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HOW ALVANON KEEPS IMPROVING JEANS

5 ways to execute consistent denim fit

By Jackie Lewis & Katinka Van Beveren



5 WAYS TO EXECUTE CONSISTENT DENIM FIT

By Jackie Lewis

It is denim season again and we all eagerly anticipate what's next; what will follow on from trends in eco-responsible production, gender adaptability in styling and innovations to deliver true consumer personalisation? What will be the big new denim story? Is the skinny jean dead yet?

Whether it's the re-invented five pocket jean with wide or tapered leg shaping or a chino style sitting high at the waist, one thing remains constant- jeans must fit perfectly! Consumers face this problem every season, as brands adopt new design trends. As an industry how can we best deliver fashion, newness and also democratise fit?

Even back in 2014, the CBI fact sheet (Jeans in the Netherlands) concluded that to differentiate in an increasingly competitive market, brands must offer:

- **'Excellent fit'**
- **Newest washing and coatings**
- **Newest fabric compositions:**
warp weft broken twills, space denim, etc.
- **Focus on a specific target group.**

Over **42%** Concerned about fit

85% Loyal to a brand for their fit

42% of consumers worry about getting something that fits well, with denim (alongside lingerie) named as the key category. When 85% of consumers staying loyal to a brand because their products fit them — fit is how you win!

In an industry where body shape is often misrepresented, Alvanon's philosophy is based on creating 3D virtual bodies and fit mannequins that are true to the natural human body. Applying the latest technology and body shape data, Alvanon advises the world's leading denim brands and retailers on fit and sizing strategies.

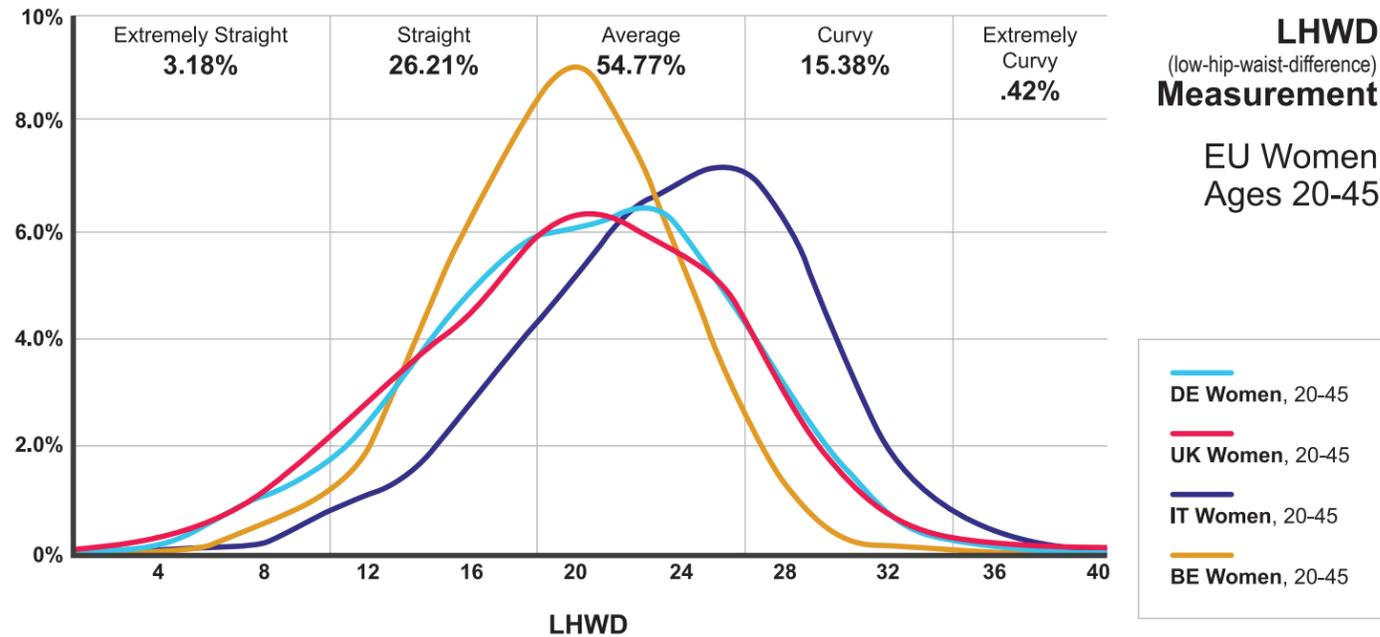
So how do you build a fit & sizing strategy to ensure competitive edge and consumer loyalty?

HERE ARE ALVANON'S FIVE TOP TIPS FOR THE SEASON ON HOW TO EXECUTE CONSISTENT FIT:

- 1** Define your target customer and their body shape.
- 2** Understand which sizes sell.
- 3** Know your fabrics
- 4** Maintain consistent measurements and pattern blocks
- 5** Love your winners

1

Define your target customer and their body shape.



Who are you selling to, or want to sell to? Start with the demographic of your core customer — where they live, age, ethnic and socioeconomic group. This important data will help to segment the customer profile and in turn will drive out a body shape standard.

For example: 55% of the woman in Europe have what we describe as an 'average' body shape in that their bust to waist to hip measurements are well proportioned. These lucky people can wear almost any style and still look good. However, what about the rest of the population? A further 30% of women have a 'straight' body shape (having little waist shaping), while the remaining 15% are curvy.

It makes great business sense to focus on creating products that fit most people, but remember this still only represents just over half the female population.

Do not forget the group who are straight in a bid to offer a sexy curve fit. This season's 'dad jean' which is straight through the body and loose in the leg is perfect for this customer group.

Regardless of body shape women generally cite the following on their most desired list;

- **It's all about the bum.**
- **No excess fabric.**
- **Back pockets must accentuate fit**
- **No gaping at the waist.**
(mostly an issue experienced by curvy girls)

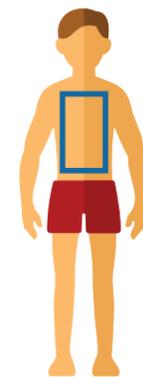
We should listen to the voice of our customers, as they claim 52% of brands still don't make clothes for real bodies or people.

2

Understand which sizes sell.



TRIANGLE
Smaller top, bigger bottom



RECTANGLE
Same size top & bottom



TRAPEZOID
Bigger top, smaller bottom

When considering new shapes and silhouettes imagine it on your most popular selling size, as this is your true customer. Having a graded 3D virtual body or fit mannequin will help you stay focused on this and ensure fit integrity is maintained across the entire size range. Be ruthless and don't offer all styles in all sizes, sometimes it just doesn't work! With jeans sitting on the natural waist this season, it's important to remember that proportionally the waist grows more than the hips or seat; this will be key to getting the fit right!

It is difficult to talk about standard sizing for jeans as it differs from brand to brand. The key to success is maintaining consistency for your consumer; work to standard measurements as guide rules and understand what 'loose', 'straight', 'slim', and 'skinny' mean for your brand in terms of core measurements and sizing. This approach drives sales and minimises returns.

To illustrate the size of the challenge, here are some statistics reported by FitsMe in their Size Disparity Whitepaper: (via One Poll UK with 2000-person online panel):

- **More than 60% of the consumers find it a gamble as to whether the item will fit when shopping online**
- **Seven out of ten women buy different clothing sizes from the same retailer**
- **Half of the men buy different clothing sizes from the same retailer**

Whether you sell your jeans by waist and inside leg or by numeric garment size, communicating sizing to the consumer in a way that is informative, concise and engaging, is crucial. The customer must be able to choose the right size with ease.

It is a well-known fact that actual garment measurements can be different to what's on the label! Sorry gents, while you boast that you still fit into a 34" waist remember that there can be up to 1.5" of ease depending on where the jean sits on the body and brand sizing.

Remember to put yourself in the shoes of the customer, who in addition to thinking about what style to buy this season, is having to navigate a purchasing journey which involves options of: fabric, wash, size, rise and inside leg every time they buy a pair of jeans; it's a minefield!

No apologies for repeating this statistic but this is why 85% of customers stay loyal to a brand which offers appropriate and consistent fit. Indeed it's deemed as the #1 reason they go back to a brand.



3 Know your fabrics.

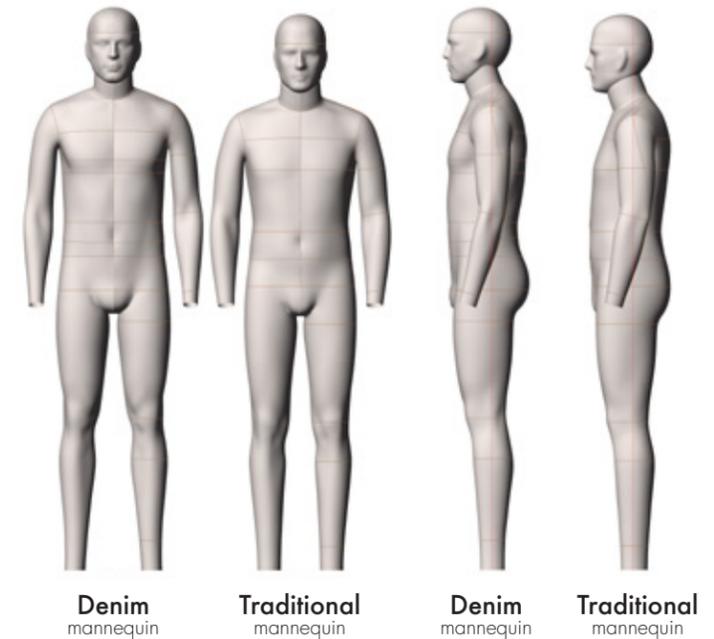
The focus on more sustainable materials and denim manufacturing processes continues to pick up pace this season, with recycled, recyclable or low-impact materials becoming key ingredients. Product functionality and durability ensures fabrics are designed to last and keep their look and colour longer, a blessing if you have found your perfect jeans. With so much choice it can be difficult to select the right fabric; get it wrong and the impact on fit is disastrous.

The key from a fit consistency angle is to categorise your fabrics based on weight and modulus (stretch properties) for example rigid, comfort stretch, super stretch; the other factors are aesthetic and will alter the look of the garment but will not directly impact the fit. Always fit your garments in the correct wash; there can be a big difference in fit between a rinse, classic stone wash or vintage washed garment.

4 Maintain consistent measurements and blocks.

Consistency is key to keeping your customers loyal season after season. Trends may change but the basic body measurements and core shape standards should remain largely the same. An existing pattern block can be adapted to incorporate seasonal trends with the body fit remaining constant in terms of shaping through the rise and crotch. This way you avoid re-inventing the wheel each season, the consumer has consistency and your ability to get the new style to market faster is increased. Focus on style and adapting rise position and leg shape. If it's not broken don't change it!

To support brands in achieving great body fit, Alvanon has just launched a new men's form specifically for fitting denim. The form has been designed to reflect the way men stand for better read of balance and rise angles, it has a deeper indent at the back rise, so fabric doesn't "bunch up" or fold in at the seat



Features and Advantages of a mannequin made for *Denim*

- Wider, natural stance for men, reflects the way men actually stand for better read of balance and rise angles
- Deeper indent at the back rise so fabric doesn't "bunch up" or fold in at the seat
- Works for all types of trousers, regardless of how close the fit is to the body.





5

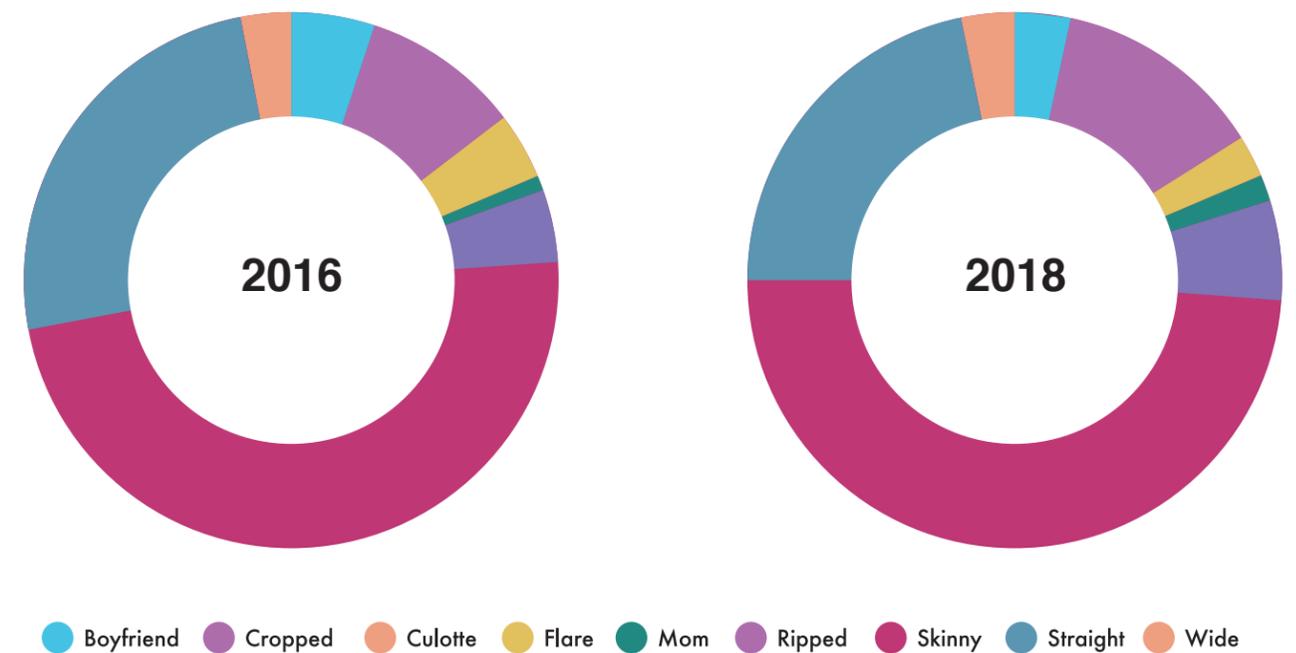
Love your winners.

Never forget your best sellers. Update in-line with trends but maintain the core shapes that your customer returns to each season.

Skinny Jeans still represent 58% of women's jeans. If you're a denim retailer, skinnies are your core. What is exciting is the movement elsewhere, with cropped, culotte, mom and wide styles all gaining in terms of popularity.

JEANS BY FIT

Based on product in stock now, versus two years ago



Source: edited.com

All things considered, it's quite easy to offer newness and consistency of fit if you keep the customer front and centre of all your decisions. This is the core of Alvanon's ethos — create 3D virtual bodies and fit mannequins, that are true to the natural human body.

We exist to help denim brands and retailers build effective fit and sizing strategies.

Want to execute consistent fit? Contact your sales director today to connect with our 3D virtual bodies team or consulting to learn more about the features and advantages of our new form made for denim.

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