

# GARAGE SALES

## All About Clothing Sizes

Vanity sizing is when a clothing manufacturer has changed the size of clothes to a smaller size to make you feel better about yourself.

Ever had a pair of pants two sizes below what you normally wear surprisingly fit in a certain brand? That might be vanity sizing at work. What this means for your vintage and garage sales clothing buys is that a size 10 is not a size 10 the world around.

### A HISTORY OF SIZING

Lynn Boorady, a fashion and textile technology chair and associate professor at Buffalo State University, told Time magazine that sizing standards didn't happen until the 1940s. "Before then, sizes for young ladies and children were all based on age — so a size 16 would be for a 16-year-old — and for women it was about bust measurement," she said.

In 1939, the Department of Agriculture started to standardize women's clothing. Manufacturers said it cost them \$10 million a year not to have set sizes, Time said. So the department conducted a



study of 15,000 women — a smaller sample size than was needed to represent the American public. In the late 1940s, the National Bureau of Standards reanalyzed sizing

and created a new standard with sizes from 8 to 38 with tall, regular and short height indications and a plus or minus sign when referring to girth.

In 1983, the what was now the Department of Commerce withdrew the women's clothing size standard. What was a 16 in the 1940s and a 12 in the 1960s would now be a size 6.

### VINTAGE CLOTHING

Today's sizes, therefore, are not yesteryear's. Your size 6 would be your grandmother's size 12. When you're shopping for vintage clothing, you need to keep that in mind, and that includes at garage, yard and estate sales. If you can, try the items on before you buy them. If you're a seller and you have a trove of vintage or older clothing, in addition to making sure they're clean and well-presented, try to set up an area for people to make sure they fit. Hang blankets or sheets and include a mirror and a light for people to see how they look.

Finding conversion charts online are also an option, but you need to know your measurements and how to properly take them. A rule of thumb is that you probably wear about four sizes larger than normal, unless it's from the 1980s and 1990s. Then it's probably two sizes larger.

### WHAT ELSE SHOULD YOU KNOW?

Vintage clothing may also be more fragile than the clothing made today. Not only are fabrics different, but aged fabrics are generally thinner and more frail than their modern, less-worn counterparts. Hand-wash your vintage garments and line dry them.

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### BUYER'S TIP

#### People Are Getting Taller

We've learned about vanity sizing, but it's also true that people today are larger and even taller than we used to be. In every country of the world, people today are taller than their ancestors 100 years ago. In the past 150 years, the average human height in industrialized countries increased by nearly four inches.

## AD SPACE