

# BE YOUR OWN STYLIST

After the woman who styles Trinny and Susannah was unmasked, Lifestyle tracked her down for our very own guide on What Not To Wear...

By Deborah Arthurs

**H**AVING celebrity stylist Zoe Lem rifle through your wardrobe is like opening up your end-of-term report book to a kind teacher — you know she's going to say something bad, but in the nicest possible way.

Zoe is a master in the art of sugar-coated criticism, or what she calls Criticism, Justification, Solution. But even so when I agree to a taster of her two-day course on personal styling, it is with some trepidation that I invite her to tear my wardrobe apart.

Initially, I stand in front of the mirror as Zoe assesses my appearance. 'I get women to really look at themselves, not to just look at their reflection, but to honestly analyse their age, skin tone and shape.'

At this point I tell Zoe that I sometimes step back from the mirror, squint my eyes at my dodgy reflection, assess that this makes me look better, and leave the house satisfied. She looks at me like I'm mad. Then undeterred, she pushes on.

Having always suspected I was a size 8 in a body two sizes too big for me, I am elated to find out that I'm actually a slim 'hourglass'.

Zoe says I have great ankles and calves; a minuscule — but high — waist (I'm not sure whether having a 'high waist' is a defect, as Zoe is too nice to let on); and my freckly skin is apparently an 'amazing' décolletage that I should show off with plunging V-necks or wrap dresses.

As an hourglass, I must enhance my curves, not shroud them. Before Zoe (a time I shall fondly come to remember as BZ), I bought predominantly drop-waist dresses, thinking that I didn't have the right figure for waisted styles.

As a result, I've been concealing my best feature under folds of cloth because my waist was too high for me to locate.

However, the boost to my ego is short-lived. As Zoe surveys my outfit, I could sense that my beloved black skinny jeans will soon be banished.

'They cut you off at the ankles, shorten your legs, and make you look wider than you are,' Zoe says. 'Only the tall or very thin should wear them.'

This put me straight where my friends had let me down: I have six pairs of designer skinny jeans in my wardrobe which I've worn for three seasons without anyone telling me they looked awful.

So it's goodbye to the taper and hello bootleg. Putting on a pair of heels and some flared Seven jeans, my legs — I'm 5ft 7in tall — gain four inches.

Next in the dock is my choice of colour — or lack of it. Thankfully Zoe doesn't make me ditch my favoured black entirely, saying that while I should not wear it quite so faithfully, it suits me.

The same goes for blues, grey, purples and reds, but pale pink and pastels — which I've always hated — drain me.

A lurid green dress I've been trying lately gets a barely concealed grimace, until I tell Zoe I'd been wearing it for an experiment to see how people reacted to me wearing colour. And while I'd been avoiding dull navy for a decade, the



Red carpet glam: Trinny and Susannah

colour is perfect for me. I'm told to stop thinking that is only for school uniforms and wear it more.

Next it's time to strip. Having worked with Trinny & Susannah on their What Not To Wear TV show, Zoe has groped her fair share of women's boobs. Which is why I feel, first, completely comfortable stripping down to my four-year-old bra in front of her, and secondly, resigned to the fact it will go the same way as the skinny jeans.

As I expected, I'm told that my bra gives no support, does nothing for my figure and is allowing my breasts to travel southwards. Zoe replaces it with a sculpted Marks & Spencer 'Body Booster', which rounds them up and points them skywards, creating a far more flattering silhouette.

Now they are in their proper place, the teal scoop neck top she puts on me later makes me think of Betty Boop — and not in a bad way. The door has officially opened on my new, technicolour life, while condemning half my wardrobe to a sartorial retirement village.

## ZOE'S TIPS FOR A NEW YOU

### Colour

● To decide what suits you, hold different-coloured clothes up to your face in front of a mirror in daylight. Does the colour drain or lift your face? Does it clash with your skin tone or eyes? Does it make your eyes seem brighter or flatter? Does it make your skin look flat or blend in too much?

● If you are unsure about which colours go together, look to fabric and wallpaper for inspiration. Break down the colours that are in the swatch and you have your colour palette.

● Don't wear bright colours with black — it saturates the intensity from other



Pictures: BEN LISTER

All change: Zoe gets the measure of Deborah, left, who models her new look, above

shades and looks cheap. ● Avoid bright reds and pinks if you have pink skin.

● Don't wear a very light top half with a dark bottom or vice versa — it will look like two separate outfits stuck together.

● Test new colours using accessories — brightly coloured necklaces or beads.

### Big tummy

● Magic knickers are a brilliant way of pulling in this area.

● Wear an untied scarf — it will cut through the waist and hide the stomach — or use similarly toned layers.

### Big thighs

● Wide leg trousers help balance out the top of your thigh — never wear tapered.

● A-line skirts will disguise thighs.

● A dress or a three-quarter coat over trousers covers thighs.

### Big bottom

● Choose skirts with vertical panels as this will have the same effect as a corset, holding the bottom in.

● Wear darker colours on the bottom half and go for long tops that cover part of your bottom.

### Flabby arms

● Cover them up — shrugs and bolero tops are good if a full top is too warm.

● Use sweat guards (available from John Lewis) to stop perspiration marks.

Zoe Lem's Introduction to Personal Styling is held at the Courthouse Hotel, Great Marlborough Street, London WC1 on March 11 and 12 or April 8 and 9, £249. A £50 discount is offered to Mail readers who book today. Visit [www.helloyou.com](http://www.helloyou.com) or call 020 87800 497 for details.

Dress: Principles, £75. Shoes: Clarks, £40. Earrings: Butler & Wilson, from a selection.