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Sizing creep in pictures – how I stayed in denial

Monday, November 12, 2012

Many Sparkers have commented on the sizing creep of the fashion industry. Since I have “vintage” clothing all the way back to 1959, I just did some in-house research.

Here I am with my 2nd child. I'm very happy to be wearing my SIZE 10 shorts. They have a zipper AND a belt. No elastic waists back then, at least not for me. A side note: The baby is 40 years old now and I'm proud to say she just ran a 3:08 marathon time on Saturday.



Here I am again and smiling because these SIZE 8 shorts are actually loose. They have a zipper and a belt too. I must be doing great, right?

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Let's just compare. I've still got both pair.

Look at the waist.



Look at the hip and thigh close-up.



The inseam of both is exactly the same, but I've got a LOT more room elsewhere.

Using my tape measure, the old 40 year old size 10 allows a 25" waist and 22 inch thigh.
The size 8 (30 years later) allow for a 28.5" waist and 26 inch thighs.

No wonder I still felt like I was doing fine. And I bought cheap clothes! If I bought pricier stuff I would be an even smaller size.

I once met a politician's wife who according to news articles wore a size 4. I asked my doctor. "How can she be a 4 and I'm a 10? I've stood right next to her and she's not smaller than me." He replied that "if you spent \$500 for a dress I'd call you a 4 too."

Member Comments About This Blog Post



WATNEY23

You just cleared up a whole bunch of confusion for me. Thank you.
My favorite pair of jeans that are too snug, are the same numerical size as my newer jeans that are just right or even a little too big. Same brand. Now I get it.

You look great. Good work!
3133 days ago



WATERMELLEN

Metrics are proof, every time.

I'm currently wearing vintage 14s and current 4s, 6s, 8s, 10s -- all with the same size waists. Go figure.

Gotta say, you are looking great!!
3133 days ago



KANSASROSE67

I wore a size 7 prom dress in my junior year (that was 27 years ago). I can now fit into it again but the difference is, in high school I felt fat at size 7 and now I feel skinny at size 7!
3134 days ago



CAKEMAKERMOM

No wonder there is a size 0. Even with the same brand in a 5 year difference, there was a change. I did fit into an 8 about 15 years ago...

Love your comparison!
3135 days ago



CD13136117

Wow - what a difference. Who would have known. Thanks for the research and for sharing!!
Kathy
3135 days ago



BOILHAM

I stopped reading after I saw the pictures. Couldn't concentrate after those. Don't be offended, but you are, as we say, a dish!
I just asked DW about her sizes in HS and now. She's your age. She was a 10 in high school, and now is a 4 or 6. She exactly the same weight as she was 40 years ago.
3135 days ago

Comment edited on: 11/13/2012 8:32:20 AM



SOUTH_FORK

Thanks for the laugh and for the insight. I've been lucky enough to be able to wear some of my great-grandmother's and grandmother's fabulous dresses over the years and can attest that cut and sizing has indeed changed dramatically over the years if those garments are any indication. I'll keep plugging along until I can squeeze into Ms Monroe's wardrobe- hopefully they won't have to sew me in like they did her on occasion. I will still point to Marilyn as evidence of an appreciation for curves though; size 6 or 10, she was still womanly.

Oh, and I agree- you do look great!
3136 days ago

Comment edited on: 11/12/2012 10:16:53 PM



COCK-ROBIN

Thanks for sharing. I'm proud of you!
3136 days ago



COCK-ROBIN

Thanks for sharing. I'm proud of you!
3136 days ago



MARZIPAN22

I enjoyed your blog and the comments Sparkies made, and I agree with Maggie101857 in that my focus is on functional fitness AND I know that as I keep doing the healthy things (tracking food and exercise and challenging myself to more activity) I will regain a reasonable weight. I know that not all people who wear small sizes are actually fit and healthy. Size can not be my measure of where I want to be.



(BTW, you look so great ! Thanks for posting...)
3136 days ago

Comment edited on: 11/12/2012 12:56:01 PM



ROSEWAND

I, too, have clothes that go back a ways. And a pair of size 8 dress pants that i wore in the 80's just fit me now.

Most of the new clothes I have purchased over the last several years, are size 4's. I remember when being a size 10 was awesome and 6's were the skinniest that sizes were.

Size inflation is quite real. Having said all that you look amazingly fit and slender!



Congratulations on your hard work.
3136 days ago



KAYOTIC

Great comparison...
3136 days ago



TINAJANE76

And this is why I can get into today's 8s and 10s! Forty years ago I probably would have been a 12 or 14. I think it's all about vanity and the fashion industry realizing that people like seeing smaller numbers in their clothes. Even in Europe sizes seem to be creeping. I recently went shopping at H&M and had to buy a sweater in a small because it was cut so generously. Believe me, I'm no small! One of the few places that has probably held onto the older sizing charts is the bridal industry. I've always noticed that I go one to two sizes up when I've been fitted for bridesmaids dresses and when I got my wedding dress.

In any case, you look great in both yesterday's 10 and today's 8--healthy, happy and fit!
3136 days ago



MJZHERE

Glad to know I am not the only one with the "vintage" clothing collection lol. Posted not long ago how I am wearing size 4's now (current from the store) as well as size 14 skirts that I can now fit back into from my teaching day (over 20 years ago). Back then I was also trying to lose a few pounds and wished I wasn't so "big," - at least now I'm fine with my size at 128 (though it did take about a month of me saying to myself that I looked good at this size).
3136 days ago



MISCHAKEO

Interesting about the fashion industry making clothes bigger but keeping the size number the same. It is the same as the text book companies making the material easier and below grade level as kids are reading at lower levels.

No matter what..enjoy your clothes!
3136 days ago



SUZYMOBILE

How great is that, to have proof of size creep! You do look great in both pictures, and those 1972 shorts are still very cool!

I do a lot of my shopping at thrift shops and Goodwill, so my sizes are all over the place. I have no idea what size I really am any more, if there even is such a thing. I can just tell, when I pick up a pair of jeans or shorts out of a yard sale pile, whether they're going to fit or not.
3136 days ago



NYS_EMT

Wow! I knew this had happened with clothes, but it's nice to see a visual! I can walk into just about any store and pick a 14 off the rack and it will fit. But I have some jeans that are several years old that are 14s and 16s... once I got into a 14, I was excited to try them again. Guess what... didn't fit! Not even close! So by years ago standards, I am probably an 18 or 20!!!! CRAZY!

Thanks for sharing!!!
3136 days ago



CAROLCRC

I recently cleaned out my t-shirt collection... my 25-year-old size medium was more than 5 inches smaller in the chest than a new size medium! Overweight is becoming the new normal, and the clothes are reflecting it.

I agree - you look fantastic and slim in both pictures!
3136 days ago





CD4382497



blog!

Thans for sharing!
3136 days ago



WILSONWR



That was a real eye opener for me! I guess that is the new "normal" you talked about a week or so ago.

Glad you can still fit into those clothes - I'm not even close to there yet...
3136 days ago



CD11026554



Interesting blog! I've noticed a huge difference in sizing depending on which country you live in too - I suspect Belgium is still using the 1960's sizings as I need clothes at least one size (sometimes 2) larger than when I buy in the UK!
3136 days ago



FITFOODIE806



You look great in both pics! Thanks or sharing this with us. At some mainstream stores like gap and old navy, I buy a small top. And I am not a small!!!! This days more about the rest of the country and sizing than it does about me.

And congrats to our daughter! What an incredible time!!
3136 days ago



TOOTHFUL99



I'm so glad you posted this! This has been my suspicion for years.

When I was in high school, I wore a junior size 9 and weighed about 120 pounds. All of my 'skinny' friends wore junior 5's.

2 years ago, I got down to 124 pounds. I fit comfortably into a womens size 4. I couldn't believe that! (Mentally, it felt good, though!)

Oh, and I buy cheap clothes, too!
3136 days ago



GYMRAT_AT44



Thanks for sharing
3136 days ago



SPEEDYDOG



You are doing fine! You look quite slender in both photos.

The size difference between now and 40 years ago is an eye-opener. I read that Marylin Monroe wore a size 10. Marylin's dress size has been used by social pundits to emphasize that we no longer appreciate curvy women and the skinny runway model wearing a size 4 is the standard of beauty.

Although dresses of the 1960's were cut differently, some knowledgeable people that have examined Marylin's dresses declare, by today's standards, she was a 6 or an 8.

Men's clothes are cut differently too. There is more ample room in the seat and thighs in regular pants then 40 years ago.

Will I be able to fit into the pants I wore 40 years ago? No, I think a 30" waist is a thing of the distant past for me.

Thanks for posting such a great blog.


Bruce

3136 days ago



CD10259955



First let me say that I'm amazed that you have all this vintage clothing!  So where does this leave us???? What size are we really???? The lesson learned is that we need to stop caring about clothing sizes AND the scale -- take our measurements and focus only on losing inches and getting stronger!

Thanks for the eye opener this morning!!!!
3136 days ago



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