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# Answer Angel: 'The Hemline Index'

Story by Ellen Warren, Tribune News Service • 1mo • 3 min read



You're talking about "The Hemline Index." This holds that women's skirts are shorter in good economic times and longer in bad.  
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**Dear Answer Angel Ellen:** I was told years ago that the length of a woman's dress or skirt was in direct proportion to the state of the economy.

Is that still true today? And/or what would be the modern equivalent barometer?

--Jennifer S.

**Dear Jennifer:** You're talking about "The Hemline Index." This holds that women's skirts are shorter in good economic times and longer in bad. Like most such handy theories, it has proved to be true

*sometimes*. And, often, it has been the exact opposite: longer hems in good times than in bad.



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Today, you can toss it out the window since, hemline-wise, anything goes. Mini, midi, maxi and all skirt lengths in between turn up everywhere these days. While this hemline theory is most often attributed to economist George Taylor in 1926 — 99 years ago — there’s credible evidence that he’s not actually responsible for this not-always-true dictum.

You ask for a more modern barometer. How about the “Lipstick Index” proposed by Leonard Lauder, then board chairman of Estée Lauder cosmetics? His theory was that during the recession in the early 2000s, cosmetic sales—especially lipsticks—were a good indicator of a recession as women turned from more expensive splurges like clothing to a cheaper mood pick-me-up from the cosmetics counter. That theory too has proved true — *sometimes*.

Then came the “Nail Polish Index.” And during the COVID-masking era, the eyes became the thing, hence the “Mascara Index.” Not one of these theories is always true. Sadly, the economy is not that simple to explain--or predict!



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**Dear Answer Angel Ellen:** Here is my problem: Several of my sweatshirts, jackets, and coats have metal zipper pulls and sometimes other metal objects attached to the zipper that bang around in my dryer and chip the enamel. What can I use to cover these objects in the dryer so this doesn’t happen?

--Debbie G.

**Dear Debbie:** There’s a product sold for precisely your problem. But first, try this: Zip up your sweatshirt, coat etc., then securely safety pin your zipper pull to your garment. Next, turn the clothing inside out and wash and dry as normal.

Another solution is to place the clothing in a mesh laundry bag sold for washing delicates and keeping socks from disappearing. Most of these are small but you’ll find jumbos big enough for most clothes ([amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), 26 by 28 inches, 3 for \$14.99; 26 inches by 36 inches, \$6.19 each).

If the problem is only metal buttons, Amazon sells button covers to prevent the washer/dryer damage and noise.



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Now the products for your precise issue: On [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) search for "zipper protector for laundry" and you will turn up Zhunpingan brand reusable stickers for zipper pulls, etc. in two different sizes ([amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), 2.4 diameter circles; 3.5 inch long strips, \$9.99). Also, Nevixtal brand special tape to cover metal zipper pulls and other metal objects ( [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), 5 rolls of tape, \$11.88).

**Reader Rants**

Harry W. writes, "Why do men — mostly older gentlemen — douse themselves in cologne or aftershave until you want to go blechhh!? The scent is overpowering and highly unpleasant. It used to be that women would also overdo the perfume with the same horrid effect. However I do not encounter that issue as often as I used to. Now, the big offenders are men. On public transportation or in a theater this is especially offensive since it is impossible to escape and I find myself sometimes reeking for hours after these encounters in a closed space!!"

*And this...*

Olivia P. complains: "I have noticed a startling increase in the number of inconsiderate women in my yoga class and a dance class who spray huge amounts of perfume or cologne on. It makes these classes hard to breathe and unpleasant. Please ask instructors to post signs and make announcements in class that scents of any kind are not considerate of others, especially those of us with respiratory issues or allergies. The same goes for taxi and ride share drivers who make any ride unpleasant with the fragrances they wear or those they spray in their cars."

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## Flare Jeans Are Taking Off In 2025 — Here's How To Wear Them

Story by Kelsey Stewart • 3w • 3 min read



@sasha.mei

A handful of silhouettes will always be linked to the '70s. Chief among them? [Flare jeans](#). Adopted by hippies, rockstars, and actors (think Farah Fawcett's flares in *Charlie's Angels*), the denim was a defining part of the decade's fashion. Or, perhaps you're more familiar with the trend from the early aughts when teens wore their low-slung looks with belly-baring crop tops. However, the look is much different nowadays. "They're unlike the flares of 2000's: we're seeing a variety of both fitted and relaxed as well as exaggerated and slim leg shapes back on the market," Free People stylist [Cindy Suzuki](#) tells TZR. "With the weather warming up, I find they're a fun silhouette to break up those simpler top-and-jeans outfit combos we'll reach for this season."

We can't dive into the trend in 2025 without giving credit where credit is due — Kendrick Lamar's \$1,200 Celine flares from the rapper's [Super Bowl LIX halftime performance](#), which set the internet on fire, helped put the silhouette back on the map. The numbers speak for themselves — Google searches for "flared jeans" [rose 5,000](#)

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