



JOSEPHINE CHAUS

Shopping Smart When You're Short

Shopping smart when you're short can be a tall order. If you are one of the millions of American women who stand 5'4" or under and wear a size 2 to size 14, you are a Petite customer. You may not even realize that you would get a better fit in Petite clothing because there is still a big misconception that Petite means tiny. Petite sizing is based on height, not weight. Petite refers to an all-over proportioning of the body from head-to-toe, not left-to-right.

In her new book, *The Petite Handbook*, Kim Williams Dahlman teaches Petite women how to flatter their proportions and dress with confidence. If you are 5'4" or under, follow Dahlman's Top 10 Petite fashion tips and you will never be short on style:

TIP #1: Shop for clothing with strong vertical lines. Vertical lines make you look taller because they draw the eye in an upward and downward motion. Vertical stripes and patterns, zip or button-front styles, and ribbed knit tops work to create the illusion of height.

TIP #2: Dress in monochromatic colors. Wear the same color from head-to-toe ; you'll always look taller. Add height with solid or patterned suitings and soft 2-piece dressing.

TIP #3: Put together outfits in tonal combinations. Achieve the same heightening effect as monochromatic dressing by wearing one family of color (shades of blue) or colors with a similar intensity (all bright colors).

TIP #4: Wear unbroken lines of color on the body. When putting together a 3-piece look, wear the same color to the inside or to the outside. For example, create an unbroken line of color to the outside by matching your jacket with a pant in the same color or pattern and a contrasting blouse.

TIP #5: Divide the Petite figure at uneven points. To avoid looking shorter, refrain from wearing silhouettes that cut the Petite figure in half. Wear a shorter jacket or top with pants or a long skirt. Pair a longer jacket or top with a short skirt.

TIP #6: Choose a V-neckline or create the illusion of a V-neckline. A V-neckline makes a short body frame look longer. For an instant neck and body lengthener, simply unbutton your top button and flip your collar up.

TIP#7: Balance the horizontal line created by a round or square neckline with something vertical. Since horizontal lines can create width on the Petite figure, it is important to balance a horizontal neckline with vertical details or vertical accessories.

TIP #8: Keep the focal point high with eye-catching details. Neck treatments, fun patterns, and special details featured on the top half of the Petite figure will draw attention upward for added height.

TIP #9: Use the "fist rule" to determine if a print or pattern is right for you. Make a fist and hold it up to the main pattern in a print. If the pattern is the same size or smaller than your fist, the print is right for you. If the pattern is larger than your fist, the print is too big for your Petite frame.

TIP #10: Shop for soft, fluid lightweight fabrics. Stiff fabrics with a heavy texture add bulk to your short body frame.

Visit www.thepetitehandbook.com for more fashion advice and helpful tips especially for women 5'4" and under.