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MacKinzie Porter, 17, a senior at Walter Payton High School, always wears her micro-minis with heels and boy shorts.

-JIM FROST/SUN-TIMES



Wear your mini to the max

Following a few rules is required, however, to avoid embarrassment

BY LISA FRYDMAN
Staff Reporter

Hair, check. Blouse, check. Shoes, check. Skirt, check. The storefront window gives you the thumbs up: Lookin' good. That is, until a strong gust of wind blows up your miniskirt, right there on Michigan Avenue. And the outcome isn't pretty.

Time to strategize.

Wearing a mini is not a fashion statement, it is a fashion *privilege*, and there is an art to making it work for you — whether on the train or on the street, at the clubs or even attending a business meeting.

According to Kristi Kelley, wardrobe consultant for the Image Studios in Chicago, "Always err on the side of conservative with a miniskirt — meaning no thongs. Very popular now are boy shorts, so that if the skirt does fly up, you're protected. And always match the color of your undergarment to the skirt."

Boy shorts, a kind of high-tech hot pants, have become popular undergarments because they're comfortable (no wedgies) and they cover your whole derriere — yet manage to be provocative (think "Baywatch" meets Dallas Cowboy cheerleader) with satin and lace details.

For winter, tights and boots with miniskirts give some coverage.

But if you're still going with bare legs, "my advice, especially

when taking the train, is to wear a trench coat to the knee, depending on weather," Kelley says.

Sitting on the L can be a bit tricky, Kelley adds. "Be sure to hold the skirt in place and smooth out the wrinkles as you sit down. Sit on the edge first, then slide back to your comfort level. Always make sure your legs are at a 60- or 80-degree angle, so that your knees are pointing downward or to the side rather than upward in order to avoid flashing anyone."

And if all else fails, Kelley advises using your purse to cover any exposed areas.

Stay away from denim and stiff corduroys, she says. The fabric is too taut and does not drape to the form of your body; it also is more prone to exposure. Any fabric that is loose, stretchy or soft like cotton, rayon, jersey or crepe works well when sitting and won't "ride up."

Melissa Ryan, trend correspondent for Marshall Field's, says, "Going into fall, there are wonderful fabrics that are versatile for the train or even business meetings, like heavy cashmere and double-faced wools, because they have a nice weight and you don't have to worry about them flying up during your commute."

"A great way to balance a mini is with a tall boot so that you have more coverage," Ryan adds. "There are also great legwear options for fall including opaque,



Book developer Marisa Molinaro advises miniskirt wearers, "Never ever bend over to pick up a purse."

-JEAN LACHAT/SUN-TIMES

lace and argyle tights that have a lot of texture, which will also provide more coverage."

A quick noon-ish survey of Chicago's miniskirted movers and shakers yielded the following advice:

Marisa Molinaro, a 31-year-old book developer, was looking great in her micro-mini. She had the whole getup going for her — hair, makeup, pricey purse, flip-flops, and yes, she admitted, "boy shorts all the way." Molinaro advises "never ever bend over to pick up a purse: always go for the deep knee-bend."

Rachel White, 21, a pre-law student at Loyola, swears by miniskirts, and plans to wear them in the courtroom.

"Hey, think Ally McBeal," she says. "Always cross your legs at the ankle, not at the knee. Wearing a miniskirt is not at all about the length (or lack thereof) but about how you carry yourself. Own it."

"If you're intelligent, articulate, there's no reason not to be stylish on your terms," she says.

Jackie Williams, 35, administrative coordinator for the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, says she wears miniskirts every day all year long. And she doesn't have a hangup about wearing a thong with a mini.

"Always," she advises, "pull your skirt down before sitting. And I have no problems with thongs, just panty lines. What's important is the total look."