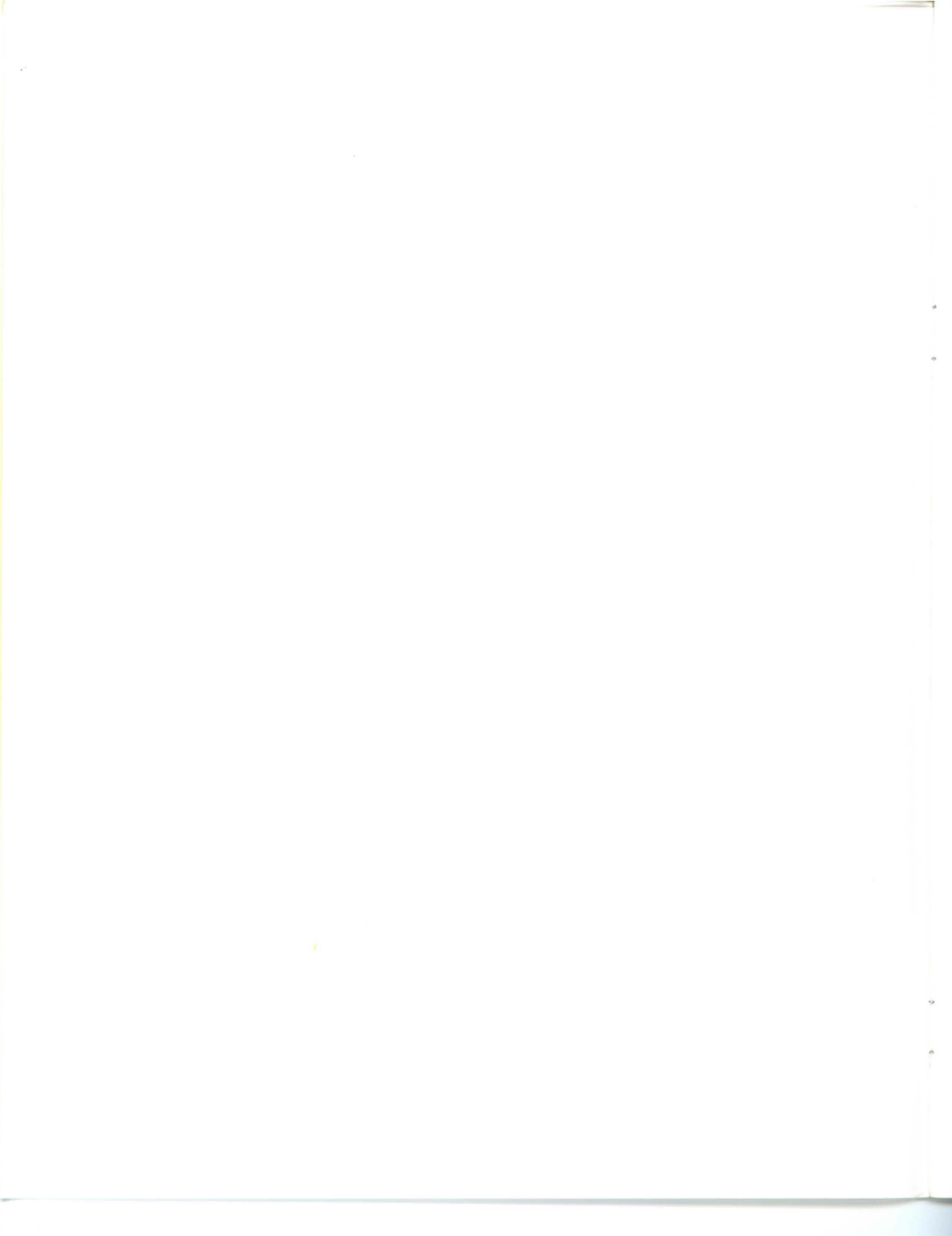


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Part 1 - Creating Your Face- A Makeup Guide

INTRODUCTION

The single most important task that you should learn to master in the process of feminine transformation is applying your makeup. This process is one which combines skill with art and both of these can be learned. The techniques are relatively simple; it only takes practice. You will feel awkward and clumsy at first, so take your time and go slowly. It takes time to get used to the feel of the tools and products. The key to good technique is repetition. Remember, most women wear makeup daily, so they are constantly sharpening their skills. Another important point is to learn to keep it subtle. Nothing looks worse than garish, overdone makeup on a male or female. Study and practice the techniques in this book and be sure to keep the effects well balanced. Your face and in particular your eyes will be the focal point of your image, so learn to do your makeup correctly.

SKIN CARE

You wouldn't paint over rust, would you? So, why put makeup on over poor skin? Taking care of your skin is very important. Today it is not so uncommon for men to use skin products. Your skin care regimen should be regular, morning and night, seven days a week. Cleanse, tone and moisturize your skin using products appropriate for your skin type: dry, normal or oily.

Never, never, ever go to sleep with makeup on your face. Remove makeup with cold cream, cleansing cream or baby oil. Don't use alcohol as it will dry the skin. After makeup removal, wash your face with warm water and facial soap. Then use a mild astringent like witch hazel to close the pores. Be sure to get **all** the eyeliner out of the corners of the eyes.

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

It is very important to start off with the correct tools to apply your makeup. These will include brushes, sponges, applicators and the like. The right tools will make the job so much easier and the results will be consistent from application to application. The minimum tools you will need are:

1. Fine eyeliner brush
2. Eye shadow applicators
3. Large and small shading brush for blending shadow
4. Combination eyebrow brush and eyelash comb
6. Contour brush
7. Powder brush
8. Sponge wedges to apply foundation
9. Tweezers
10. Large and small pencil sharpener
11. Optional: Eyelash curler

The right tools will make the job so much easier and the results will be consistent.

The basic makeup products you will need are:

1. Moisturizer
2. Foundation/beard cover
3. Dark contour
4. Highlight color
5. Eyeliner
6. Eye shadow
7. Mascara
8. Lip liner pencil
9. Lip color
10. Translucent powder
11. Optional products- lip sealer
eye shadow sealer-lip gloss
iridescent powders
artificial lashes

STEP BY STEP

Your transformation will proceed in orderly steps. Take your time and you will be pleased with the results. It should take between one half hour to one and a half hours to do a detailed evening makeup, depending on your skill. The process is:

1. Close shave
2. Moisturize
3. Beard cover/foundation
4. Contour face into oval shape
5. Contour cheekbones
6. Shadow and define eyes
7. Line lids
8. Mascara
9. Line and color lips
10. Set with powder

SHAVING

If you are one of those lucky people who has a very light or almost no beard, I hate you and you can skip this section. For those of us who must shave one or more times a day, read on!

The best time to shave is right after a shower when the beard is soft. If you get razor burn easily, rub some cortisone cream into your face before lathering. Use a gel lather, it works better. Let the lather sit on your face for 5 minutes before starting to shave. You will get a closer shave and are less likely to cut yourself. Use a fresh razor but take a few strokes on the side of your face to take the edge off before tackling your chin, neck and upper lip. You will have to decide how much scraping your face can stand. I have been able to shave twice a day for a 3 day weekend using gel lather and cortisone. After shaving use an astringent, alcohol, if you can stand it, witch hazel, if not.

Don't dream it, Be it!

If you should cut yourself, do not panic, but be prepared. Use a styptic pencil or in a pinch use an antiperspirant with aluminum chloride. Dab this on the cut and let it dry. Then rub some cortisone into the cut. The bleeding should stop within 5 minutes and you can then continue.

..You will apply the basic artist's technique of using light and dark to reshape and contour...

BEARD COVER AND FOUNDATION

The purpose of foundation is to even out the skin tone and prepare the face for color. In this case it also can serve the purpose of hiding facial blemishes and the male beard. The process is much like an artist white-washing a canvas before beginning to paint. In fact, you will apply basic artist's techniques of using light and dark colors to reshape and contour the face.

Before you put any colored material on your face use a moisturizer and allow it to sit for five to ten minutes. Use a moisturizer appropriate for your skin type. Moisturizer does not put moisture **into** the skin but is a sealer and prevents water loss **from** the skin. It also will allow the foundation to go on your face more evenly. Moisturizer is typically a problem for those of us with oily skin, but now there are products specifically formulated for oily skin. If you do not have one of these products, dust the skin with an oil blotting powder before applying foundation. At this time also apply lip sealer and eyelid cream if desired.

The next step is to cover the remaining hair follicles that show on your face. If you are not sure what type of beard you have try the simplest methods first and progress to the more complex.

Very Light Beard: For oily skin use a pancake (Max Factor) makeup applied with a damp sponge. Slowly build up the color in several applications. For normal or dry skin use a pan-stick with a dry sponge.

Moderate Beard: Try using a color corrector and a normal foundation. Color correctors are opaque primers used under foundation to adjust skin tone. They come in several colors, lavender warms a sallow (yellow) complexion, mint tones down a ruddy (reddish) complexion, apricot brightens a pale complexion and white is used to contour and correct a blotchy complexion. Choose the appropriate tint and apply with a sponge then let it dry. Do not use an excessive amount. After it is dry apply the foundation.

Heavy Beard: The "Clown White" method used to be recommended for heavy beards, but the cosmetics industry has responded to a need of women that have severe blemishes or birthmarks to be concealed and these products will work just as well for beardcover.

These extra-coverage bases are preferred to the Clown White as you don't end up with several layers of "paint" on your face. The lightest weight of these extra-coverage products is Clinique's Continuous Coverage. Next come the heavier creams such as Lydia O'Leary's Covermark, Dermablend and Recover. All of these products are waterproof when applied per the directions on the package. If you have a really heavy beard try a color corrector and one of these extra-coverage bases.

Always apply foundation with a sponge to get even coverage. Dampen the sponge slightly to get a sheer coat and leave it dry for a more matte finish. Foam wedges are inexpensive but are only good for a few applications. Silk sponges are costlier but can be cleaned and reused. When applying foundation work from the center of your face outward and be sure to blend up into your hairline, eyelids, over to your ears, lips, under the chin and down the neck.

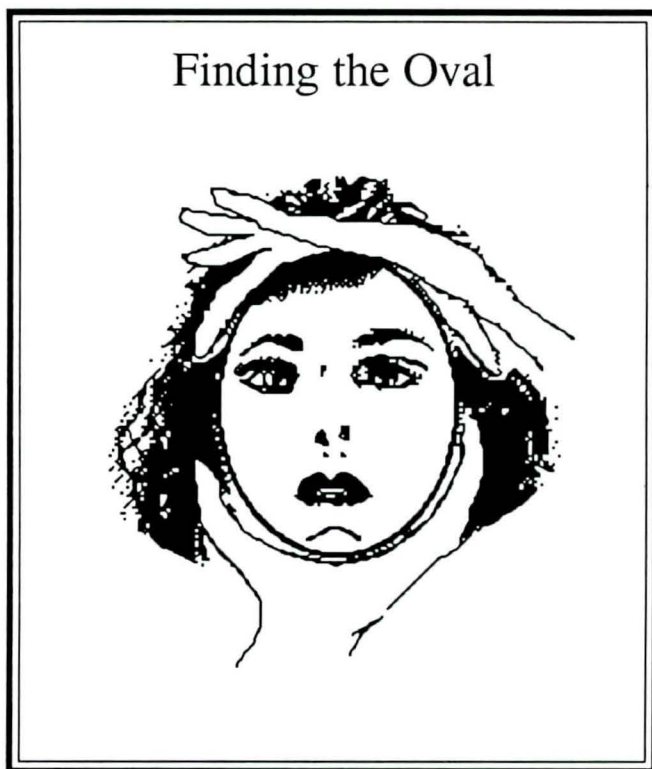
Okay, the canvas is ready for color.

If your skin tone is:	Then use:			
	Foundation	Blush	Eyes	Lips
IVORY	hint of beige avoid pink and peach	shades of pink to pale berry	gray, smoky blues, mauve	any pink avoid orange
ROSY	yellow/beige avoid pink	coral peach	brown bronze	copper bronze
OLIVE	beige with pink tint	pink or peach	plum, dark green, blue	deep red wine
TAWNY	golden honey	coral, peach russet	red brown amethyst	amber copper
BLACK	match skin tone with bronze base	bright red plum, wine magenta	bronze charcoal copper	wine berry burgundy

CONTOUR AND HIGHLIGHT

DaVinci used it, Rembrandt used it, Orson Wells used it in "Citizen Kane". "It" is a technique called chiaroscuro which means light and dark. Things that are dark tend to recede from view and things that a light tend to stand-out. You will use light and dark to contour and highlight your face into that much sought after "ideal" oval shape and create desirable features such as cheekbones. At this point it is useful to use a headband to hold your hair away from your face.

Look into a mirror. Is your face oval? Lucky you if it is! If not, you will need to contour (shade) your face so that it looks oval. There are many face shapes, but since you want that "perfect" oval make one with your hands and hold it over your face (see figure). Adjust the position of your hands to form the most pleasing shape. Any parts of your face outside the oval you darken to make less prominent and those inside you will highlight to accentuate.



Contour color can be dark foundation or, as I prefer, dark blusher (plum, brown, wine). Highlight color can be lighter foundation, light blusher or my choice, white stick concealer. You may start with either; I prefer to start with contour. See the illustrations for examples of shading different face shapes. For a round face, shade the sides to minimize width; for a rectangular face, shade the corners of the forehead and jawline; for a diamond face highlight the corners of the forehead and the jaw, then shade the front of the jaw. You've got to have cheekbones and here's how to get them. Stand in front of a mirror and suck in your cheeks - you know, make a fishmouth! See those hollows? Apply contour from the centers of those hollows diagonally back to your hairline at about the center of your ear. Then blend each side with a clean part of the sponge. There should **not** be a definite line. Next put some contour color on the sides of the neck just below the ears, this reduces the apparent width of the neck.

If your neckline or shoulders will be exposed you may want to contour the hollow at the base of the neck and the collarbones. These are prominent feminine features. (You may also need to shade your Adam's apple.) Make the neck muscles taut. Apply contour to the triangular hollow at the base of the neck and highlight the neck tendons on either side about half way up your neck. Contour outside the tendons as well. For the collarbones, apply shadow behind and highlight on top of them. Blend well until the colors meld together. Some areas will require only highlight. These are the space between the brows over the nose, just above the upper lip, the sides of the face between the nose and mouth, and the curve of the cleft between the lower lip and chin.

Practice applying and blending the contour and highlights until you achieve the look you want. There is a quick guide to general placement of contour and highlight included here.

Contour Corrections

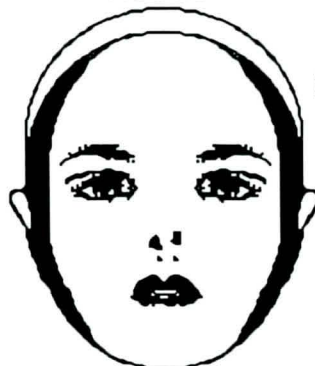
SQUARE

WIDER AT
JAW AND
FOREHEAD
THAN AT
CHEEKBONE



ROUND

SHORT IN
LENGTH.
WIDE
CHIN
BROAD
CHEEK-
BONES

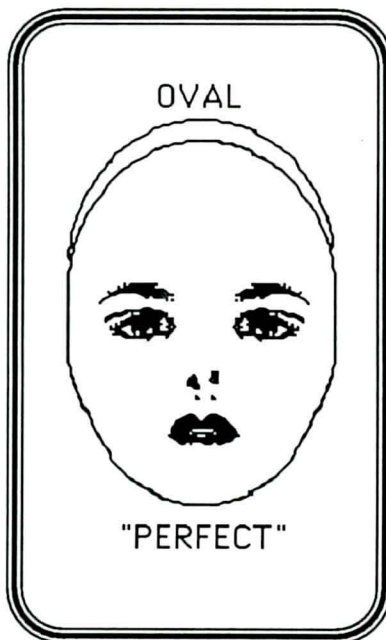


OVAL

...Chiaroscuro means
light and dark...



HIGHLIGHT



"PERFECT"

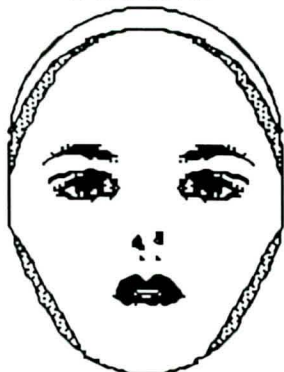
..things that are dark
tend to recede and
things that are light
tend to stand out...



CONTOUR

DIAMOND

WIDER AT
CHEEK-
BONES
THAN AT
JAW OR
FOREHEAD



OBLONG

LONG IN
RELATION
TO
WIDTH.
CHEEKS
AND
JAW
NARROW



Simply remember that light makes features come forward and dark makes features recede. Many facial imperfections can be corrected using this technique. For example, a broad nose can be made to appear slimmer by shading the sides and highlighting the top. A "weak" chin is strengthened by highlighting on the pad of the chin and shadow in a "u or triangle on the throat under the chin. A heavy jaw is softened by shading just at the edge of the jawline from the ears to the chin, darker in back and lighter in front. (Be careful here! You don't want to look like you have a beard again!) The chart shows typical corrections.

It gets easier now. These first steps are the most difficult to master, but the end results can be quite striking.

EYEBROWS, EYES AND EYELASHES

EYEBROWS

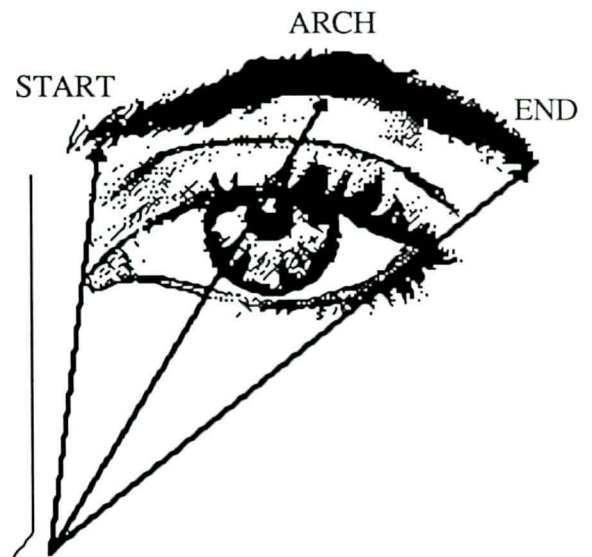
Even though heavy, fluffy brows are fashionable these days, that does not mean you can just let them grow wild! Eyebrows, even heavy ones, require shaping and grooming. Eyebrows should frame your eyes and there is a simple method of determining their correct shape. Take a pencil or other long slim object and hold it at the base of your nose. Then lay the pencil on your brow so that it passes over the inner corner of your eye. This is where the brow should start. Now rotate the pencil so that it crosses over the center of your pupil. This is the point of the arch. Rotate the pencil again so that it now crosses over the outer corner of your eye. This is the end of your brow. Tweeze and trim the hairs to fit within this general shape. If you do it gradually, no one will ever notice!



Contour Guide



Highlight Guide



Shape of the brow

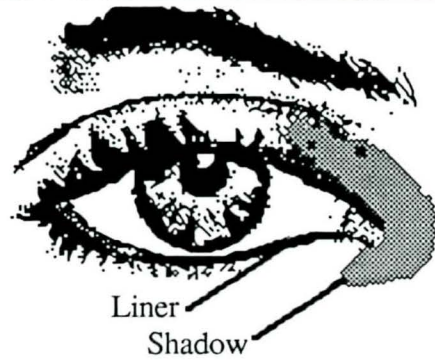
If you wear glasses, even better. You will probably need new ones soon so go pick out a unisex style that covers your eyebrows. This is what I have done and my brows are thin by any standard. No one has ever made a comment to my male-self because they do not see them behind the glasses. When dressed, I wear contacts to show them off.

If you do not want to thin your brows too much, work some foundation into the lower hairs and this will help to thin them visually. You can also mechanically raise your brows. One way is to use a headband to lift the forehead. Place the band over your head, settle it in back and place it just above your brows in front. Now push the band up to your hairline. If it is tight enough, it will raise your browline. Too tight and you will get one doozy of a headache. Another method is to use clear plastic surgical tape over each eyebrow. Pull up on the tape and stick it down to your forehead in the hairline. This is okay if you do not have a lot of hair. A third method is to use a stocking as a headband. Place the stocking behind your head and bring the ends forward. As if you were tying a knot loop one end over the other several times and pull close to your forehead, just above the brows. Now push this band upwards, raising the browline, and tie the ends in back. Again, do not make this too tight!

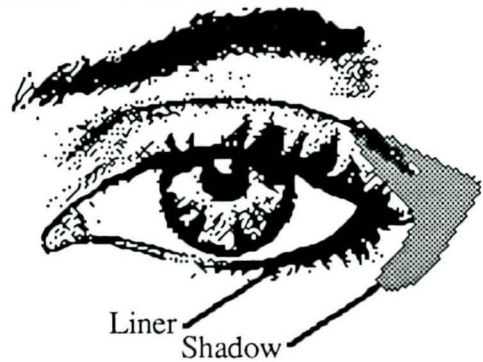
EYESHADOW

Your eyes will command the most attention of any of your facial features, so take the time to learn how to make them up properly. Ideally, your eyes should be one eye-width apart. You can check this by looking in a mirror and marking the outline of your eyes in crayon or eyeliner pencil on the glass. If they do not meet this ideal, see the illustrations for corrective techniques.

Eye Corrections



wide set



narrow set



Blue liner on shelf
Black liner outside

small eyes



Slant liner upwards

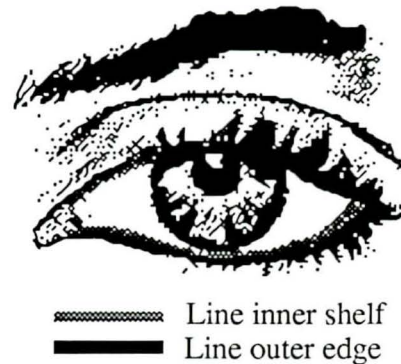
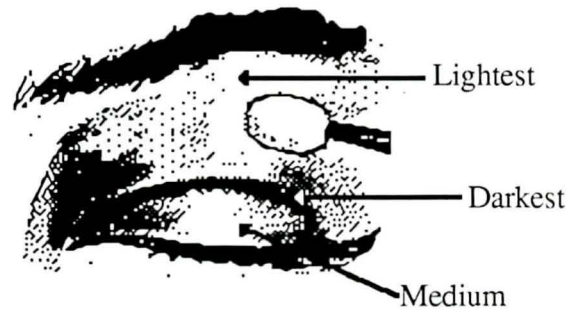
droopy lids

Shadow or liner first? I prefer to put shadow first then line the lids. You will add color to several parts of your eye: the lower lid, upper lid, crease of the lid and browbone. You may also want to use a sealer before using foundation to prevent creasing. Eye shadow colors are available in every imaginable color and form. Pressed powders are easiest to control but creams and sticks are also useful. I recommend powders to start. About the only rules to follow are: 1) do not match your own eye color (even that rule can be broken occasionally) and 2) never use light blue liner! For daytime, stay with one color on the lid extended slightly onto the brow bone. For nighttime, almost anything goes! Use at least two or three complimentary colors. The lightest color goes on the browbone, a medium on the lid, the darkest in the lid crease. The illustration shows the general placement. For added sparkle try using gold, silver or a pearlescent highlight. For pure sex appeal go with smoky colors like grey, charcoal, wine, and plum. Some Fantasy eye shadow schemes are included here, so experiment.

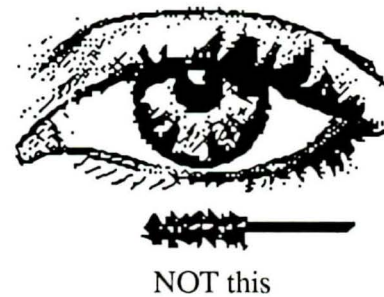
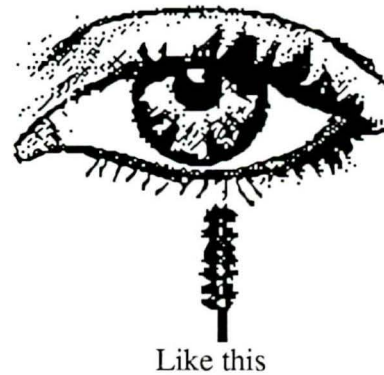
EYELINER

Eyeliner is available in liquid, cake, cream and pencil. Cream liners are the easiest to use but they smear easily and do not have staying power. Pencils are easy to handle but it is difficult to get a smooth or thin line. Liquid liner comes with its own brush but the brush can be awkward to use at first. Cake liner needs to be mixed with water first and affords the best color control. However, cake liner is not very popular today and may be difficult to find. Avoid waterproof liner if you will only have access to soap and water for cleanup. I recommend a combination of liquid and pencil liner. Also, buy yourself a very fine eyeliner brush. Using the liquid liner and the fine brush, close one eye and draw a thin line as close to the lash base as possible from the inner to the outer corner.

3 Color Shadow Guide

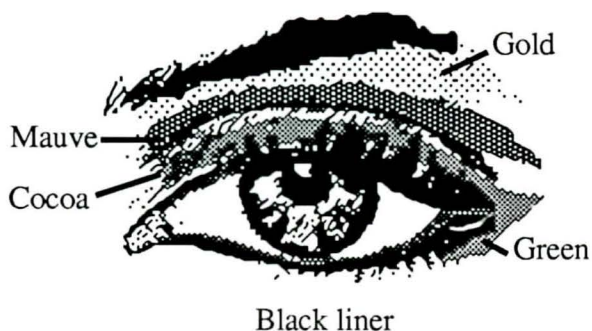
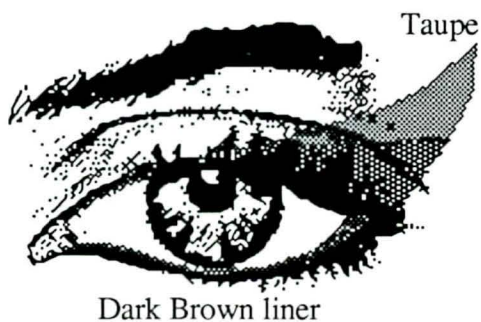
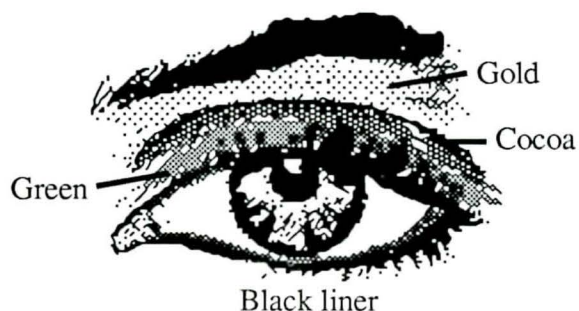
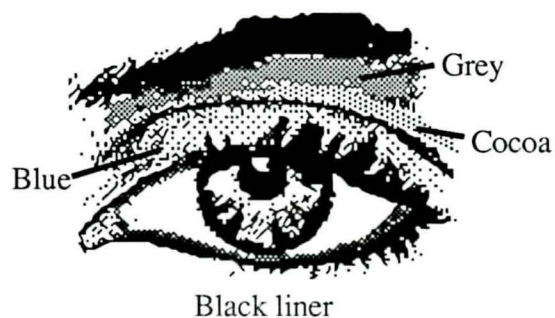


Doe Eyes



Applying Mascara

Fantasy Eyes



Hold your lid down by the lashes if necessary. Wait for the liner to dry before you open your eye, else it will smudge. Now line the other lid. Take the pencil and sharpen it. If necessary run the tip under hot water to soften the liner. Very carefully line the lower lid from inner to outer corner, again as close to the lash base as possible. Repeat for the other eye. Use a cotton swab on both upper and lower lids to soften the sharp line, if you wish. For a dramatic evening effect line the inner edge of the lower lid. Now look at your eyes and decide if the outer edges should turn up or down and line accordingly. Eyeliner color should be jet black, charcoal, dark brown or dark blue. Leave the other colors for special effects only. To make your eyes appear brighter line the inner edge of the lower lid in electric blue. To give your eyes a younger look add a touch of pink or peach blusher just below the outer end of each brow.

MASCARA

Mascara on the lashes finishes the eyes. Avoid waterproof mascara for the same reasons as eyeliner and avoid lash-lengthening mascara, as this has tiny fibers which flake off the lashes and can irritate your eyes. Most mascara has a wand applicator and you will be tempted to hold the wand horizontally and brush outward from the base of the lashes. This is only partly correct. For better control hold the wand vertically and rest your pinky on your cheek to steady your hand. Gently sweep the wand from side to side. This will coat each lash individually. Before the first coat dries, use a lash comb to separate the lashes and remove excess mascara. Repeat with a second coat. For evening you may want another coat near the outer lashes to enhance that wide-eyed look. Mascara color should match your eyeliner.

If your lashes are very thin, you may want to use false lashes. These are available for both upper and lower lids.

You must trim them before application. Follow the directions that come with the lashes. Depending on how they look, you may not need liner, but you should use mascara to make them blend with your real lashes. Apply false lashes before any other makeup. If you curl your lashes, do it **before** applying mascara. Otherwise your lashes will clump or even fall out.

A note here about eyeglasses and contacts. If you are nearsighted go a little heavier on the shadow and liner. Use brighter colors as well. Lenses for nearsightedness make your eyes look smaller than normal. The opposite is true if you are farsighted. Play down the colors. If you wear contacts, be very, very careful lining the inner lids. Try to keep the color to the outer edge only. Your contact will touch your lower lid and will eventually wipe away the liner, not to mention irritating your eye.

One last note of caution, eyeliner and mascara are both dark and damp, a perfect breeding ground for bacteria. Do not be foolishly cheap, replace mascara and liner frequently, every 3 to 4 months. This is inexpensive insurance against a serious eye infection.

LIPS

Making up your lips involves preparing the base, lining and coloring. When applying foundation be sure to cover your lips and then powder them lightly. This helps color to cling and reduces staining. You may also want to use one of the lip sealers; use it before the foundation. Using a lip liner close to the shade of your lipstick outline your lips. Here is one method. Look in a mirror and find the two ridges on your upper lip. Place a small dot of lip liner on each ridge. Make two more dots directly below these on the bottom of your lower lip. Open your mouth to make an "O" and place a dot in each corner. Okay, connect the dots. It is that easy!

LIP COLOR

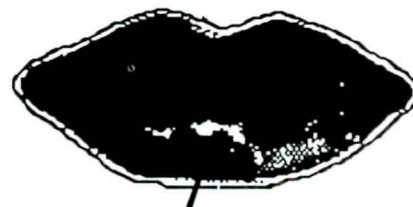
Use a lip brush and collect color from the lipstick. Apply the color inside the lines you just drew. To make lipstick stay on, apply a light coat of powder and blot gently. Then apply a second coat of lip sealer and let it dry. Repeat the color and powder applications, then blot again. For a wet sexy look finish with clear gloss applied to the lower lip and just a tad to the upper. Another trick is to put a dab of pearlescent white or silver on the center of the lower lip and press the lips together. You can correct any imperfections in lip shape when drawing the outline. Now smile! Did you get any on your teeth? No! Great! Lip color is a matter of personal choice. Many companies make coordinated lip and nail color. Just try not to pick a color that overpowers your eyes or other facial features.

Lip Corrections



Highlight

line inside for thick lips



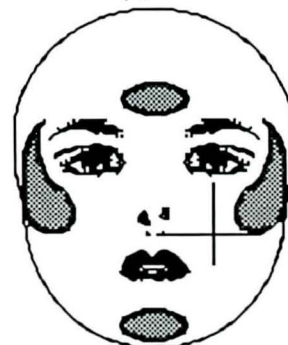
Highlight

line outside for thin lips

BLUSHER

Blusher is the most abused of all cosmetics. It is supposed to give a healthy glow to the skin, but applied incorrectly it can make you look like a clown. Location of blusher is most important. Hold a pencil vertically from the pupil of one eye. Take another and hold it across your face in line with the bottom of your nose. See illustration for applications. The area above and outside the pencils is where you should apply blusher. Do not apply blusher below your nostril level or closer than the center of your pupil. After application, blend with a sponge so that no distinct line shows.

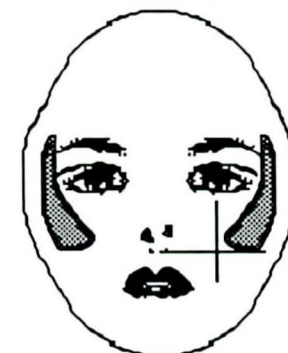
Square



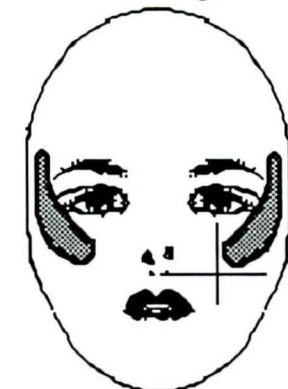
Round



Diamond



Oblong



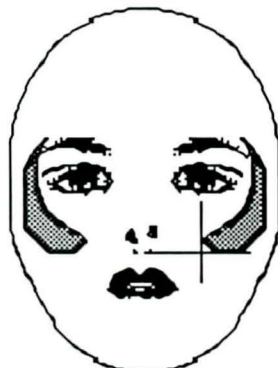
POWDERS

Powders come in loose and pressed form. Loose, translucent (no color) powder is used to set your base. Fill your brush or puff and stroke it all over your foundation. Let it set a bit, then buff off the excess. Pressed powders are good for carrying in your purse and performing touch-ups while out. If you have oily skin, use an oil free or oil blotting powder. Be careful not to use too much, or else your face could end up looking like a dried mud puddle.

Well that's the whole facial process. All you need now is practice, determination and a little self-confidence! **Good Luck!**

Correct Blusher Placement

Oval



BODYWORKS

Just getting your face on is only part of the transformation process. The rest of your body requires just as much attention. Hair removal is very important as is the care of your hands. This section will also discuss hairstyles.

BODYHAIR

There are several ways to deal with body hair. It can be bleached, shaved, tweezed, waxed or permanently removed. The technique you choose will depend on the type of hair and your skin's sensitivity. The hair on different parts of your body are not all the same and each type responds differently to the various processes.

Bleaching: This is a chemical process which lightens and softens the hair. New hair will grow in the original color, so if you do not want a two-tone look you will need to periodically bleach, approximately 2-3 weeks. Bleaching is useful for the arms and back of the hands. Bleaches are available at most pharmacies.

Shaving: This is the simplest technique. There are some pitfalls, however. Shaving is good for arms, hands, legs and chest, but it starts to regrow immediately and stubble will be evident in 2-3 days. You may also experience ingrown hairs which can cause minor infections of hair follicles. If your heritage is from the Mediterranean area, you are especially susceptible to this.

Tweezing: This is the mechanical removal of the hair by pulling it free from the follicle. Regrowth will appear at the surface anywhere from 1-3 weeks depending on your body chemistry. Tweezing is good for small areas, such as the back of the hands and eyebrows.

Waxing: This is also the pulling free of hair from the follicle, but on a much larger scale. Wax (pinewax or beeswax) is melted and spread over the area of the skin where the hair is to be removed. After a short time the wax will harden and when it is pulled off the skin it brings the hair with it. Regrowth time is the same as for tweezing. In addition to the same problems as tweezing, there is the chance of getting burned if the wax is too hot. Waxing is also more irritating. Powdering the area before applying the wax will help.

Electrolysis: Permanent hair removal can only be achieved by electrolysis. The process uses an electric current to destroy the hair follicle and prevent regrowth. It is the only other process, beside shaving, that is recommended for facial hair removal. However, it is a long, tedious, and expensive process. Removal of a male beard could require upwards of 200 hours of treatment. It can also be painful if your skin is very sensitive. It depends on the skill of the operator, as well. Forget the home treatments seen in magazines. I can tell you from personal, expensive, experience that they do not work. In order to electrolyze a follicle, the operator inserts a very fine needle into the follicle and applies a short burst of electricity which kills the hair. Most problems which can occur are infection and scarring due to carelessness of the operator. Selecting the right Electrologist is the first step. Is the person licensed and insured? Some states do not require licenses for operators, but to get insurance they must be licensed. Has the operator worked on a male before? Male facial hair is quite different from female hair. An unlicensed operator may not be skilled enough to remove the hair permanently. Check the phone book and look for certification and licensing mentioned in ads, then call and ask about experience with males.

Depilatories: Depilation is a chemical process which dissolves the root of the hair. The chief advantage is that the hair is removed from below the skin. Regrowth time is about the same as for tweezing and waxing. Problems which can occur are rashes from the chemicals used. A depilatory is a quick (15-20 minutes) way to remove large amounts of hair. It is usable everywhere but on the face. Depilatories have little or no effect on facial hair, so do not waste your time. I prefer to put the cream on, wait, then use a teryy washcloth in a shower to lightly abrade the hair loose from the follicle. Afterwards, lightly powder the skin and do not apply fragrances or deodorants containing solvents such as alcohol for at least 8-12 hours.

HANDS AND NAILS

After your face, your hands draw the next most attention. Care and maintenance of the skin and nails is therefore important.

HAND CARE

You can do all the things your male-self likes to do and still have nice hands. It just takes a little care and effort. I like to work on cars and invariably I would cut myself or break a fingernail. So, now when I do these activities I wear work gloves. Whatever it is that you do, consider the likelihood of damage to your hands and protect them. This will also prevent dirt from getting under your nails. If your skin is rough or dry, use a hand cream morning and night. Remember, it is okay for a man to care about his skin.

NAILS

Your nails are the main focus of your hands. You have several options for fingernails. False nails are available in a wide variety of forms and colors. The newest addition is press-on nails. These are molded plastic nails held on with double sided adhesive.

They really work and are good for an evening out. And no polish stains on the cuticle! Replacement adhesive pads are also available. One disadvantage is size, however. It may require you to buy two sets in order to get 10 nails that fit and look proper. There is no reason to use glue-on nails anymore. The instant glue used to hold glue-on nails can actually damage your real nails. I went through a whole year once of breaking the same nail because it had been damaged by using glue-on nails. Another disadvantage of false nails is that they just do not feel natural and you may have difficulty doing the simplest things, like picking up a coin or doing a button.

The easiest nails to work with are your own. The question is, how long can you grow them before someone notices? The answer depends on you alone and your attitude about dressing. I wear my own nails long for a male and have had only 1 or 2 minor comments which I let pass. They are my hands and I do as I like. The important thing is to keep them neat and clean. I file mine straight across with slightly rounded sides. Keep the cuticle pushed back. The shape and length should compliment your fingers. Long nails for long, slender fingers and shorter nails for shorter fingers. Never file nails to a point, use a square or oval shape. As mentioned above, you may have difficulty with the simplest tasks at first, but you will get used to the length and learn to function again.



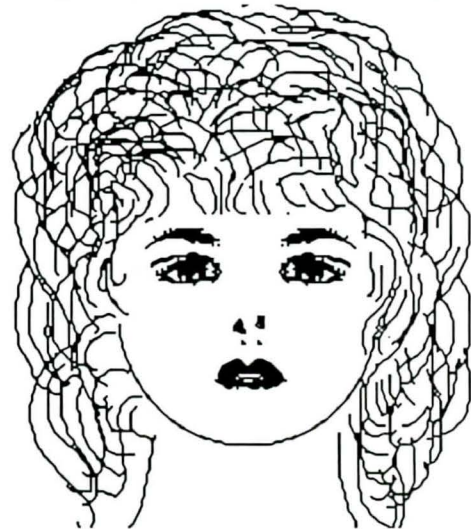
Polish stains in your cuticles can be minimized if you follow my method here. Use good fresh polish. There are now one coat polishes which will do nicely. In any case use only one coat. It dries faster. To remove the color, soak a cotton pad (not ball) in polish remover. Press the pad firmly down on the nail and hold it there for 30-45 seconds. Pull the pad forward off the nail. Almost all the polish should come off the nail. Fold the pad in half, rewet and do another nail. After all your nails have been done this way go back with a cotton swab and fresh remover and go over each nail once more. Your hands should be reasonably clean. Never scrub the polish off. This will only make it run all over your hands and cause the stains you are trying to avoid.

WIGS

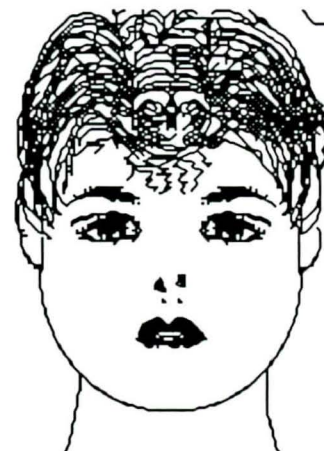
One of my biggest criticisms of novice, and even some experienced, crossdressers is that they do not choose the right hair style for their face. This has a lot to do with that fantasy women in the mind's eye and simply not knowing the correct style or face relationship. The idea is to balance the size and shape of the face with the right style and color. You have the advantage of being able to choose from a wide variety of styles and colors. The color should coordinate with your skin type, but do not think that means you must wear your natural color! My real hair is dark brown with red highlights and I usually wear a light red colored wig that complements my skin tones. The only way to know for sure is to try one on. In general, the male face is larger than the female and consequently needs more hair to appear balanced. Unless you are fine boned and the size of your face is smaller than average, stay away from short wigs. The reference chart shows styles for face types and as usual Oval gets to wear any style!

Wigs vary widely in price and quality and you do not always get what you pay for! I have two very similar wigs, one was \$70 and the other was \$40. I can not tell the difference. I recommend staying in the range from \$30 to \$50. If you purchase a wig by mail order, buy from a store that deals with crossdressers, such as Lee's Mardi Gras Boutique or Fem Fashions, both in New York City. The wigs they sell will have slightly larger caps to fit the male head.

Wig Styles by Face Type



Square Long: Loose curls at neck with height on top



Square Short: Tight to head with knot on top

Wig Styles by Face Type



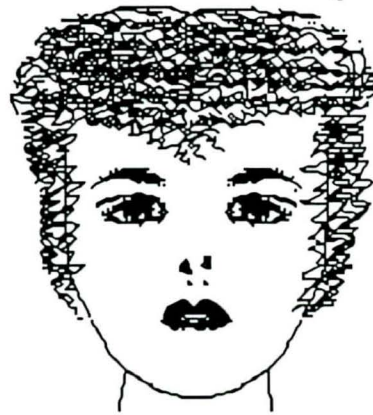
Round Long: Keep soft and frame the face



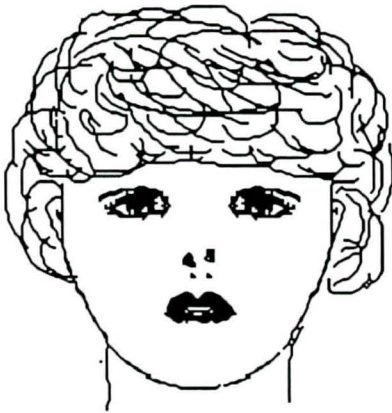
Round Short: Casual and brush forward



Oblong Long: Cover forehead to balance chin



Oblong Short: Umbrella cut, short at back and full on sides



Diamond Long: Soft and puffy with fullness behind the ears



Diamond Short: Short, straight looks great

Part 2 - Creating Your Figure - the Basics of Lingerie Selection

INTRODUCTION

Lets face it, you are going to have one hell of a time figuring out what size and kind of lingerie to wear. And most of us are not able to wear those darling little nothings we see in the mail-order catalogs. Hopefully, this section will give you the information you need to make smart choices and still get pretty and sexy lingerie. I'll also give some tips on body contouring for that "perfect" look.

Brassieres

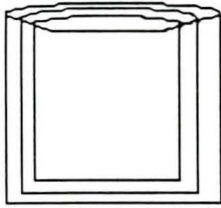
Most bras come with two measurements, a chest size (number) and a cup size (letter), such as 36C. In order to select the correct bra women must make two measurements, one at a level under the arms but above the bust, and a second across the fullest part of the bust. The first is the numerical bra size and the difference between the two determine the cup size. You only need to make the first measurement since you can decide what cup size you like and stuff the cup accordingly. Rather than measure up high on your chest, measure just at or below the nipples and use this as the numerical size. Choose a cup size to go with your frame. If you are tall and slender, select an A or B cup. If you are stockier, select a C or D cup. The idea is to balance your figure. Of course, if big breasts turn you on, then go ahead and wear them, but be prepared for stares and possibly unwanted attention.

BREAST FORMS

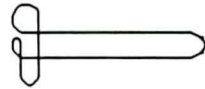
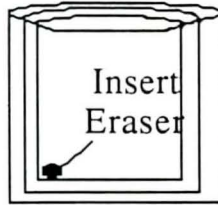
Now you know what size, so how do you fill those cups? Breast forms are available ranging from foam rubber falsies to silicone filled mastectomy forms. Prices range from a few dollars to several hundred.

These forms are available in most large department store catalogs and from TV specialty shops. A recent addition to this category is the Mirage breast form. This is made especially for the crossdresser. Those who own them, swear by them and say they are the best there is. The Mirage is also the most expensive costing from \$350 to \$700. A very inexpensive form can be made at home using plastic sandwich bags, string and water. You will need quart sized plastic bags, twine, rubber bands and four pencil erasers. The accompanying illustrations will help explain the procedure. Peel six bags off the roll and turn them inside out. Nest three inside each other. This will afford better protection against leaks. Take two pencil erasers or any other small round, blunt objects and place one into each corner of the inside bag. Loop a short rubber band around the outside of the bags, trapping the eraser in the corner. Repeat in the other corner. Then turn the bags right side out. The rubber bands should be short, about 2 to 3 inches long. The rubber bands pull in the corners and cause two things to happen. The first result is that the bag takes on a more natural breast shape; the second is that when filled with water, the bag will "give" and seem more natural to the touch. Fill the bag with between one to one and a half cups of water. The amount of water will depend on how big a breast you want. Use a measuring device, so that the second breast will be the same size. Carefully twist the bag closed, making sure no air is trapped inside. Tie the bag closed with the twine at the base of the twist. Wrap the twine around once or twice and tie again. Tightly twist the top and fold it over and tie it again. This makes a small rounded bump that can simulate a nipple. Cut off the excess bag. Repeat the process with the other bags. The process takes about a half hour. I have made and worn these for several months before seeing any evidence of a leak, and I've never had a leak when wearing them.

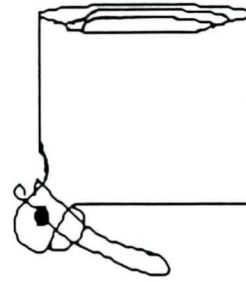
Making a Breast Form



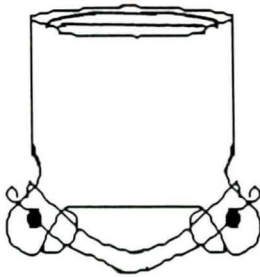
Nest 3 bags



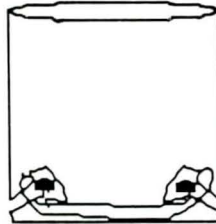
Rubber Band



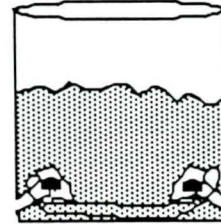
Loop band
over eraser



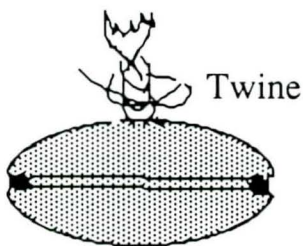
Repeat for
other side



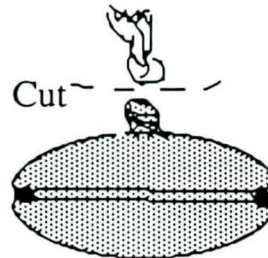
Turn bags
rightside out



Fill with
water



Twist bag closed
and tie with twine



Fold over twist,
tie again. Cut off
excess bag

If your bra has elastic straps they will bounce like real breasts, since most body tissue is water. I made pockets to hold these from skin colored tights. The pockets serve two purposes. I noticed in a photo taken with a flash that the plastic bags showed right through my clothes! The pockets eliminate the reflection from the plastic and they eliminate the noise caused by the form rubbing against the bra.

CLEAVAGE

Now that you've filled the bra, do you need to show cleavage? If so, here is a technique to try (Thanks to Denise Mason, Conn.). You will need Sport Tape and Moleskin with adhesive backing, both available in pharmacies. **DO NOT USE REGULAR ADHESIVE TAPE.** You are going to pull the flesh of your chest together to create a cleft and then use tape to hold it there. Start by cutting four pieces of Sport tape about two to three inches long. Overlap two pieces along the long edge and place this patch just under one nipple. See the illustrations. Repeat on the other side. These pieces of tape will distribute the pressure of the Moleskin and protect your skin from tearing. Cut a piece of Moleskin about one and a half inches wide and eight inches long. Fold this in half and at the fold make a diagonal cut from the center to one edge. When you unfold the tape it should have a "vee" in the center. Peel off the backing from the moleskin. With one hand pull the flesh of the chest together and with the other hand place one end of the Moleskin on one Sport tape patch and then the other end to the other patch. Make sure the Moleskin is pressed firmly across your chest. This should create a nice cleft depending on how much body fat you have. The illusion can be enhanced by contouring and highlighting as you learned in Part 1. Add shadow in the cleft and highlight on the top curve of the breast. Voila! Nice breasts.

TYPES OF BRAS

Bras come in a myriad of styles, closures, cups, etc. Once you determine your size, the final selection is a matter of personal choice. There are some guidelines that will be helpful.

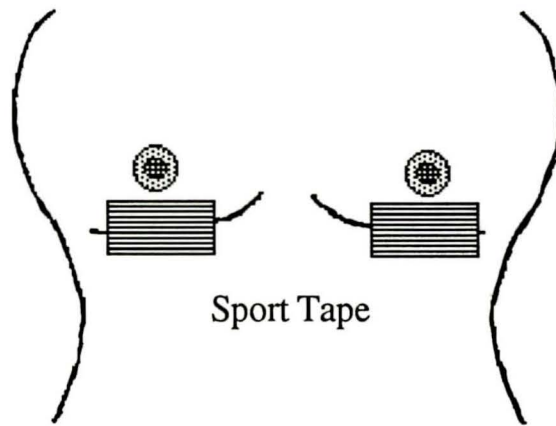
Full-busted women usually wear an underwire bra. This type of bra has a metal or plastic support built into the bottom of the cup to support the breast. I recommend that you choose this type if you are using one of the heavier breast forms. There is a variation of this type called an overwire. I have a strapless longline overwire which is perfect for strapless dresses or spaghetti straps. The overwire practically guarantees that your breast form will not fall out.

Another characteristic to look for is elastic straps. This will add a natural bounce as you walk.

If your form has a nipple and you want it to show, choose a soft cup. If you are stuffing the cup with foam or old stockings, etc., then a molded cup is desired.

One last comment. As in real estate, the three most important things about breasts are location, location, location! I have seen many dressers who do a very nice job on their makeup and then their breasts are either down at the waist or up under the chin. The bust should fall about the middle of the upper arm. Also, a man's nipples are spaced wider than a woman's, so don't make the mistake of placing the forms directly over your own nipples. Move them slightly closer together. Make sure that one breast isn't higher than the other. The point is to look at yourself when dressing. I mean really look critically. Does everything look natural? If not, adjust them now.

Creating Cleavage



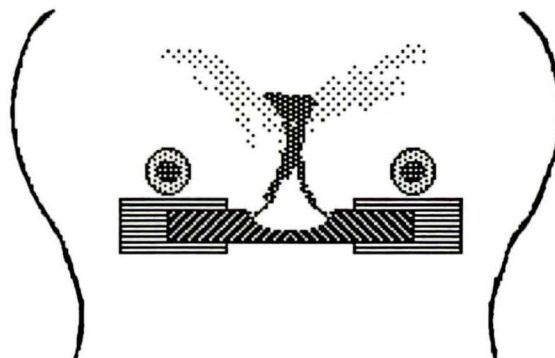
Sport Tape



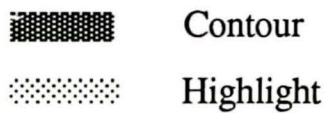
Trim Moleskin



Moleskin



Sport Tape



Contour

Highlight

PANTIES, BRIEFS AND GIRDLES

FILLING OUT THE HIPS

Most men have hips too narrow in relation to their waist for a proper fit in female clothing. If this is the case for you, either shrink your waist or fatten your hips. The latter is the easier to accomplish if you use foam pads. Similarly the only fix for a flat or droopy derriere is also foam pads. Special panty girdles are made with pockets to hold the pads. The best known of these are available from Fredericks of Hollywood.

FRONTAL AREA

One of the more difficult aspects of crossdressing is trying to figure out what to do with your genitals. This will depend a lot on the degree of comfort you desire, the style of clothing and whether or not you will need to use a toilet. A gaff is a triangular piece of cloth or Lycra that is tied tightly around the hips with a cord pulled back between the legs. The genitals are tucked inside the groin area and the gaff holds everything in place. To do this it must be tight. While I have never used one I am told that it can become quite uncomfortable. A tight panty girdle serves much the same purpose. Then there is the 'tuck and tape' method where the genitals are pushed up into the groin and then the entire area is covered with tape to hold it all in. OUCH! It seems to me that the main problem is the testicles and scrotum. If these can be effectively hidden, then the penis can be pushed back between the legs and held by a brief or panty. Here is the method I use. It takes longer to describe than to do it. I use plastic vented surgical tape 1" wide and Sport tape. These will not tear the skin when removed. I remove most of the pubic hair from the testicles, although this is not strictly necessary. Peel off a two inch and a six inch strip of surgical tape and place them near at hand. Push your penis back between your legs so that the scrotum is expanded with the testicles.

Carefully push the testes up into the groin and pull the now loose scrotum skin forward. You should have two loose folds of skin. Release the penis and fold these skin flaps one over the other on top of the penis. Place the shorter piece of tape over the flaps. Your teste should stay up inside your body. Go around the entire fold and penis with the longer piece of tape. The result is a sheath of skin around the penis. If you stop here, when you push the penis back the tape can fold and allow the testes to emerge. So, cut a length of Sport tape and wrap a second time. Now all should stay in place for hours. You will find that you can now wear panties, even bikinis! Best of all, should you need a toilet, move the panties aside and you can have sweet relief in no time.

...the the entire area is covered
with tape to hold it all in place.
OUCH!

CORSETS , WAIST CINCHERS AND ALL-IN-ONES

I can see the glaze come over your eyes at the mention of a corset. This particular garment probably has the highest sexual attraction for men and women, both! It is also the one item that is going to give you the most problems if you want to wear one. Corsets and cinchers are designed for women, unless you have one custom made it just ain't gonna fit right. The location of the the waist in relation to the bust and hips is in the wrong place. Given a woman the same height as yourself, in general, her legs are longer, her torso shorter and her waist is higher. Now I am not saying you can't ever hope to wear one of these (I own one!), just that it is going to fit differently. The same is true for waist cinchers.

Cinchers are generally not as rugged as a corset, nor as long. Corset and cincher should be sized about 4 to 6 inches smaller than your natural waist. If you want to be able to sit, eat or breathe, stay with the 4 inches. Also, all that tissue you are compressing has to somewhere. Some of it goes in, but a lot of it will go downwards below the waist, talk about a spare tire! A good steel boned cincher will cost upwards of \$100, so you better really want one.

Brasellests and All-In-Ones are based on bust size. Getting a good fit is just as difficult as with a corset for the same reasons. These garments will vary in length and your best bet is to get the longest possible. Look for the "waist-down" measurement. This is the length from the waistline to the bottom of the garment.

Corsets and cinchers should be sized about 4 to 6 inches smaller than your natural waist size.

SLIPS AND CAMISOLES

Full slips and camisoles are sized by bust measurement, while half slips go by waist size and length. This is a no-brainer for choice. Consider slips with slits if your clothing has slits or kick pleats. Please try to coordinate your slip color with your outer clothing and make sure it doesn't show!

HOSIERY

Stockings are once again the rage with women of fashion, although we faux-girls have probably never given them up. Most department stores now carry a wide selection of stockings and pantyhose. Proper fit will involve specifying a size and length, where possible.

A little experimentation in size selection will

be involved since the kind of yarn and the knit style will affect fit. Start with your female shoe size and work up by half size steps. I wear a size 10 shoe and take an 11 Long stocking. (If you don't know your shoe size Part 3 will deal with that.) Also, start with a tall or long since your legs are almost certainly heavier than a female's.

Wearing stockings means garter belts. Again, these are now quite popular, so stock up! Use your waist size.

Pantyhose usually have a size chart on the package, but remember that this is for women. So some experimentation is required. Pantyhose can be a real pain if you need the bathroom. You can solve this by getting hose with a cotton crotch and cut out the crotch. Wear your panties or briefs over, not under, the pantyhose.

COLORS

As a minimum you should have two complete sets of lingerie, one in black and one in beige (not white). You will need the beige under light clothing. White shows through on almost everything, even white clothes. Other color choices can be purchased later. I find it very sexy to be wearing all one color underneath everything.

CONCLUSION

Those are the basics for the selection and fit of lingerie. It will pay off in the long run to buy smart and buy right. It is not pleasant to be out for the evening and have your underwear pinching and binding. And if you are big, don't despair! The fashion world has discovered that large women like to feel sexy too, and size is generally not a problem today. So get out those catalogs and order up your favorite teddy.

Part 3- Creating Your Outer Image - Sizing Clothes and Accessories

INTRODUCTION

This is the final step in the process of creating your own 'Dream Lady'. Everything you've achieved up to now could be ruined by ill -fitting or poorly chosen clothes. Just as "Clothes Make the Man", they make the woman as well.

One thing that you cannot get by reading a book is a sense of style, and that is partly because styles change and a book, once written, is static. Style is more a philosophy than anything else and it will reflect in the way you dress, and it says a lot about you, the person. Observation of women you find attractive and scanning the fashion magazines will help to develop your personal style. Remember those things that catch your eye and try to incorporate them into your dressing.

Let us talk a bit about "passing". If you have read this far, I am going to assume that you are among those crossdressers who have a strong desire to appear in public as a woman, ie you want to "pass" as a female. Much of being able to pass is related to your physical image. Women come in as wide a variety as men, so that if you have applied your makeup well and wear appropriate clothes, you will most likely pass for female. There is an emotional/psychological side as well. Once you have achieved an acceptable (to the rest of the world) outer image, you must build an inner one. You must believe that you will pass. If you do not believe, then you will be sending subtle signals to those who get a little too close that something is not quite right. Confidence comes gradually and by placing yourself in controlled situations you will achieve your goal of passing.

I remember when I decided that I had to walk through the local shopping mall, in the daytime. In retrospect, it was a foolish stunt, but at the time I was determined to go through with it. The timing was wrong. It was Christmas break for the local schools and the mall was full of teenagers! I made the rounds of the stores window shopping and I was very, very nervous. Just as I was getting ready to leave, I walked by a jewelry booth where 3 or 4 teenage girls were talking. I swear that one of them "read" me and whispered something to the others. I continued walking and as I rounded the corner, there was a mall security guard coming toward me! I thought, I'm in real trouble now. I kept going at a steady pace and the guard walked right by me without a second glance. However, he was headed toward those teenage girls, so I wasn't out of the woods yet. I expected to hear a "Hey You!" at any moment. It never came and I briskly left the mall. By the time I reached my car, I was sweating so profusely that my makeup was in danger of running off my face. That was my first public appearance!

...I had decided to walk through
the local shopping mall...

By controlled situations I mean one where you have little chance of getting hassled by the general public. Start by finding if there is a group of TV/TS's that meet in your area, or see if there are TV/TS parties. Most large cities have several national and local organizations. Some advertise in the local gay news, others in TV/TS publications such as the Transvestian or the Tapestry. Joyce Dewhurst is well known for her Pocono Fantasy Weekends and there are week-long events held in Chicago and Provincetown.

These are excellent opportunities for the novice to practice and get feedback in a controlled situation. Another alternative is a gay bar or club. There are two very nice gay clubs near me that have excellent restaurants attached and I have gone to them for dinner several times. Call first to be sure that you will be welcomed. Do not be intimidated by being dressed in a gay men's bar. If anyone comes on to you and you are not interested, politely say so and thank them for the attention. That will usually be the end of it. This will be good practice for you when you decide you are ready to venture into the real world of "normal" (HA!) people.

An acquaintance of mine once remarked, "Dressing to pass is work!". This is very true. You must be much more aware of your appearance and actions, especially during the daytime. Your choice of clothing should be appropriate for the time of day and season. A low-back evening gown on 4th and Main at Noon is going to get a lot of attention. Makeup for daytime must be softer and more subtle. What works for evening could look like a circus clown in broad (no pun intended) daylight.

Once you think you've got the look right and have gotten some feedback from other people, it is time to ease into daytime excursions, slowly. Try going for a ride in the car. Maybe, go to a park when it is not too crowded. Eventually, you might work up enough courage to go to a restaurant. It will help a great deal if you are not alone. If you have a friend of either sex that you can trust, see if they will go along with you. One possible idea is to find another TV and take turns escorting each other as a male/female couple.

Remember, try to always be in control of the situation. Carry your real ID and if out alone, take the phone number of someone you can trust. This is supposed to be fun, right!? Just don't take any foolish chances.

CLOTHING

CORRECT SIZING

Lucky us! Clothing manufacturers and retailers have finally realized that all women do not wear sizes 6 to 12. That is real bonus for us "big-boned" girls. Many up to date styles are now available for the fuller figure. Now, you don't have to look dowdy or go on a starvation diet to look nice. However, you must know what size and styles are best for you. You are going to discover a fact that women have known for quite some time, no two dresses, skirts, tops, etc., fit the same, even from the same manufacturer. Because of my broad shoulders, I usually need a size 18, but there are 16's and 14's and even a 13 in my closet that fit just fine. You will learn only by trial and error what styles and what sizes work for you. Don't despair! I will try to save you a lot of time and money. Given below are the current body measurements related to dress sizes.

...no two dresses, skirts, tops,
etc., fit the same...

Clothing Sizes

MISSES SIZES (in inches)

SIZE	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
Bust	34	36	38	40	42	44	46
Waist	26	28	30	32	34	36	38
Hips	36	38	40	42	44	46	48
BkLen	16.2	16.5	16.7	17	17.2	17.5	17.7

Note: petite Misses are about 1" shorter in back length

WOMEN'S SIZES

SIZE	36	38	40	42	44	46
Bust	40	42	44	46	48	50
Waist	34	36	38	41	43	46
Hips	41	43	45	47	49	51
BkLen	17.4	17.5	17.6	17.8	17.9	18

HALF SIZES

SIZE	14.5	16.5	18.5	20.5	22.5	24.5
Bust	37	39	41	43	45	47
Waist	31	33	35	37	39	41
Hip	37	41	43	45.5	48	50.5
Bk Len	15.5	15.8	15.9	16	16.1	16.2

Notice that there is a lot of overlap in the bust, waist, and hip measurements, particularly between Misses and Womens. Now look at the measurement called Back Length, that is where the real difference is. This is the distance from the base of the neck to the center of the waist. Compare the Back Length measurements for similar sizes in all three charts. Note that while a 16.5 has more generous measurements than a Misses 16, it is fully three quarters of an inch shorter in the torso!. Take your own measurements and select the size that matches most closely. If you are like me, you may find that you fall within two sizes. I need an 18 up top but can wear a 16 from the waist down. The answer is alterations, either by my own hand or done professionally.

Different styles in the same size will fit differently. A pull-on dress with elasticized waist will fit easier than one with a back zipper and fitted waist. You may be able to wear a size smaller than usual in a simple chemise, while a slinky dinner dress in the right size won't fit. Also, in general, the cheaper the price the tighter the fit. This is due to something designers call "ease".

Ease is the extra material added to a pattern to allow for slight variations in the size of the wearer. One way to reduce costs is to cut more patterns from a given piece of cloth, therefore the amount of ease is reduced along with smaller seam allowances.

When buying clothes look at the quality of workmanship in the garment. Are the edges trimmed and basted? Is the garment lined? Are hems and seams straight and tight? These are all signs of quality. Even though you may not get to dress very often, when you do, you should look the best that you can.

SOME DO'S AND DON'TS

You are trying to create an illusion, so use illusion to your advantage when dressing. Some general rules apply to different body frame types.

Tall Frame (5'8" and up)

DO WEAR

Long jackets
Low waistlines
2pc dresses
Flared/pleated skirts
Textured fabric
Horizontal lines
Wide collars
Wide belts
Moderate heels

DON'T WEAR

Cover whole body
Tight clothes
Short skirts
Short waisted drs
Bolero jackets
Vertical stripes

Large Frame (Size 16 and up)

DO WEAR

Princess style jackets
V-neck sweaters
Solid colors
Small prints
Diagonal lines at bust
Full or 3/4 sleeves
Narrow belts or none
Vertical lines
Sleeveless dresses

DON'T WEAR

Front pleated skirts
Dirndl skirts
Shiny fabrics (Satin)
Heavy, bulky wools
Stiff fabrics
Bold fabrics
Plaids
Square necklines

CLOTHING HINTS AND TIPS

Rather than try to tell you what to buy, I am going to describe the areas that you should be looking at when buying certain types of clothing.

BLOUSES

I would not recommend pullover type blouses unless you will have help when dressing. The neck is likely to be tight and the probability of getting makeup on the blouse is high. Stay with front buttoned blouses. Certain sleeve holes may be too tight, so look for raglan or Dolman sleeves.

SKIRTS

Pull-on skirts present little problem, they just don't often look dressy enough. Skirts with fitted waist bands will probably be too large in the hips if bought to your waist size. These may be altered or you fill out your hips with pads. If you decide to alter it, look in the phone book for a tailor that does women's alterations. Pin the seams and hem and drop it off at the tailor. Some skirts in larger sizes (16 and up) have short elastic sections which allow the waist to expand. This type will usually give you a better fit.

DRESSES

Combine the problems of blouses and skirts and these are the same for dresses. Pay particular attention to where the waist is located. Avoid short waisted dresses and try an elasticized waist or better no waist. Pullover dresses are unavoidable, so be extra careful and cover your face with a light towel when pulling one over yourself. Dresses with zippers are usually fitted, so know your size before buying fitted clothes. When a dress needs hemming, for short lengths let the hem fall just below or at the center of your knee, for long lengths keep the hem below the widest part of your calf.

Anything shorter than knee length will depend on your desires, the shape of your legs and how much attention you want to attract when you sit down.

SUITS AND COORDINATES

Since suits are sold jacket and skirt together, it is probable that one or the other won't fit right. Choose a suit by the dress size that most closely matches your bust size. It is a lot cheaper to alter a skirt than to alter a jacket. An alternative is to buy coordinates or separates that match in color texture and style.

The basic colors are black, white, beige, navy and red.

ALL YEAR, ALL AROUND CLOTHING

There are certain colors and fabrics that are always wearable, any time of the year. The basic colors are black, white, beige, navy and red. The best fabrics are jersey, lightweight wool crepe, crepe de chine, gabardines, and fine cottons. A basic starting wardrobe consists of , at least the following:

- 1 suit
- 2 basic dresses
- 1 blazer
- 1 cardigan sweater
- 2 basic skirts
- 2 prs shoes
- 3 to 6 blouses

Keep these in one or two of the solid colors noted above. You can expand your wardrobe as you expand your outside activities.

TYPICAL PROBLEMS

The following is a collection of hints for body parts which I consider typical problems for crossdressers.

–Lines in neck or large Adam's apple: wear scarves or high collars

–Long or thick neck: Peter Pan, jewel necklines, hair low on neck, high neckline

–Broad wide shoulders: Unconstructed shirts & jackets, dropped or raglan shoulders, narrow lapels, halter necklines, low necklines

–Heavy arms: Raglan, kimono, Dolman sleeves, very long sleeves without cuffs

–Large bust: Dark colors on top, v-necks, raglan or Dolman sleeves

–Thick waist: Chemise, drop waist dresses, Chanel style jackets, blouson style dresses, narrow belts same color as outfit (if at all)

–Tummy protrudes: Tunics and chemises, A-line skirts, hard finish fabrics

FASHION SENSE (CENTS)

Unless you can afford to keep up with the real girls and the latest fashion crazes, try to spend your money wisely on clothes that have a classic, timeless look about them. One absolutely dynamite black evening dress can go a long way with the right accessories. A light wool two piece suit is another classic, especially if it is in the style of Coco Chanel. A good quality black skirt is a basic item in every woman's wardrobe. Maybe treat yourself to a black leather skirt, which is quite acceptable for evening these days. Adding a wide belt or new shoes to an outfit can completely change the look.

In the beginning, at least, stay with the primary fashion colors; black, white, red and navy blue.

SHOES

Finding the right size shoe can be an expensive proposition if you have to buy and try! First of all your foot is wider than a woman's, so right off you have to compensate for width. If you find a style you like in a wide width, add one size to your male shoe size. If the shoe only comes in medium width, add one and a half sizes. So a man's 8 1/2 becomes a 9 1/2 wide or 10 medium. Heel height affects fit as well. The lower the heel, the bigger the size you need. The above guideline works well for mid to high heels. Heel height is measured from the bottom of the heel to the point where the heel first intersects the sole, ie the front of the heel. So a heel listed as 3" might actually lift you 3 1/2 or 4 inches, depending on the final size.

A lightweight two-piece wool suit is another classic...

ACCESSORIES

EARRINGS

While it is acceptable in some circles for a man to have one pierced ear, having both pierced may cause some concern. If you can get away with it, great! Otherwise, stay with clip earrings. If you must have a pair of pierced earrings, most craft stores sell clips that accept pierced earrings. These run about a dollar a set. Rhinestones are reserved for evening wear and a new set will cost from \$20 to \$40. Try bazaars and flea markets for bargains. As a minimum, you should own one very plain gold-toned pair, one jet black pair and one rhinestone pair.

FINGER RINGS

Ring sizes are the same for both men and women. However, most womens rings are no larger than a size 9, which is probably too small for the average TV. You can still wear these rings by cutting through the bottom of the shank and spreading the ring. Many department stores sell costume jewelery rings for around twenty dollars. You can even get faux-diamond engagement rings for this price. Choose rings that complement the size of your hand.

CHAINS

The same problem of size prevails with pre-made chains. Neck, wrist and ankle chains will just be too small. A woman's wrist chain is about 7" long, an ankle chain 8" long and a small neck chain about 14". The solution is to have your chains made. Several times I have seen vendors selling chains by the inch. Measure your wrist or ankle and add between a quarter to three-eighths of an inch to this measurement. Have the chain made to this length before the clasp is added. The smallest neck chain should be about 18 to 20 inches long.

WATCHES

As with the wrist chain, the lady's watch band may be too small. Some replacement bands come in extra long lengths which will fit a small to average male wrist. A recent style dress-band is a two part mesh with an adjustable clasp which just might fit even a large male wrist. This is the type I wear. These watches often go on sale for thirty to fifty dollars.

BELTS

Size again! Most often a dress will come with a belt and if it is your correct dress size it should fit. At the very least have one black patent belt. Black patent goes with everything.

For large sizes check out a Lane Bryants, but don't be surprised if you can't find one SMALL enough! A good choice is a one inch wide leather belt in basic colors.

HANDBAGS

Usually, you will coordinate your bag with your shoes, although this is not absolutely necessary. A clutch bag in black leather or black patent is a good choice for evening. A shoulder bag is good if you feel awkward about what to do with your hands. You will find that one hand just naturally rests on the bag. Again, stick with basic colors.

GLOVES

Glove sizes are measured by the circumference of the widest part of the hand, in inches. Only the largest of women's gloves will fit the smallest of a man's hand. Try one of the stretch styles like Isotoner. It may be advisable to wear gloves if your hands are large or just not very feminine.

CONCLUSION

Well that is it! The whole show! It is all up to you now. As I've said before, practice, practice, practice. Read, observe and copy. Develop your own feminine style. You can do it, if you will only try.

I hope these thoughts will be of use to you as you progress in your dressing activities. I am sharing them with you because I know what we all went through getting to this point and we've had to deal with enough garbage along the way, so why not make the rest of the journey a little easier.

HUGS AND KISSES
JoAnn Roberts
July 1986

Your Notes

Your Notes

Your Notes



About the Author

JoAnn Roberts is a 38 year old, heterosexual, crossdresser. She is married and has two children. Her family is aware and supportive of her activities. JoAnn has been developing her feminine image for over twenty years. She has participated in many TV functions and has won awards at Joyce Dewhurst Fantasy Weekends for Best Makeup and as Miss Trash.

JoAnn, in association with a local gender therapist and professor, is a frequent guest lecturer on Crossdressing at local universities. She lives in suburban Philadelphia.

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