

Earrings do much more than simply adorn your ears—so much in fact that we place them at the top of the hierarchy of jewelry every woman should own.

Well-chosen earrings can dangle seductively, communicate playfulness, or convey authority. They complete an ensemble. They can create a visual diversion. And with an up-do, they are practically a necessity. Most important, earrings draw attention to the face.

Whatever your style and personality, and whatever the occasion, whether you have short hair or long, and yes, even if you regularly wear glasses, there are earrings that will flatter your face.

HOW TO CHOOSE EARRINGS THAT FLATTER YOU

Consider Your Ears: Have you ever really looked at the size and shape of your ears? Chances are, unless there is something about your ears that you specifically don't like, you've never given them much thought. Ears can be large or small, relative to the size of your head and facial features. They can be prominently set at an angle, or they can unobtrusively lie flat against the side of your head. The tops of the ears can start high on the sides of the face, or low. And earlobes can range from large to nonexistent. All of these variations should be considered when selecting earrings that are right for you.



Savvy Tip

Small details on larger earrings can bring out delicate facial features and still flatter larger ears and earlobes.

If you love the appearance of your ears, try pierced clip-back or shepherd's hook earrings (see pages 22-23), which completely expose and therefore highlight beautifully shaped ears. Be careful about scale, however. As a general rule, delicate wires or shepherd's hooks look best on smaller ears. For larger ears we recommend a heavier shepherd's hook, or earrings that cover the earlobe.

If you dislike the appearance of your ears, perhaps you've decided that earrings are not for you. This need not be the case. Seek styles that completely cover the earlobes, such as button shapes or other large designs.

If your ears are prominent and protrude, rather than lie flat against your head, try earrings with some width rather than narrow linear designs.

The illustration top right shows doorknocker earrings that have some width, as compared with narrower, more linear earrings shown below.



Asymmetrical Ears

Most of us have some asymmetry in our ears, but unless the bottoms of the ears are at significantly different heights, it is unnoticeable, and therefore does not affect jewelry choice.

If the bottoms of your ears are at noticeably different heights, we recommend making this asymmetry a signature of your style. Consider wearing two markedly different earrings or wearing two earrings in one ear and one in the other.

Incidentally, sometimes the placement of the holes in your earlobes causes earrings to hang at different heights. An experienced piercer should be able to place the holes at equal heights. However, if you are unhappy with the placement of your piercing holes, consider letting one or both of them close up and having your ears re-pierced.

Consider the Shape of Your Face: Understanding how earrings work with the shape of your face is key. (We discuss face shape at length in Chapter 9, and we urge you to take a moment to learn how to assess the shape of your face.) Basically, earrings that repeat the overall shape of your face bring emphasis to its shape. Most fashion books will advise you to camouflage elements of your face that deviate from the oval shape, but we say whether to accentuate or downplay the shape of your face is entirely your choice.



In this illustration, the square earrings with strongly angular motifs repeat and therefore highlight the strong square jawline of the model. The oval earrings shown to the right have the effect of softening the angular lines of her bone structure.

Savvy Tip

Stud earrings are attractive on just about everyone because they do not detract from the natural shape of the ear. As a general rule of thumb, the size of the stud should relate to the size of the earlobe: tiny studs on delicate ears, larger studs on larger ears.



Two examples of stud earrings.