



GYM-STYLE FIXES

FOUND!

Wearing the correct workout kit not only makes you feel good in the gym, it also boosts your motivation, making you perform better

words Joanna Ebsworth

Don't underestimate the power of your gym kit. Aside from enhancing your performance, it can also boost your motivation, with research from the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* showing that putting on new fitness gear can help you 'get into character', allowing you to feel more mentally prepared for your workout, so increasing focus and energy.

When it comes to stylish fit kit, we've never had so much choice. However, it's easy to get it wrong – choose the incorrect fit and you can spend more time adjusting your clothing than exercising. Sounds trivial, but a new US study reveals that 65 per cent of US women avoid the gym over anxiety of being judged, and 49 per cent say they feel scrutinised for their choice of workout clothing. So, we reveal the worst workout wardrobe malfunctions and the styling secrets that banish them for good.

GET SOME SUPPORT

FASHION FAIL

Quad boobs, roaming breasts and back fat spillage aren't the only problems you face when wearing an ill-fitting sports bra. Research shows a lack of breast support can lead to pain in your neck, back and shoulders, and cause changes to the body including deep grooves in your shoulders, bad posture, skin abrasions and permanent damage to the Cooper's ligaments (the connective tissue that keeps your boobs perky). Worst of all, one study revealed one in five women are put off from regular workouts due to pain and embarrassment caused by their breasts, sacrificing their fitness along the way. And that's the biggest no-no of all.

FASHION FIX

Know you've heard it before but recent research shows 80 per cent of women are *still* wearing the wrong size bra, meaning lots of you aren't getting professionally measured to find the right fit. So invest in your health and get fitted properly! Once you know your correct size, select a sports bra that matches the intensity-level of your workouts. If in doubt, plump for a high-intensity bra to support your assets at all times. Finally, keep in mind that no two pairs of boobs are the same. Online sports bra retailer, boobydoo has created a handy guide to help you work out your breast shape from nine varieties – shapes include East West Breasts, Side Set Breasts, Tear Drop Breasts and Athletic Breasts – and suggests the best bras for your shape (see boobydoo.co.uk/breast-shape-guide). Once you've worked out your breast type, you'll easily find a sports bra that's both supportive and super comfy.

THE BEST BRA FOR
YOUR BOOBS
Find the right support for your shape with
boobydoo's best bra suggestions



Athletic Breasts

These breasts tend to be wider and muscular, with athletically shaped breast tissue.

- Avoid underwired sports bras as they can sit wrongly on your breast tissue. Compression styles are wire-free with great support, such as Shock Absorber's Active Multi Sports Support Bra, £38.



Tear Drop Breasts

Round but with less volume at the top, your nipples tend to be set in the middle or facing upwards.

- Choose underwired styles, such as the Freya Active Epic Underwired Moulded Crop Top Sports Bra, £42, to give you more support at the bottom of the breast, where it's fuller.



East West Breasts

They gravitate to either side of your chest, with your nipples pointing outwards instead of to the front. Most common in A-C cups.

- Try padded bras, such as the Brooks Juno Sports Bra, £50, to help gather your breast tissue to the front.

CONCEAL CAMEL TOE

FASHION FAIL

Whatever you want to call it (crotch cleavage, anyone?), that moment when you look in the gym floor mirror and catch sight of a camel toe drawing everyone's eyes to your lady parts is never fun. Not that there's anything wrong with showing a camel toe in leggings, it's perfectly natural. But that doesn't change the fact that most of us still feel terribly self-conscious when our vaginas decide to eat our clothing – and when did feeling exposed or embarrassed ever enhance anyone's performance?

FASHION FIX

Google 'how to hide camel toe in leggings', and all sorts of solutions come up, including wearing pantyliners to smooth out your pubic area, and stuffing 'camel toe guards' down your knickers (yes, they exist). But there are simpler alternatives. First, always wear underwear. You might like the freedom of 'going commando', but it's a sure-fire way to put your bodily features on display as there is less of a barrier between your leggings and body (if you're worried about VPL, try a seamless thong such as Victoria's Secret No Show Thong, £9; victoriasecret.com).

Next, choose thicker, heavier fabrics, as they'll be more likely to stretch over your crotch area, as opposed to thinner fabrics which can get pulled into the creases of your body. Super-tight leggings can also create a disaster zone down there: think about sizing up so you're not constantly tugging at your leggings, causing them to get trapped where they shouldn't.

Finally, eschew all leggings that have front rise seams running vertically through the centre of the crotch, creating tension and cutting you in half. Look for leggings that have flat front panels with U-shaped inseams or a crotch gusset (a triangular-shaped piece of cloth sewn in where all the seams would normally meet between your legs). Not only do these seams withstand the pressure of being pulled in all directions – so your leggings will last longer – but you'll also never have to endure a camel toe again.

3 OF THE BEST CAMEL TOE-FREE LEGGINGS



ILU Fitwear (ilufitwear.com) has nailed the 'flat front panel' leggings market, currently offering 10 designs in different colours and patterns, including these Vitality Leggings, £52.

Lululemon's All the Right Places Crop II Leggings, (£108; lululemon.co.uk) are so-called for a very good reason and are adored by gym fashionistas around the world for their camel toe-fighting properties.



These Lucus Hugh Technical Knit 7/8 Leggings (£70; lucashugh.com) have a flat front panel combined with a crotch gusset for an amazing four-way stretch.



Silou London offers an über-stylish range of front seam-free leggings and unitards to keep you covered from all angles (siloulondon.com)

3 OF THE BEST ONE-PIECES



Gym girls will love UA's Always On Bodysuit (£65; underarmour.co.uk) for its silky performance fabric featuring four-way stretch and moisture-wicking properties. The deep zip also makes it easy to get on and off.



With its comfortable, functional, elegant fit and super-soft technical compression fabric that stretches with your every move, this Silou London Ella Unitard (£239; siloulondon.com) is perfect for spinning.



Asquith's Reflect Jumpsuit (£89; asquithlondon.com) is made from super-soft bamboo fabric and designed to be seen in and out of the gym, seamlessly taking you from yoga classes to afternoon glasses!

BANISH BUILDER'S BUM

FASHION FAIL

You've just flowed from inverted Downward dog to standing Mountain pose – or finished 12 reps of the deepest squats – only to realise you've flashed the intimate details of your derriere to the entire yoga class/gym floor/park.

FASHION FIX

If you don't want to lose the bottom-half of your clothing while bending forwards, there is a simple solution: ditch two-piece outfits for the latest one-piece catsuits and unitards. No longer the uniform of dancers, gymnasts and comic book characters, bodysuits are now de rigueur for elite sportswomen, not just

for their style credentials, but for their performance benefits too, as many are made from supportive, compression fabrics to keep the blood flowing and aid recovery.

Think you'll feel a bit exposed in a catsuit? Not to worry. First off, remember that one-pieces often smooth out any unwanted lumps and bumps because they don't have waistbands that can create bulges. And second, they look amazing layered under loose vests and t-shirts so you can still stay covered up. You might need to visit the loo before jumping into your, ahem, jumpsuit prior to class, but you'll never have to worry about inappropriately flashing the flesh again.

Going commando is a sure-fire way to put your bodily features on display



FLATTER YOUR BELLY

FASHION FAIL

You're stuck in the 1990s and still favouring low-rise, abs-baring waistlines, but your belly likes to escape over the top of your waistband.

FASHION FIX

My advice falls into two camps. If you're up for flaunting your wobbly bits without a care, find a pair of the lowest-rise leggings and shake it like you're Taylor Swift. If, however, you feel shy about your tummy and prefer to keep it covered up, invest in a pair of high-waisted leggings. The benefits aren't just aesthetic – although they smooth out your silhouette, elongate your legs and suck you in at all the right places – they're performance enhancing, too. Wider, higher waistbands always stay in place whether you're on the bike, in Pilates or doing a boxing class, so you never have to pause your workout to pull up your pants, making them both flattering and functional. I'd call that a win-win.

High-waisted leggings smooth out your silhouette, elongate your legs and suck you in at all the right places

3 OF THE BEST HIGH-RISE LEGGINGS



A pioneer of high-waisted leggings, Gymshark offers a huge range of bottoms in multiple styles and colours, including these Energy+ Seamless Leggings (£45; uk.gymshark.com) which have a super-high ribbed waistband.



Bellum Active's Teal Leopard Leggings (£55; bellumactive.co.uk) are made of technical, stretchy fabric to sculpt your bum and legs. They also have a wide, high waist to ensure a secure fit.



evveervital's Leap It Leggings (£68; evveervital.com) offer breathability and compression with a perforation design to make you stand out from the crowd.



3 OF THE BEST STAY-COOL KIT



Crafted from breathable fabric and a touch of mesh, this NikeCourt Dri-FIT Maria Tennis Dress, (£89.95; nike.com) will help you stay cool on and off the court.



Lululemon's Cardio Cross Trainer Headband (£10; lululemon.co.uk) is made with 'anti-stink' Silverescent technology to inhibit the growth of odour-causing bacteria.



The fibres of Stance Women's FEEL360 Train Tab 3 pack of socks (£24.99; stance.eu.com) are treated to create a totally dry and comfortable training experience. They also have a seamless toe closure to reduce chaffing.

SAY 'SO-LONG' TO SWEAT

FASHION FAIL

The girl next to you on the treadmill is barely perspiring while you're soaking. And when you finish your workout, you look as if you've taken a shower – without taking off your kit first.

FASHION FIX

There's nothing wrong with getting sweaty. Not only is it a great sign that you're working at a good intensity during workouts, but it's also very liberating and satisfying. But damp gym kit can leave you feeling uncomfortable, embarrassed and open to skin irritations, including chafing, that can impede exercise. So look for moisture-wicking fabrics that

move the sweat from your skin to the surface of the fabric, and allow it to evaporate. Many gym brands have their own name for this but they all regulate your temperature. Damp hair sticking to your sweaty neck/forehead/face/eyelids can put a wrench on your workouts, especially if you have a fringe so go for a headband. I love Lululemon's sweat-wicking Cardio Cross Trainer Headbands (right). Finally, your feet bathe in up to a pint of sweat (each!) when you exercise so always wear socks to protect them from rubbing which can lead to blisters. Look for hi-tech, breathable styles with sweat-soaking properties to keep your feet fresh, comfy and dry.