

Your denim problems...

...solved! We assembled an expert panel to address New Yorkers' burning questions. By **Cristina Velocci**

Where can I find longer-length jeans that won't totally break the bank? For a city full of supermodels, it's surprisingly difficult to find jeans for a 6-foot-tall woman! Take it from a supermodel: "Express does a great job in specialty sizes for taller women," says Molly Sims. "I personally love the new bootcut Stella style." Indeed, most of the chain's jeans (\$60-\$88) come in a 35-inch inseam. And don't overlook some of the affordable classics. "In the age of premium denim, consumers have forgotten about old favorites like Levi's and the Gap," says stylist Amy Gordon. "Both stores carry three different lengths."

What denim is appropriate to wear for work? Is a denim dress okay for a Casual Friday if it's a dark wash? "If you work in a very creative environment, you can probably get away with a light-wash or distressed jean," says *What Not to Wear* cohost Clinton Kelly. "But the average cubicle-dweller should stick to dark-wash denim that is free of holes, frayed hems and major bleaching." Our experts also agree that classic silhouettes (bootcut, straight leg, trouser) are the way to go; save skinny jeans for the weekends. As for that denim dress, Jessie Thorpe, NYC editor of the blog Denimology, enthuses that "you can get away with a lighter wash so long as the length is professionally appropriate and the cut declares you mean business." But dresses and jeans aren't the only denim pieces suitable for the workplace, if you follow stylist Stacey Kalchman's rule of thumb: "A dark denim blazer or pencil skirt can be incorporated into your work wardrobe as long as it's paired with a more traditional suiting piece like a tweed jacket or a silk blouse."

Where can I find reasonably priced jeans that come in short lengths? Some jeans I find that are my size fit great, and then I try on the "short" version in the same size and it seems as though they don't fit the same! "Be careful not to mistake a shorter inseam with petite styles," advises Gordon. "Petite items are cut for different proportions." A great line

MORE QUESTIONS, ANSWERED! To find out how to pull off white jeans, which shoes to wear with denim, whatever happened to Blue Cult and more, visit timeoutny.com/shopping.

to try for its shorter-length jeans is J.Crew. "They fit exactly like the regular length," says Kalchman. "Speaking from experience—I'm only five-foot-three—jean shopping used to be a nightmare. J.Crew short length has changed all that."

When is it time to throw in the denim towel? I have a problem with holding on to my favorite jeans for too long. Should I refurbish or just toss? If our experts' polarized reactions are any indication, the answer depends on whom you ask. "Refurbish? I'm not sure how one would even refurbish a pair of jeans other than sew a bunch of patches on them, which would be fine if it were 1973 and/or you were 12,"

quips Kelly. "Jeans have an expiration date, and when they look like crap, chances are you will too." On the other

side of the coin, "denim lovers all over the world scramble to get their hands on vintage jeans," points out Tomoko Ogura, women's fashion director of Barneys Co-op. If you can't part with your beloved dungarees, let skilled professionals work their magic; Evan Hecht, coowner of Williamsburg store Brooklyn Denim Co., recommends taking them to Kill Devil Hill (170 Franklin St between Java and Kent Sts, Greenpoint, Brooklyn; 347-534-3088, killdevilhillshop.com) for repairs, while Denimology executive editor Andy Knight suggests Denim Therapy (denimtherapy.com). Refurbished or not, just make sure your pants fit properly. "If those busted jeans are saggy in the ass, they're a waste of everyone's time," warns Kelly.

Where can I find cycling-specific denim? I bought an awesome pair of Osloh biking jeans from Chari & Co and would like to know what else is out there. Denim Therapy founder Francine Rabinovich suggests trying Iron Heart (ironheart.co.uk), a Japanese

brand known for its near-indestructible denim (the company was founded by Harley-Davidson fan Shinichi Haraki). You'll find the label at Self Edge (157 Orchard St at Rivington St; 212-388-0079, selfedge.com), a denim specialist boutique Knight recommends for its "fantastic selection of the highest-quality Japanese selvage that is more than capable of standing up to the rigors of cycling through the city." The men's team at Barneys Co-op (236 W 18th St between Seventh and Eighth Aves, 212-593-7800 • 2151 Broadway at 76th St, 646-335-0978 • 116 Wooster St between Prince and Spring Sts, 212-965-9964 • barneys.com) has also recently launched an exclusive biking jean with cycling-apparel company Swrve. "The jeans have all the necessary cycling requirements: articulated knees, reflective strips, pockets for a bike lock and cell phone, a higher waist and a lower rise," boasts Ogura.



Shopping

OUR PANEL



1 Molly Sims, model, actress and designer of jewelry line Gracey by Molly Sims (graceybymollysims.com) 2 Amy Gordon, stylist (stylebyamy.com) 3 Clinton Kelly, cohost of TLC's *What Not to Wear* (season eight premieres in October) 4 Francine Rabinovich, founder of Denim Therapy (denimtherapy.com) 5 Tomoko Ogura, women's fashion director of Barneys Co-op 6 Evan Hecht and 7 Frank Pizzuro, owners of Brooklyn Denim Co. 8 Stacey Kalchman, stylist 9 Andy Knight, executive editor of Denimology 10 Jessie Thorpe, NYC editor of Denimology