

**PART 3
LOWER
BODY
MAKEOVER**

BY STACEY COLINO

to some extent, looking and feeling good in your jeans is largely about what's happening below the belt. So if you're ample in the hip area or if your thighs are a bit too bulky, you may have a particularly tough time finding jeans that fit. But while slimming down and shaping up, you *can* help yourself look and feel better in your jeans right now. Start here:

STEP 1

The Easy Part: Shop!

From a fashion standpoint, the first step is to wear jeans that work with (not against!) your lower-body trouble spots. Follow this advice from Sarah Hodge, merchandise manager at MyTrueFit.com:

{THE COMPLAINT} Wide Hips

TRY THIS Dark-wash jeans with 2 percent spandex and a contoured waistband. The dark color is flattering for your lower half, and a fitted waistband will prevent gapping at your midsection.

AVOID THIS Jeans with a straight waistband, which will not fit well through the hips. Also, stay away from fading or any intricate detail (zippers, ornate stitching, or embroidery) across the lap area, which only draws attention to wide hips.

{THE COMPLAINT} Full Thighs

TRY THIS A tailored trouser-style jean that falls straight down from the hips, disguising fullness in the thighs.

AVOID THIS Any fading down the thighs, which draws attention to full thighs. If you're trying to mask saddlebags, steer clear of stretchy jeans (such as jeggings), which will call attention to any dimpled areas below your waist.

{THE COMPLAINT} Big Bottom

TRY THIS Jeans with a rise that's higher in the back than in the front. The extra fabric will keep your rear well covered. Also, look for styles with plain, medium-size back pockets to balance out a fuller rear.

AVOID THIS Styles with small or embellished back pockets or no back pockets at all, which will accentuate your derriere. Also, steer clear of jeans with fading across the seat.

THE JEANS TEAM



Molly Kimball, RD, a sports and lifestyle dietitian who manages the nutrition program at Ochsner's Elmwood Fitness Center in New Orleans.



Sarah Hodge, a merchandise manager and fit specialist at MyTrueFit.com, an online custom-sizing retailer.



Debbie Then, PhD, an author, psychologist, and consultant who specializes in women and body image.



Suzanne Bowen, a fitness expert and the owner of Seren Motus Fitness Studios in Nashville, Tennessee.

STEP 2

The Tough Part: A Little Sweat Required

One of the best ways to get a better below-the-belt fit in your jeans is by working at it—and we do mean the hard way: cardio, lunges, squats. Sure, a good diet will help give you a more proportionate figure, but to really get tone in these areas, it's going to take a little sweat equity.

You can trim and tone your hips, thighs, and derriere by choosing cardiovascular activities that target

the muscles in those areas, says Suzanne Bowen, the creator and star of the *Gorgeous Core* DVD. Good options include hiking or walking hills, using an elliptical or stair-climbing machine with some resistance, taking spinning classes, or learning belly dancing or Zumba (a Latin-inspired dance workout).

In addition, try this lower-body sculpting routine, designed by

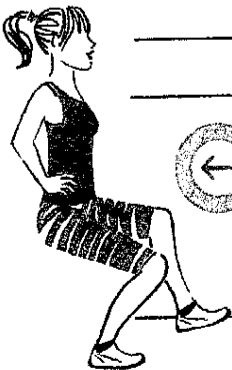
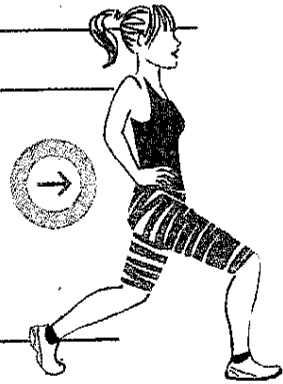
Bowen, two to three times a week. "If you do this every other day, you'll start to see results within four weeks," says Bowen. Specifically, you'll see (and feel!) stronger, leaner muscles in your hips, quads, hamstrings, thighs, glutes, and calves—and you'll be burning body fat to boot.

Warning: These moves are not easy if done correctly!



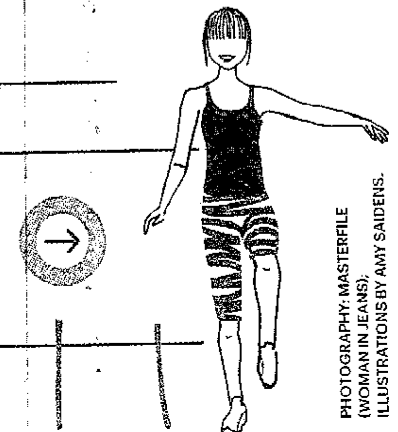
Wide Pliés Stand with feet 2 feet apart, toes turned out. Bend knees, keeping back straight and head high, and lower your body a few inches. Make sure knees are in line with feet and do not pass your toes. Return to starting position. Do 20 reps. **Variation: Wide Plié Pulses** From same starting position as the wide plié, bend knees and lower your body as deeply as you can. Pulse down about an inch 20 times. Then hold plié position for a count of 20 before returning to starting position.

Tough Lunges Stand with feet together. Step forward with right leg as far as you can without letting right knee pass your toes and try to lower thigh parallel to the floor. Hold lunge for 10 counts; pulse down about an inch for another 10 counts; then hold lunge for an additional 10 counts. Bring right foot back to meet left. Repeat with opposite leg.



One-leg Squats Stand with feet hip-width apart, hands on waist. Bend knees and lower butt and hips as if you're going to sit in a chair. Keeping back straight and right leg bent, lift left knee until thigh is parallel to floor. Hold for 10 seconds; return to starting position. Do 5 reps. Repeat with opposite leg. Work up to 20 reps.

Standing Leg Extensions With feet hip-width apart, place hand onto a chair for balance. Lift and tighten abs to keep your back stable, then flex left foot and lift left leg behind you 3 inches off the floor. Hold for 10 seconds. Then swing left leg in front of you, bending knee and raising thigh to hip level; keep abs engaged. Return to starting position. Do 20 reps. Repeat on the opposite side.



PHOTOGRAPHY: MASTERFILE (WOMAN IN JEANS); ILLUSTRATIONS BY AMY SAIDENS.