

Style Tips to disguise those festive indulgences!

As we approach these final weeks of the year, the temptation for indulgence reaches an all-year high. Gifts of chocolate begin to appear in the post. Biscuits in festive shapes show up next to the coffee machine at the office – or in your cupboards if you work from home! You could be adding 750 calories a day with your nibbling and at party time, be tempted to put on that oversized sweatshirt that has blinking lights all over the front of it. Stop!

No, I don't mean stop eating, I mean stop thinking about hiding behind your clothes and start thinking about how you can look festively chic, no matter what. You can still look trim until January 1st when you actually resolve to cut out all the sweets. Here's how.

1. **Draw attention to your assets.** (Fakes out the fruitcake!)

Do something special with your most beautiful features. Great hair? Make an appointment for a blow dry if you're between haircuts. A professional cut and finish of your hair can make you look great for a whole week. Great hands and fingers? Pull out the cocktail rings that are so en vogue right now. Get a fresh manicure; add some bangles to your wrist. Pretty arms? Go sleeveless in a sparkly tank top. Or bring attention to your face by adorning a crew necklined top with a chunky choker. The light from the choker splashing up to your face will be all you need to get the attention off of you-know-where.

2. **Keep the eye moving up the body.** (Neutralizes the chocolate pickings!)

Strong vertical lines make us look taller and slimmer. You can achieve this by wearing a black cocktail dress with black tights and black heels. Or, you can wear one dark shade (your choice of chocolate, charcoal, black or navy) in a top and matching trousers and add your pop of colour (your choice of magenta, turquoise, deep orange) in a shawl, shrug or jacket. That solid inside colour keeps our eye moving up your body, which makes you look slimmer. (I call this the 'column of colour' trick). Also, consider wearing a belt and shoes in the same colour as your hair when you're wearing separates. Your accessories will tie into the colour of your hair and stretch that vertical line for you, making you look taller and slimmer.

3. **Lift your boobs.** (Cancels out those shortbread biscuits and mince pies!)

Nothing can make a woman look matronly and heavy quicker than a sagging bustline. When you look in a full-length mirror, your bustline (if it was an imaginary vertical line) should sit right in the middle between your shoulder line and your waistline. If it's not, hike up those bra straps or go indulge in a new bra that lifts you towards that central point (can't go wrong with M&S!)

4. **Buy a bigger size.** (Hides those extra tipples!)

Honestly... If you've been living in those clothes while they've been getting snugger, you may not be noticing the way the too-small size is distorting the drape of the garment and adding even more pounds. Going up a size isn't a disgrace; it's a weight-loss device. Wherever there is strain, create ease. Upper arms—a dolman sleeve may be great. Waist—relax the belt. Thighs—wear trousers with gentle pleats for extra ease or wear skirts with elastic waistlines that you cover up with a fabulous belt.

5. **Don't leave home without your make-up.** (Fakes out fudge!)

To keep the focus up at the face instead of on the hips, be sure your make-up and especially eyebrow line is doing its job by framing your face. If your eyebrows are thinning or if they are barely visible because of their colour, get help at a make-up counter. You'll need a slanted brush and the right shade of color. The make-up artist will show you how to dip into the pot of colour with your slanted brush and gently fill in your eyebrow line. Attention will automatically be directed to those gorgeous eyes of yours. Wear lenses or glasses? You still need to give attention to your brows. Then, add the all-time never-fails accessory: a smile! You'll look fab!

Happy festive activities,

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