



Goodbye, Muffin Top!

Exploring woman's secret weapon

Just the mere mention of the word “shapewear” used to conjure thoughts of a Bridget Jones-style disaster, a restricting “granny pant”-esque thick and unflattering undergarment that might, horror of horrors, unravel awkwardly as you move about at an event, revealing an unsightly spare tyre of excess fabric gathering around your wobbly bits. But fortunately, that’s now a thing of the past: The shapewear of today is most often associated with the smooth, seamless and yes, comfy, undergarments embraced by regular women and celebrities alike.

MOVING WITH THE TIMES

Shapewear has actually been around for decades—from the corsets of the 16th to 18th centuries to the various incarnations of girdles dating back to ancient Babylon, women have been using some form of it to enhance their shape throughout history. And now, there’s a new generation of shapewear that’s taken the world by storm: just this February, department store Debenhams saw a reported 120% increase in sales of support lingerie in the

UK around Valentine’s Day. And Wacoal, one of the most well-loved manufacturers of women’s intimate apparel, are leaders in the shapewear of the future.

NEW TECHNOLOGY & FABRICS

“Wacoal was initially created in Japan, where [women] are very fond of modifying their figure where necessary—they even use padding and stuffing for the bottom!—and with technology developed at our Japanese headquarters, we were one of the first in Europe to introduce the new generation of shapewear. [This isn’t] the old girdles that our grandmothers had,” says Marion Brizon, Wacoal’s Head of International Sales. Marion advises first-time shapewear buyers to first touch the material. “You would never believe it would work so well, being so light and smooth—in the old times you needed so many seams plus a zip to make it work,” Marion says. It’s this amazing fabric that makes it so special: take Wacoal’s Anti Cellulite iPant, for instance. Working with Spanish experts, they developed special technology that embeds cellulite-busting

molecules into the fibres of the fabric itself. “For instance, caffeine molecules—these are the same that the cosmetic industry introduced into cellulite-fighting creams,” Marion explains. And unlike creams, you don’t need to worry about applying it via a special massage—just slip them on and you’re good to go. The pants can be used for up to 100 washes before losing their anti-cellulite properties, upon which you’re still left with a great piece of shapewear. Wacoal has also developed a summer version of their popular mid-thigh shapers, made with a net called CoolMax, often seen in sportswear. Sheer with a faux tanga-shape look, they are designed to let your skin breathe in heat and wick away sweat.

PICK AND MIX

So which one is right for you? “If you just have cellulite on your bottom, shorter shapewear such as the culottes are easier to wear as they’ll let you wear shorter skirts,” Marion explains. “If you only want to cover the lower part of your body, the type that stays at your waist is enough, whereas the high-waisted versions (which come right up to underneath your bra) are for those who also have a little stomach fat they’d like to smooth out,” she says. Not only will the latter smooth out any bulges, they’ll also stay in place thanks to a clever stay-in-place belt that leaves a margin of stretchable fabric that stays put while moving with your body, as you expand and contract throughout the day. “[This way], women who want it very tight can still have lunch comfortably without feeling too compressed!” Marion says.

TREAT IT DELICATELY

While shapewear doesn’t need to be hand-washed like a bra, it is still a delicate item and experts from K-Lynn lingerie recommend washing it with similar fabrics—in a delicates bag if possible—to protect them from unnecessary rubbing and thinning. With “What women want” as their motto, it’s clear this is a brand that considers women’s needs seriously. So what do we want in the end, out of our shapewear anyway? “Comfort is the number one priority,” says Marion. She adds, “Even if you’re wearing the nicest, fanciest designer item, if it scratches or is uncomfortable [that’s] all you remember. In the end, it is a technical product, so support and comfort come first—it should be like a second skin. If it’s beautiful and sexy too, well, that’s a wonderful bonus!”