

Does my bum look big on TV?



By [Marie Rocher](#)

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The pinnacle of publicity opportunities - being invited to be interviewed on national television, but without doubt, also the most daunting.

On television, there is nowhere to hide. TV reportedly makes us look five kilograms heavier and exposes the blemishes and wrinkles. And there's no editing the bloopers out of a live interview. You could be reduced to a blithering idiot while millions point and laugh. Or you could rise to the occasion and be the confident, articulate expert you are in real life, on the small screen! Here's what I wish I'd known first time around...

Hang on...what's that bit about TV making us look fatter?

Sadly, new research by the UK's [Independent Television Commission](#) has confirmed every TV starlet's worst nightmare - television packs on the pounds, specifically 'chunking up' the neck, jawline and waist. This is attributable to how the human eye perceives images in 2-D, as opposed to 3-D - in other words, the camera does, in fact, lie.

Need I mention HDTV?

Projecting two to five times the resolution of standard television, HDTV magnifies wrinkles, blemishes and creases in glorious technicolor. As if TV presenters didn't have enough to worry about with unnaturally chunky jowls, more mature presenters are being dropped by TV networks, like the BBC, because they look [too wrinkly](#) on HDTV. Bottom line (*errm*) - TV can be less than flattering for seasoned pros, so what hope do the rest of us have to come across even half-decent on camera?

Thankfully, there are workarounds...

Starting with choosing a TV-friendly outfit. Avoid at all costs:

- Black - it reduces definition on-screen, rendering you down to a big black blob on a black chair
- Reds and oranges - they appear to 'glow' on TV
- Patterns and overly bright colours - it causes a phenomenon known in the industry as a moiré... distracting for viewers
- Flashy, jangly jewellery - can be distracting, reflecting light and causing interference with your lapel microphone
- Too baggy clothing - contrary to what you're hoping for, it makes you appear larger than life
- Revealing clothing - the penetrating glare of the TV lights will not do you justice.

If you don't have an appropriate outfit, invest in one. These are good choices to make:

- A well-cut jacket or blazer lends style and structure, instantly slimming and defining the body (and provides a spot for the lapel microphone)
- Plain, neutral colours - blues, greens, greys or earthy tones - will help prevent you from blending into the background and don't have that 'blobbing' quality that black does
- Gentlemen - If you choose to wear a tie, make it a solid shade and make sure it's neatly tied and that your shirt collar isn't too tight. Or lose the tie and leave the top button undone for a more relaxed look.
- Ladies - Pair a plain shirt in a complementary neutral colour with your jacket. A loosely tied scarf can cover a multitude of sins and creates a touch of glam.

- Although only the upper body will be shown on most TV interviews, pay attention to the lower half, as well. If you look good, you feel good, and if you feel good, you'll do well.

But wait, there's more!

- A couple of days before the interview, drink plenty of water - this reduces water retention and properly hydrates your skin
- Get an early night before the big day so you're bright-eyed and bushy-tailed
- TV is no place for a bad hair day, so do book an appointment with your stylist the morning of your interview for a professional blow-dry
- A make-up artist will be appointed to you - they'll put on more makeup than you're probably used to but this is a performance and they know what they're doing, so let them do their thing (gentlemen, this goes for you too).
- Don't slouch in your chair - sit up straight and lean slightly in towards the camera to appear both slimmer and more authoritative and confident.

Bonus tips for your TV takeover

Clothes make the man, or so said Mark Twain. You may look the part, but you need to act the part too. To promote a successful performance, do the following:

- Get all the details upfront - who's doing the interview, where's it taking place, what time's it happening and will it be live or recorded?
- Ask for the interview schedule in advance
- Jot down some facts and figures and think about how you would tell someone who knows nothing about your area of expertise all about it
- Confirm the interview the day before it's due to happen
- Allow plenty of travelling time and get there around half an hour early
- Take a comfort break before you hit the studio
- Listen to the studio engineer's brief and ask questions
- If the feed in your earpiece is too soft or too loud, ask for it to be turned up or down to comfortable levels. Be aware that there's a slight time delay in the feed.
- Blot out all the activity around you and focus in on the camera.
- Keep gestures small and controlled
- Breathe, relax and enjoy!

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