

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Fashion Designers Ignoring Shapes of Women's Bodies, Study Finds**

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Women who succeed in their New Year's resolutions to lose weight still might not fit into that new dress.

That's because fashion designers continue to make clothes based on the traditional hourglass figure despite the fact that most women's figures are either rectangular or pear shaped.

A study conducted by a faculty member in North Carolina State University's College of Textiles reveals that only 8 percent of women actually have hourglass figures. Most clothing manufacturers, however, continue to make clothes designed to fit the hourglass shape, which was popularized by 1950s film stars such as Marilyn Monroe and Jayne Mansfield.

"Companies are recognizing that there's an issue," says Dr. Cindy Istook, the study's lead researcher and an associate professor of textile and apparel technology and management at NC State. "They just haven't changed their sizing system to demonstrate it."

Based on an analysis of the body types of more than 6,300 women, Istook identified seven general categories of body shapes for women. They are the rectangle, the spoon, the triangle, the inverted triangle, the hourglass, the bottom hourglass and the top hourglass.

Approximately 46 percent of women were classified as rectangular, in which the bust and the hips are generally the same size, and the waist is less than nine inches smaller than the hips or the bust.

A little more than 20 percent of women possessed the spoon or pear shape, which is marked by a hip measurement that is at least two inches larger than the bust.

Nearly 14 percent were inverted triangles, meaning their busts were three or more inches larger than their hips.

The hourglass shape, which features bust and hip measurements that are nearly equal along with a narrow waist, comprised 8 percent of those body shapes analyzed.

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Istook hopes the results of the survey will lead to a change in the clothing industry, in which manufacturers will begin producing clothing that conforms to the shapes of women's bodies.

“What we're trying to do now is get manufacturers and retailers to understand the idea that people really are different shapes,” Istook says. “If we can serve the top four groups, we would have almost 90 percent of the market covered. Right now, the industry is serving less than 90 percent because of the sizing system that's based on the hourglass.”

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