

The Strategic Placement of Stripes

So often we shy away from stripes because of their reputation for making us look broad and short. That is an unfair stereotype; it's really all about the type and width of stripes and where they are placed. Used strategically, stripes can enhance your figure in a positive way! Here are some general guidelines for different types of stripes.

Solid Horizontal Stripes:



Fibonacci Flip Pullover
Pattern #50506

Offset the stripes on the sleeves from the stripes on the body. That way, the horizontal lines are broken up. The Fibonacci Flip Pullover shows this example.



Broad Stripes Pullover
Pattern in The Knitting Experience, Book 3:
Color #30676

Wide horizontal stripes add visual breadth, so place them where you need them, not where you don't. If you have broad hips, you can balance your hips out by placing broad stripes across your shoulders, thus bringing you into proportion visually. The opposite is also true: if you have broad shoulders or a larger bust, placing stripes at your hip line will visually offset your widest point.



A Worthwhile Investment Vest
Pattern in The Yarn Girl's Guide to Knits for All Seasons #30932

If you're still nervous about using horizontal stripes, vests are a good way to go since leaving off the sleeves keeps the stripes as short as possible.

A final note, narrow solid stripes seem shorter. They can be intermixed with wider solid stripes to visually create an hourglass silhouette even if you aren't curvy. Put the narrow stripes at the waist, and widen the stripes above and below your waist.

Patterned Horizontal Stripes:



Astera Fair Isle Cardigan
Pattern #50588

Patterns within stripes can look like an all-over pattern from a distance and the stripes will lose their abruptness. The Astera Fair Isle sweater is composed of stripes, but you hardly notice because each stripe has a pattern within it.



Fair Isle Sweater
Pattern in Modern Classics #30828

Patterned stripes are so interesting, they draw the eye. You can use them to highlight your best feature. This example shows a strategically placed wide Fair Isle stripe that emphasizes a narrow waist. See how the matching stripes around the sleeves do not line up with the stripe around the body, but rather fall below it? That breaks up the line to keep the focus on the waist.

Vertical Stripes:



Zippy Pullover
Pattern #50587

Vertical stripes do a body good! In the Zippy Pullover, the dark horizontal stripes under the arms become negative space, so the mind's eye doesn't really see them, interpreting the body's width as only the purple section.