STYLE GUIDE
Create your own unique outfits and looks with surprising ease

CORSETRY TERMINOLOGY
IT'S EASY WHEN YOU KNOW HOW!

CORSETTRY EVOLVED
Corset shirts, dresses and jackets are re-writing the definition of what a corset is

SHAPING UP NICELY
WHERE FASHION MEETS FUNCTION & COMFORT MEETS CONTROL
THE RELEVANCE of CORSETS

An overlooked fashion giant... or an archaic garment best left in the past?

In the 21st century, it is understandable that many feel the corset has dropped out of contemporary fashion. The corset is the same time pervasive on the catwalk, yet largely hidden from view in modern everyday wear. When we see corsetry nowadays, it tends to be in the context of designer fashion or couture looks concocted by big fashion houses - Vivienne Westwood and Jean Paul Gaultier in particular revitalised the corset. Similarly, we may expect to see a corset in a theatre production or burlesque performance. Either way, it is a piece of clothing that we don’t typically anticipate cropping up in day-to-day wear. However, the corset’s appeal extends well into this century. From its controversial past to its contemporary revival, the corset continues to be a fashion outlier, and its pervasiveness in modern clothing is more prominent than you may expect.

Corsets, contrary to popular belief, are not and don’t need to be confined to museums, period drama sets, and pop royalty on stage. It would be apt to say the corset is not a neutral garment. Far from it - it is emotionally-charged, one that toes the line of lingerie and underwear, and one that is still very much in the process of shedding its reputation as an instrument of female oppression from the preceding centuries. Perhaps only the stiletto has come close to the fierce debates throughout history about its relevance in today’s fashion, but let’s face it - the corset has been around for much, much longer.

COMMON QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS ABOUT CORSETRY

There are a multitude of genuinely valid concerns and questions around wearing corsets.

These range from the practical:
- How long will it take to put on and take off?
- Will I be able to adequately disguise a corset underneath my clothes?
- What will my friends or others think?
- Will a corset suit me because I’m not (tall/short/slim/curvy)?

To health-conscious:
- Is wearing a corset uncomfortable?
- Will wearing a corset cause health problems?
- Could my breathing be adversely affected by wearing a corset?

These are all well-founded questions to have when considering wearing a corset, and we believe that they are important to ask! It shows an awareness of your body and a keenness to look after it properly, which is paramount.

A reputable corset seller will endeavour to answer these questions as thoroughly as possible. At Corset Story, our product descriptions set out in extensive detail what you can expect from your corset in terms of...
Corses are dry clean only due to the various metal components that they are constructed from.

The practicalities and caring for the garment. For example, many of our traditional corsets use lacing to maintain their structure, which can take a little longer to take on and off due to the lacing and ribbons. On the other hand, many of our corset tops, designed for everyday wear and comfort, use zips for ease of putting on and removal. We always make sure to signpost these details, as we understand they're important factors when choosing a corset.

When it comes to caring for your corset, we recommend dry-cleaning if this is possible for you. If it isn’t, then using a damp cloth to gently clean your corset works too. However, it is important that after cleaning, the corset is laid flat in a dry environment (preferably an airing cupboard) to ensure that any residual moisture evaporates as quickly as possible. It is crucial that you do not submerge your corset in water, as this will cause the steel bones to rust.

It is important to consider health-oriented questions when investing in a corset. A corset is a strong garment, and has been used for centuries to help women achieve a feminine silhouette. There are a number of health controversies associated with corsetry, such as restricted breathing and adverse effects on the internal organs. However, corsets and medical science have come a long, long way since the 18th century. A well-made (and perhaps more crucially, well-fitted!) contemporary corset should not cause you unbearable discomfort. If it does, take it off immediately!

Waist reduction and training does not happen overnight. A solid-fitting corset can be a comfortable way to reduce your waist size by up to two or three inches. While corsets can also be used to reduce waist size by four or five inches, we do not advise this. Waist size reduction through corsets works in part by applying pressure to the stomach, thus reducing your appetite. Furthermore, the simple act of wearing a corset can endow an individual with a confidence boost in their weight loss journey. As with all the best things in life, moderation is key: ‘season’ your corset (corsets can initially be very stiff – wearing them for short periods of time and avoiding tight lacing helps them fit your body), don’t wear one 24/7, and oscillate between tight and loose lacing from time to time.

For more permanent results, there’s no better pathway than a healthy diet and regular exercise combined with wearing a well-fitting corset. We recommend you research and gather as much information as possible before embarking on your waist reduction journey, and Corset Story is brimming with all of the information you need. We’re not doctors and we don’t know your medical history, so before seriously considering waist training, please consult your doctor to see if it is for you. Our tips are simply wise advice we’ve picked up along several years of working with those who get the most out of their corsets.

As for questions about the aesthetics or...
whether or not you’ll "suit" a corset, the beauty of corsetry is that they are built for every single body. Corsets are wonderful confidence boosters and come in a range of styles to suit every taste. On this point, our hearty recommendation is that you take the plunge and dare to experience the wonders of corsetry for yourself.

**WHY A CORSET? WHY NOW?**

To that, we ask the question: why not? Corsets invoke the spectacle of high drama. Some recent high profile displays of corsetry have come from dancer and artist FKA Twigs, who showed off her penchant for Vivienne Westwood corsets in a Rococo-era inspired Westwood corset at the Sundance Film Festival. Social media darlings, Kylie and Kendall Jenner, have also embraced fashion corsets, teaming them with everyday wear to inject some high glamour. Similarly, a peruse through any reputable lingerie store will show that corsets still reign in the bedroom as the ultimate piece of statement underwear.

Over the past 400 years, corsets and styling have always moved with the times. This is reflected in the way a woman’s corset was styled as the decades passed, demonstrating that the corset really was the foundation of her ensemble. It may not be the case today that a woman is required to wear a corset, but such is the beauty of modern corsetry.

Infusing an everyday look (such as a formal dress, a shirt, or dress top) with a corset is a sure-fire way to elevate it into something romantic and stimulating. It is important to note that this doesn’t always have to equate to sexy - corsets can still be perceived as bedroom wear. However, a well-fitted, in-built corset can actually look incredibly professional and smart. When composing pieces for our contemporary corsetry range, we felt it was important that the designs reflect the modern woman. Corsets are eye-catching and flattering, and when paired with the right companions (like a work shirt!) can be a greatly welcome addition to anyone’s wardrobe.

Equally, some prefer to wear corsets in a particular context or setting. Corsets still play an important role in some fashion subcultures, such as punk (and steampunk), burlesque, and goth. We’re proud of our more unconventional designs, which are beautiful as they are unique - just like corsets themselves.

Ultimately, the corset is in a permanent state of reinvention, ready to be seized upon by the next generation. It’s timeless appeal endures.

**RELEVANT YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND TOMORROW**

Our mission at Corset Story is to remove all of those negative, practical reasons for why you wouldn’t buy a corset through research, testing, design & innovation. We are constantly developing our shapes and patterns and in the near future all of our corsets will be available in your body shape and torso length. We are sourcing and testing high tech modern, moisture wicking fabrics for greater comfort, we have a range of corseted dresses, shirts and jackets to eliminate the issues of disguising corsets underneath clothing and have created alternatives for the trickier corset busk and corset lacing.

Let’s be honest, the look and feel of corsets are stunning. Simply put, a well-made corset is a work of true craftsmanship and art. Individuals today are bestowed with the choice of wearing a corset - whether that’s in the comfort of their own spaces, or as fashionable outerwear - which is the most compelling signifier that this beautiful garment is still as relevant as ever.

“Ultimately, the corset is in a permanent state of reinvention, ready to be seized upon by the next generation.”
The corset has one of the richest, most diverse, longest spanning and most controversial histories of any item of clothing.

Where did corsets originate from? How did they remain so popular as different clothing styles marched ahead? Does the history tell us anything about why they’re still a must-have item for those interested in fashion? The tale of corsets through time is a story that reveals much about what societies in the past valued aesthetically, and equally woven into their tale is the gradual liberation and independence of women in history that can be felt.

First things first: what do we mean when we say ‘corset’?

The word ‘corset’ comes from the Old French word corps, meaning body. We generally understand corsets to cover and hold the torso, making use of a rigid bodice and laces in order to tighten the body inside. Corsets were (and are) tight-fitting, and have enjoyed time in the spotlight as both undergarments and outerwear.

EARLY ADOPTERS

While it is true that corsets were popularised by the likes of Catherine de’ Medici (the wife of King Henry II of France) in the 16th century, the origins of corset-like garments can be traced back to the time of Minoan people - that’s 1600 B.C. Fashion historians posit that etchings on ancient pottery, which show both men and women wearing specially-crafted belts and vests that constrict the middle, demonstrate that Minoans culturally valued and desired small waists. This may have been for reasons of fertility - women were portrayed exposing bare breasts - or simply an aesthetic choice.

Again, prior to the 16th century, corsets were used by certain Caucasus tribes, such as the Circassians and Abkhaz, albeit for slightly more controversial and contentious reasons. Circassians, for example, made women wear a tight leather corset from childhood through to her wedding night. This was to ensure she kept a thin figure, but it also had a symbolic meaning: after the wedding night, the groom would present his new wife with the corset still intact, as a sign that he had passed the test of fidelity.

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"In the 1700s, stiffer material was used to produce maximal effect: rows were closely stitched together encasing whalebone or cane-like materials"

exhibited self-control. It is no wonder the corset attracts such polarising opinions when one considers its origins.

During the middle ages, it is more difficult to ascertain if and how a corset (or similar garment) was used, as women dressed from head-to-toe in modest clothing, usually long robes. It is thought by fashion historians that instead of having a separate corset to take on and off, wooden slats or bones were sewn into the robe or gown to provide support. Yet evidence exists that bandages may have been used to slim the waist as far back as the fourteenth century, showing that the coveted and desirable small waist is a phenomenon that’s existed almost as long as clothing has!

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY BOOM

Fast-forward to Catherine de’ Medici’s time, who in the 1550s enforced a ban on thick waists at court attendance. The image of the corset was solidified in de’ Medici’s era, and the wearing of corsets became equated with wealth. The influence of the shape created by corsets trickled down into fashion more generally, as the bodice became a separate article of clothing to be worn underneath the gown and was laced up at the back to promote a thinner waist. This style became fashionable across Europe. A woman with a slim waist encased in a corset became a seminal image in paintings and art at that time, solidifying the corset’s place in fashion history. Various styles began to emerge in different places, with the corset as the primary component of the look. Despite the huge surge in popularity, the corset was not for everyone. Mary, Queen of Scots, was not fond of wearing corsets.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries brought yet more changes to the now classic corset. In the 1700s, stiffer material was used to produce maximal effect: rows were closely stitched together encasing whalebone or cane-like materials. This was primarily to create a contrast effect, whereby the torso was as slim as possible (usually in an inverted conical shape), and the lower half was as exaggerated as possible with heavy, full skirts that puffed out. Corsets also ensured correct posture and a high, fuller bosom. We would recognise this style in beloved British period dramas. Perhaps surprisingly, a well-fitted corset in this time posed no breathing difficulties and they were recorded as being quite comfortable.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND BEYOND

As society progressed and monumental changes continued apace, so too did the corset to keep up with fashionable norms at the time, yet remained a staple in a woman’s wardrobe. During the transition to the Victorian period, the term corset was used for the first time. Further, where the corsets of the past used whalebone or even ivory to make the busk (to stiffen the front of the bodice), it was now
Corsets of this era were also tailored with a curve, which sat comfortably with the natural curves of the body.

As we moved through the 20th century and women made enormous gains socially, economically and politically, corsets began to shed some of their previous patriarchal associations. For example, in the Edwardian era, a new busk was created to accommodate the now incredibly fashionable S-silhouette shape (where the curves of a woman’s figure resembled the letter ‘S’), and was specially designed so as not to harm any of the wearer’s internal organs. Corsets here could also be trimmed shorter and had a number of decorations and adornments included to add charm.

The S-shaped silhouette dominated throughout the 20th century, and the traditional corset began to fall by the wayside as women sought out alternative support garments such as girdles, compression underwear, and bras. However a smaller waist remained a desirable figure, but with more independence and freedom, the focus shifted to diet and exercise (and even plastic surgery) for more long term results. This is still very much the case today across the world.

FASHION FORWARD: CORSETRY TODAY

However, beginning in the 1970s, the corset experienced a fashion renaissance. Dame Vivienne Westwood, the high priestess of punk, seized the corset for use in her high-fashion punk aesthetic. Dame Westwood adored corsets, not only for their appearance, but their message as instruments of female oppression. In her rebirth of the corset, she dared to reimagine the corset as a symbol of female empowerment. Jean-Paul Gaultier, Thierry Mugler, Stella McCartney, Yves Saint Laurent are but a handful of names who have sought to transform the classic image of the corset, subverting its controversial history and celebrating the garment as an expression of female sexuality. Madonna famously donned a corset as part of her Blond Ambition tour in 1990, pairing it with a conical bra, to hark back to previous generations when women were required to wear these garments. For Madonna, it was all about choice, self-expression and creativity. This is how we understand modern corsetry.

And here we are in the 21st century: the corset endured, and continues to endure. Modern pop divas like Beyoncé and Lady Gaga have incorporated the corset into their onstage looks more than once. We have come to associate the corset with drama, femininity, passion; which perhaps is why so many women are still drawn to the allure of the corset. However, the corset of the 21st century is a different beast compared to its traditional ancestors, as women now choose corsets for their own aesthetic pleasure, as a way to enhance their silhouette on their own terms and simply because there is something so timeless and charming about a corset. It’s controversial history also makes it irresistible for some. There’s a reason that corsets transitioned from underwear to outerwear.

We believe in the modern day they are for wearing loud and proud. Corsets are catwalk and fashion photography staples and come in so many different designs and sizes, that there’s something for everyone and every body. The corset is not only truly here to stay, but to be enjoyed and embraced.
When it comes to choosing a corset, everybody is different. You might enjoy traditional styles, or a more contemporary look. Some wearers prefer to have everything encased in an overbust, while others would rather use their own bra with an underbust. A corset top is fast becoming a popular choice for those who want to incorporate corsetry into everyday wear. But one factor remains the same: sizing is everything!

This article looks at two key elements of sizing: the measurement of your waist, and the length of the corset. The latter is often overlooked, but it's a huge part of what makes an effective corset.

Why is sizing important?

We understand corsets as an item of clothing to help pull in the waist, which creates the famed hourglass silhouette. However, because corsets have the effect of slimming down a particular part of the body, it is crucial that the waist measurement is as accurate as possible when selecting a corset. Don't be tempted to run your waist measurement lower or higher than it really is, as this could seriously affect how effective and comfortable your corset is.

Corsets are delicate but strong garments. While fabrics such as satin and mesh may adorn the outside of the corset, these fabrics are strengthened with steel bones which allow for effective waist cinching. Almost all corsets lace up the back to make sure they fit just right, and this also means that getting the right waist measurement is key. If you measure too big, the waist modification won't be as effective. However, if you measure too small, this could cause discomfort and pain. In short, corsets are serious about what they do, but this is part of what makes them so beautiful.

If you're looking for a slightly more casual corset experience, you may opt for a corset top. These are typically not worn very tightly, but still provide the benefits of a corset. Our corsets are fully adjustable across the bust, waist and hips. When it comes to a corset top and corsets worn as fashionable outerwear, we recommend a 2-4" gap at the back of the garment. This will provide both a noticeable visual effect, but retain enough comfort for the garment to be worn all day.
WAIST MEASUREMENTS: HOW TO

What’s the best way to measure your waist? Well, it’s with a good old fashioned fabric tape measure! Using the tape, measure the narrowest part of your waist. This is usually where the natural bend in your torso sits (sometimes referred to as a ‘natural waist’ measurement). Lay the tape flat against your skin, but don’t pull too hard. While the measurement needs to be accurate, the tape shouldn’t be so tight against your skin that you are unable to slip a finger underneath it. This is the sweet spot of waist measurements!

...AND DON’T FORGET THE LENGTH:

When it comes to the length, this is usually the most confusing element of sizing a corset for the first time. We understand the necessity of a correct bust, hip and waist measurement, but how do we make an effective length measurement? Each of our corsets have the bust length detailed in the product description. The best way to get a torso measurement is to simply place a tape measure against your body and measure from above the bust (if an overbust corset) or under (if it’s an underbust) to where your hips sit.

Some corsets are made longer than others, known as ‘longline corsets.’ Longline designs are appealing for some, as they imply that the slimming effect will run longer on the body. However, this is a common misconception, and means that if your body isn’t suited to a longline fit, the corset will fit incorrectly.

As a rule of thumb, if you are 5ft 7" and above, a longline pattern will be better suited to your shape. The flipside of this is that if you are under 5ft 7", your body is better suited to a regular-length corset.

The length of your corset is important for several reasons. The first is your proportions. For example, if you choose an overbust corset, it is designed to cover your bust. It does this by dipping in slightly at the centre to create a cup. If the corset is too long for you, the fit will be too tight around the bust area - it might look a little strange too! Essentially, the fit would be misplaced across the entire length of your torso. Secondly, and very importantly, if the corset runs too long over your hips and hip bones, this could result in the unfortunate predicament of being unable to bend at the hip. Lastly, choosing the wrong size of anything is just plain uncomfortable. This will take away from your enjoyment of wearing a corset and won’t be very fun! You don’t want to risk being unable to sit down, or having your corset ride up into your underarms, or dig into the top of your thighs - remember to double check the length of any corset before taking the plunge!

To sum up, when it comes to both waist and length measurements, don’t be afraid to take some time to ensure your numbers are correct. It will only serve to ensure that you have the best possible corset experience and guarantee great results. A good corset is an investment, and a properly-fitting corset will continue to delight for years to come.
**Binding** - This refers to the material that sits on the top or bottom edge of the corset. Binding provides extra security for the boning (see below), making sure the boning stays in place and doesn't poke out and dig into your skin.

**Boning/bones** - Boning refers to the rigid pieces that slot into the channels to provide the corset with extra structure. The 'bones' keep the shape of the corset and are the key component of waist reduction. In the past, traditional boning was made from whalebone (hence the name), but nowadays high quality corsets usually use steel boning.

**Busk** - The busk is the opening at the front of the corset. Typically this is made from two steel bones (see steel bones below) paired with a row of hooks which allows you to close the corset. A busk isn't a universal feature of a corset, but most styles do include them.

**Channels** - The channels of a corset are what keeps the boning secure and in place. Channels are sewn into the fabric of the corset, into which the boning is inserted. Strong channels ensure the corset keeps its shape and lasts much longer.

**Corset Top** - A corset top is a more contemporary garment, where a corset is typically sewn into a top and is designed to be worn for everyday purposes. Corset tops provide great shaping for everyday use and ensure maximum comfort.

**Grommets** - These are the small metal pieces that are added to the corset to strengthen the lacing holes. This ensures your corset sits flat and neatly once it's all laced up (as opposed to bunching up). Grommets also ensure the corset doesn't rip when the laces are tightened.

**Hip Gores** - These are darts sewn into the hip region of the pattern. A hip gore creates a larger hip measurement than the waist of the corset and is essential for the corset to fit snugly over the hip bones whilst worn tightly around the waist.

**Hip Panels** - A hip panel has the same functionality as the hip gore in that it allows the pattern to fit more comfortably between the waist and the hip. A hip panel is a semi-circular piece of fabric which also creates a little padding over the hip. Hip panels add a contour, resulting in a more profound hip/waist curve. A corset with hip panels is slightly harder to conceal under clothing.

**Lacing** - Lacing refers to the cords that are used to tighten the corset and are essential for achieving waist reduction. Laces are typically placed at the back of a corset, but it can be at the front or both the back and front too. The laces are used to pull the panels of the corset together, to create the shaping effects and an hourglass shape. As laces are usually tightened behind the back, they can be a little tricky to do up to start with, but you can easily master this with a little practice.
Modesty Panel - A panel behind the criss-cross lacing at the back of your corset. As the name suggests, this covers your modesty, however you can easily fold the panel underneath the corset if you would prefer your back to be exposed through the lacing.

Overbust - Overbust corsets support, shape, and lift the bust. They can be worn with a top or on their own. Overbusts run from the hips to the bust.

Shell - The shell is the fabric exterior of the corset. Strong materials and textiles should be used to ensure longevity, such as brocade, satin, and durable and breathable mesh.

Steel Bones - In order to effectively pull in the waist, offer support to the bust, and be as comfortable and durable as possible, a corset with steel boning is ideal. Spiral steel bones are the premier choice for corsetry as they can mould to the body without any resistance. See also boning.

Suspenders - Suspenders help the wearer to attach old-style stockings with minimum fuss, typically arranged on the bottom of the corset.

Sweetheart Bust - A corset top with a sweetheart bust will give you that famed, show-stopping, plunging cleavage. Think of the classic love-heart shaped front, which covers your chest but emphasizes their shape. The alternative is a straight-cut neckline.

Underbust - An underbust corset is a pattern that sits beneath the bust. These corsets allow more flexibility if worn for long periods of time, and are often worn on the outside of outfits as accessories. Similarly however, an underbust corset is often the focal point of a lingerie ensemble. See also overbust.

Waist Training - No two corsets are the same. Given the availability of different styles, there are also a whole host of effects and benefits that corsets can offer the wearer. Some gently reshape the waist, some are fashionable outerwear, and some offer some radical reshaping: waist training corsets. Waist training does work, but it is a form of body modification so we always recommend that you get advice from a medical expert before beginning.

Waspie - A waspie is a shorter corset, sometimes referred to as ‘waist cinchers’ or ‘belt corsets.’ These sit around the waist, hence the ‘belt’ association. Waspies can be worn underneath the clothing, but in recent years there are several waspie designs that can be worn over clothes as a fashion statement.

Why We Are the Leading Brand

At Corset Story, we’ve been proudly designing and selling corsets for years. This article takes a look at what goes on behind the scenes at Corset Story, and what the driving ethos is for us as a company. As a leading brand, we ship worldwide (as well as offering worldwide returns) and 80% of our customer-base are international. For us, making corsets available to our customers is much more than just a business. It’s embracing a timeless style, striving to do it justice, and continuously reinventing it in line with contemporary fashion. When you choose Corset Story, you can rest assured you are choosing the very best in corsetry.

We try to find the balance between being product led and marketing led. It is important for us to be in a continual dialogue with our customers. This is key in finding out how we can improve our designs and service. We understand that our customers, as people, are always changing and evolving. It is paramount that Corset Story reflects this, which is why it’s so crucial that we never hit pause when it comes to interacting with those who buy or are interested in buying our corsets.

We aim to create garments which we hope will be popular, but at
the same time we are not afraid to take design risks and create garments which are truly one-of-a-kind and world firsts. Look no further than our corset shirt and jacket ranges, which were both a labour of love and a desire to ensure the legacy of corsetry thrives in the world of contemporary fashion. When we begin brainstorming new ideas and designs, we do so without any real idea of whether or not a market exists for these garments. For us, we make them because we are fascinated by what is possible in the world of corsets. This is what makes us one of the leading design-led brands — we design corsets with no limitations in place, and then we try to work out how our production lines would actually make these designs and bring them to life. This is in contrast to solely designing production-defined designs, which at face value are much easier to produce, but that simply doesn’t capture the Corset Story ethos.

MARKET LEADERS

At Corset Story, we are proud to be the market leaders. The current corset market is quite small, made up of a clutch of brands. Thanks to our fearless designs, we are the innovators. In recent years, a small percentage of other brands in our market have attempted to copy what we are doing. This is done by lifting images from our website to appeal to the customer, but ultimately selling an inferior version of our designs. These companies can only poorly replicate sections of our catalogue, and do not come close to our high quality production or accomplished customer service. We’re aware that this happens, and although it is unfortunate (everybody loses out with fake designs), we are in confirmation that we’re driving the corset market in the right direction.

Over the years, we have developed dedicated production lines. We invest heavily in our tailors, many of which have been working with us since we formed the company over 10 years ago. Our tailors are one of our greatest assets, as we are so in the knowledge that we’re continually producing high quality work. Corsetry demands attention to detail, meticulous planning, and an enthusiastic and skilled set of tailors to make things happen. We decided in the earliest stages of founding Corset Story that we didn’t want to buy garments from overseas factories, which can be the practice for other corset brands. From the get-go we wanted to be involved in designing, developing and producing our corsets, overseeing the process from the spark of an idea to its physical completion.

For us, the dream is simple, but big. We believe that if you see a design on our website, and you want it, then it should be available in your size. We understand that quality takes time. We’re working towards ensuring all of our new corset patterns are extra comfortable and easy to put on and take off by yourself, as well as looking absolutely gorgeous. Our new patterns will be available in three shapes (bodysuit, straight and pear) and three lengths (longline, regular and petite). It’s our aim to make every corset listed on our website available in these different combinations. This isn’t an overnight process, but it’s one that we’re committed to seeing through as we want corsetry to be easily available to everyone. And if our customers can’t find their perfect size on the website, we ensure that there will be the option to pre-order and have the item custom-made to their size. There’s no automated service or processes at Corset Story; just humans who want to share the joy of corsetry.

As part of our ongoing research, we know that our customers are interested in sourcing full outfits that will match their desired corsets. We are currently investing in developing all new, non-corset garments so that you will be able to put together and buy complete outfits — lingerie and beyond. Using our ‘Shop the Look’ feature, you can easily find matching pieces, making it effortless to put together a truly dreamy ensemble. We strive to make our collections as affordable and accessible as possible, as we want everyone to experience the sensation of feeling irresistible.

Personally, we believe that there is a corset for everyone. But we have no intention of using slick marketing messages to convince you to try our corsets, or otherwise invest in something you’re not absolutely certain about. Instead, we are going to continue to invest in developing more comfortable, more desirable and more practical corsets which fit in with your lifestyle as seamlessly as possible. On our website, we make sure each corset comes with an in-depth detailed profile to help you make the perfect choice, including:

- A waist reduction guide advising you on how many inches reduction you can expect. Look out for the golden badge that signifies it’s an ultimate waist reduction corset.
- A disguise rating, letting you know how visible your corset will be underneath clothing. We offer styles that can be worn as underwear or outerwear, so you’ll be spoiled for choice.
- A comfort rating, informing you of the outer material used, how adjustable the corset is, and the type of lacing the corset boasts.

In short, it’s important to us that our customers fully understand what they’re spending their hard-earned money on. That’s why you’ll also find all you need to know to begin making an informed choice on owning a corset on our website, from design ideas to caring for your corset, to information on safety and health concerns. Corsetry is fun, beautiful, and the seemingly endless range of designs can make owning a corset a wonderful experience to have time and time again.
HOW TO STYLE A CORSET

There’s a common misconception that corsets belong exclusively to the realm of lingerie, or that corsets carry implications of being ‘skimpy’ or ‘revealing’. While it is entirely possible to find corsets that are these things, the world of contemporary corsets have a wealth of styling options, with something for every taste.

Corsets act as a versatile, yet functional, top-half. A corset can give you the best of both worlds: corsets made with shiny, luxurious fabrics can be dressed up in no time at all to create glamorous looks for special occasions. A lot of our customers opt for a corset to complete an extra-special piece of occasion-wear. On the other hand, if you’re looking to dress down a corset, this can sometimes feel a bit more of a task. We are so used to equating corsetry with decadence and more formal styles that it can take some readjusting to see corsets through the lens of modern fashion!

A corset is a feminine and intricate garment. It has its own paneled structure, including a corset busk and modesty panel, finished with criss-cross lacing. These elements are themselves eye-catching and elegant. Further, a corset oozes personality and craftsmanship, even when finished in more muted fabrics. This makes creating outfits much easier, as a block colour corset can be paired with almost anything.

For example, you could pair a block colour corset with shorts (in the spring and summer), contrasting prints on a skirt, or a pair of jeans for a more relaxed look. Our pastel-coloured corset tops work especially...
“you could pair a block colour corset with shorts (in the spring and summer), contrasting prints on a skirt, or a pair of jeans for a more relaxed look. Our pastel-coloured corset tops work especially well with jeans.”

well with jeans. For a more dressy feel, a skirt does wonders. The corset remains a statement piece, whatever you choose to pair it with.

We understand that not all of our customers may feel comfortable wearing only an overbust corset as a top, as this leaves the neck area and upper arms bare. With this in mind, we’ve created a range of corsets that have shoulder straps and sleeves to ‘break up’ this area and which have the appearance of a complete top - while still being a beautiful corset, of course! You could also consider styling an overbust corset with a blouse underneath, which would cover the arms and chest, but also make for a show-stopping look.

A blouse isn’t the only solution to creating greater coverage when wearing a corset. In addition, you could also consider styling a corset of your choice with a cropped cardigan, cape, shrug, bolero or even a short jacket. Sometimes a little layering is all you need to feel confident and comfortable with your style, and layers make all corset styles accessible to everyone.

At Corset Story, we also have a range of ‘full coverage’ corsets, which include corset shirts, blouses and dresses. Essentially, these are gorgeous fashion pieces with a corset sewn-in to the garment. They can be paired with suits, skirts, or trousers in a number of settings: work, as formal wear, for events, and for day-to-day wear. We have everything from relaxed, summer prints to more formal finishes, so you’re bound to find something you love.

Another well-loved trick is using an underbust or waspie corset as an accessory or belt to liven up an outfit. This particular style has seen a revival in the past year, with celebrities such as Kylie Jenner and the Hadid sisters choosing to layer a corset over a dress, shirt, or t-shirt for a glamorous look. We have plenty of smaller corsets that are perfect for this, and it’s also a fantastic way to ease yourself into the wonderful world of corsetry. This is a style that comes into fashion time and time again, and for good reason - it’s a great way to express yourself and help create a stunning silhouette.

We love to share the joys of corsetry at Corset Story, which is why we strive to make our pieces as inclusive as possible. It’s easy to make a corset not only look stylish, but in a way that matches your personality and reflects your tastes. Our product pictures and descriptions are a great place to start for inspiration! It’s all about feeling confident in your own skin, setting your own boundaries and following what feels best for you as an individual.
whot's the difference?

It would be true to say that it is not only the corset that has survived throughout several centuries, but also the effect of a corset. Waist training and waist reduction have been on the periphery as long as modern fashion has existed. And as is always the case with fashion, certain trends ebb and flow, coming back time and time again.

Kim Kardashian West has heralded the resurgence of shapewear in recent years, including releasing her own range in 2019. Does this spell the end of corsets? For those in the know and who have extensive experience with all kinds of shapewear, the answer is: No. The corset has been around for centuries, and for good reason: there is still nothing else quite like it when it comes to waist and figure enhancement.

WHAT IS WAIST TRAINING AND MODERN SHAPEWEAR?

There is no medical or scientific definition of what ‘waist training’ constitutes, despite it being a practice that has thrived for decades. In very short terms, waist training is the act of ‘training’ the waist. Training in this sense means gradually slimming the waist, usually with the aid of a piece of clothing designed for this purpose.

There’s a reason that corsets are not shapewear and vice versa - they are actually two very different things! Shapewear can come in many forms, from waist trainers to bodysuits, to control top tights. If you look up ‘waist training’ online, a corset is unlikely to be the first result that pops up. There is a specific piece of clothing known as a ‘waist trainer’ that sits around the waist, like a belt. This is the type of shapewear that Kim Kardashian

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has popularised. Some people opt for waist trainers to wear for support while exercising — exercising while wearing a corset is something we do not recommend!

Waist trainers are usually made of some form of latex or rubber. These are non-breathable materials, and have been known to cause skin irritation when worn for longer periods of time. They may give the wearer the temporary illusion of a slimmer tummy, but this is often at the expense of other body parts, or the 'fat' may be displaced elsewhere, such as at the top of the waist trainer or underneath.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? WHY DOES IT MATTER?

A 'waist trainer' can actually have lots of different names: a cincher, a belt, or simply referred to as 'shapewear' in general. Waist trainers and shapewear can be used to cinch the waist by one or two inches, but ultimately this is an artificial and short-term solution. This isn't necessarily a bad thing if you're looking to slim down momentarily to fit into a piece of clothing. But for those seeking longer-term results, a waist trainer isn't likely to fit the bill.

A corset is a much more efficient and reliable option for effectively reducing waist size. Traditional and best, corsets make use of steel bones (that's what makes them so strong and substantial!) and breathable fabrics, such as cotton, to create an adjustable and comfortable route to waist reduction. Corsets give a much firmer fit and give the wearer enhanced control over their waist and silhouette. Many wearers say this gives them more confidence as they can rest easy knowing that their corset won't result in any uncomfortable overspilling, or 'squished' feeling. A further benefit of a corset is that they can be tightened, meaning that it's easier to fit your corset around your true shape. If you were to lose weight, you may find yourself lacing the corset up more tightly, and vice versa if you were to put on some weight. This is part of the reasons why a corset tends to stay with its wearer for a very long time!

There are other benefits from choosing a classic corset over stretchy shapewear. These include better posture, improved confidence (it's not so indulgent to wear such a beautiful item of clothing, even if it's just sitting pretty under your clothes!) and the breadth of styling options. Corsets don't have to be hidden away under clothing. Nowadays, there are a range of styles that are available that integrate corsets into their designs. For example, Corset Story have created a range of everyday corset looks, from dresses to shirts, all designed to bring out the beauty of corsetry in contemporary fashion. Our fantastic selection offers the perfect pieces for absolute beginners and seasoned corset-wearers alike to get the most out of waist reduction.

Of course, a corset is considered a more luxurious item and therefore is often more costly than modern shapewear options. However, this is because corsets are made from flexible fabric (such as cotton, satin or leather) and reinforced with steel boning. These materials can be more expensive to produce, but last infinitely longer and are altogether more supportive of the waist area.

The age-old maxim that you get what you pay for rings especially true for good corsetry. It's wise to consider a decent, good-fitting corset an investment piece: when cared for and looked after, it will be your waist-slimming companion for many years to come.

There are upsides to modern shapewear too, of course! They are often much easier to clean than their corset-counterparts, and are easier to put on and take off. It's important that you really consider what it is that you're looking for in a waist training garment, and weigh up the pros and cons of each.

THE VERDICT

If you are serious about waist training, there's really no competition when it comes to the corset. When worn properly over time, corsets will slowly pull in your waistline (some have likened the process to teeth being straightened by braces), rather than holding everything in all at once with a waist trainer. It can help to think of it as a natural, results-driven process vs a quick-fix solution.

We deal in honesty here at Corset Story. Waist reduction and training does not happen overnight. A solid-fitting corset can be a comfortable way to reduce your waist size by up to two or three inches. While corsets can also be used to reduce waist size by four or five inches, we do not advise this. Waist size reduction through corsets works in part by applying pressure to the stomach, thus reducing your appetite. It's therefore essential to be informed as possible before embarking on your waist reduction journey. For more permanent results, there's no better pathway than a healthy diet and regular exercise combined with wearing a well-fitting corset.

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HOW TO

PICK the PERFECT CORSET

Nowadays, there are so many different types of corsets on offer, embarking on your corset buying journey may seem like a daunting task. A cursory glance at Corset Story’s website reveals just how many occasions and styles are available in the world of corsets. But don’t feel intimidated! Even the most seasoned corset-wearers take stock and consider their next corset purchase carefully. As you likely already know, a corset is an investment piece, so it pays (in every sense of the word) to do your research to ensure that you secure a corset that is perfect for you. Here are some questions to have a think about, whether you’re making your first corset purchase or your fifth.

WHAT SIZE AM I?

First things first, it’s absolutely essential that your waist measurement is as accurate as possible. Measure it a few times, just to be sure, and no breathing in! To really get the most out of your corset, it has to be as comfortable as possible. Don’t worry about trying to make your waist seem smaller than it is - that is the job of a corset, after all! Getting your waist measurement correct determines the effectiveness of the corset. A good corset won’t leave you with any unsightly bumps or bulges, and above all it should support you without squashing you.

It is typically the case that a steel boned corset will be four inches less than the wearer’s natural waist size. This means that if you are naturally a 28-inch waist, a 24-inch corset would be suitable. The exception to this rule for Corset Story is our Instant Shape range, which are available in dress sizes. Dress sizes do vary remarkably between brands so we recommend that you check your waist measurement against our size guide even when purchasing an Instant Shape corset.

WHERE AND HOW DO I WANT TO WEAR THIS CORSET?

If you’re looking for the best variety of styles and design of corsets, you have come to the right place! At Corset Story, we’ve carefully curated a gorgeous range of corsets for almost every occasion. We have pretty and daring pieces for behind closed doors and vivid and exciting designs to delight as formalwear - these corsets are designed to be worn loud and proud! We’ve even built-in our well-loved corsets into shirts and dresses, which are perfect for spicing up your workwear wardrobe or having...
"We live by the belief that there’s a corset out there for everybody, no matter their tastes and preferences, and we strive to have our collections reflect this."

All eyes on you at a party or event. We live by the belief that there’s a corset out there for everybody, no matter their tastes and preferences, and we strive to have our collections reflect this. Corsets are extremely versatile and have been for centuries. They are used for waist reduction, worn as outerwear and underwear, and well loved by ladies who love to dress up. The important thing is to have fun and feel great!

If you’re looking for a corset for a more functional purpose, our range of underbusts in neutrals and lighter colours are more comfortable for longer periods of wear. We also have specialised corsets that are perfect for brides-to-be, and a range of seasonal corsets for special occasions, like Valentine’s Day and Christmas. In short, you’ll be spoiled for choice!

What type of corset am I looking for?

As well as a number of styles of corset, there are a number of different corset types. For example, underbust and overbust corsets. As the name suggests, an underbust sits underneath the bust, pulling in and drawing all of the focus upon the waist. You can wear your own bra with an underbust corset. An overbust, on the other hand, also provides bust support. It could be said that an overbust is more of a statement piece. Of course, they can be worn underneath clothing, but aren’t as easy to disguise as an underbust. Equally however, it is not uncommon to wear an underbust corset over clothing as a fashion statement. If your bra cup size is DD or greater, you might like the extra support provided by an overbust. An underbust corset classically would be more practical for wearing on a day to day basis. Underbusts are not as heavy as their overbust counterparts and allow a little more flexibility.

You’ll also want to think about the length of the corset. At Corset Story, we provide regular length and longline corsets. It’s a good idea to measure the length of your torso when you take a waist measurement - sometimes this element is neglected when buying a corset! Our longline underbust corsets accentuate the waist and work fantastically for longer torsos.

For how long do I want to wear this corset?

As with any clothing purchase, perhaps even more so with corsets, comfort is always a factor that should be taken into account. As we’ve already stressed, making sure your measurements are as accurate as possible is the first step in corset comfort.

It may be surprising, but a corset constructed from a good pattern and materials is more comfortable than you may realise! Wearing one for the first time can be a new sensation but lots of our customers quickly relate to this feeling. In fact, we often receive feedback about how supported and confident our customers feel when wearing...
we only produce corsets using the highest quality materials - our customers’ satisfaction, comfort, and experience is paramount to us.

our corsets!

Regardless of the finishing fabric used in corsets (such as satin or cotton), a good corset should always have a breathable twill lining. This is the fabric that will be against your skin while wearing your corset (unless you’re wearing it over another item of clothing). For added comfort on our Waist Taming and Expert Waist Training corsets, you will also find the additional “Hip Gores” or “Hip Panels.” Gores and Panels are two different solutions to ensure additional flair at the bottom of your corset, and gives the corset more room to fit comfortably over the top of the hips.

WHAT EFFECT DO I WANT FROM MY CORSET?

Lastly, it’s a good idea to consider what you want your body to look like when you wear your corset. For example, if you’re considering waist training, we have a specialised range of Waist Training corsets that have a more accentuated effect than our standard corset range. We recommend that you consult with your medical specialist before undertaking any kind of waist training, as health always comes first.

If you’re looking for more subtle (but still very effective!) silhouette enhancement, our Instant Shape range offers a fantastic selection of contemporary corset tops, dresses, and corsets that look gorgeous when paired with jackets or your own shirt or blouse.

A FINAL TIP...

Buying a corset is a fun and exciting purchase. A good, well-made corset can be a companion for life. It may be tempting to shop around for a bargain, but we advise against this. A solid corset will be made of strong, sturdy fabrics and ideally use multiple layers of fusing to ensure strength. They will use spiral steel boning, which allows the corset to mould around your body, regardless of your shape. A good corset will also come with a modesty panel, which will allow you to hide or show off your back as you wish. If you’re in a pinch, our advice is to check out the Corset Story Sale section (find this under ‘Offers’ on our website), sign up to our newsletter, or follow us on Facebook to get access to Corset of the Day deals as they happen. Above all, while we hope you’ll love your new corset, we offer free returns so you’re always in good hands. So there you have it! Good luck on your corset journey, no matter what stage you are at. A great corset doesn’t just give you a more flattering outline: it boosts confidence, adds a flair of the dramatic, and improves posture. Go forth and enjoy!