



## She was choked by a corset or a fashion trend of the past, the consequences of wearing and its modern counterpart

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### ABSTRACT

This article examines the history of the corset from antiquity and the Victorian era to the present day, describes the consequences of wearing a corset from the point of view of medicine and common sense, tells the creative activity of designers and brands that used corsets in their collections.

### Keywords:

Fashion, style, history, corset, instrument of torture, trend of the past, revolution, cyclical fashion, femininity.

A corset is a piece of clothing that has been worn by beauties of the past for many years to the fashionistas of today. Traditionally, it is presented in the form of a wide belt, in which shock-absorbing elements are sewn, enhancing the waist circumference. It is tightened with lacing, hooks, buttons and locks. It is used predominantly in women's wardrobe to support breasts, thin the waist and control the female body. Its cultural context is so complex that it has only been relegated to the pages of fashion history in the last hundred years and returned almost immediately - always with a new element

Different sources indicate different dates for the appearance of the corset, such as in ancient times there was a belt that was somewhat reminiscent of a corset for both men and women, the main purpose of which was to protect the internal organs from fatal blows. Later, the belt became much wider and represented, literally, metal armor, which created a perfect female waist and even posture, and also guaranteed her chastity. And in other sources it is said that: The history of the corset began in the Renaissance. "Women were advised to wear corsets because they believed in

the idea of the 'weaker sex'. It was believed that a woman's body needed extra support so that it would not "soften," says fashion historian Audrey Millet.

But the narrative in this article will begin with the Victorian era, because it was at this time that the consequences of wearing a corset appeared, due to the fact that the ladies tried to meet the standards of beauty. To achieve the coveted 45 cm in girth, women had to literally live without air, and sometimes food, and when in Spain the waist was tightened to 20 cm, the corset was called an instrument of torture. Over time, instead of iron, corsets made of whalebone and wooden inserts appeared

Do you think in the past girls used snuff salts so often because of excessive impressionability? The thing is that they simply had nothing to breathe, so they fainted constantly. The corset could cause permanent deformities of the ribs and probably did cause them, at least if it began to be worn in childhood, when the ribs are still pliable. Girls in the nineteenth century usually began to wear a corset in adolescence or even earlier. In adulthood, the deformation of the ribs is temporary - it is necessary to remove the

corset and the ribs will take their previous position.

If it is true that the pinched ribs broke and pierced the lungs and liver, this, of course, must have ended very sadly, especially considering that antibiotics were not yet known in those days. It is possible that the stories of rib fractures are the result of an inability to identify injuries caused by cracked stiffeners of the corset itself, steel plates or whalebone. They often broke and their sharp ends could cause bodily harm, from scratches to punctures of internal organs. Moreover, the volume of the lungs differed from normal, greatly decreased, so women constantly lost consciousness. In Britain, there were even special fainting rooms in which ladies could come to their senses.

Real Victorian ladies wore corsets even when pregnant, as it was considered bad form to take it off. As for the harm from the corset for the reproductive system of the female body, it was, and very significant. Many women of the nineteenth century suffered from uterine prolapse, partly due to multiple pregnancies. Corsets only exacerbated this already serious illness. To combat uterine prolapses, a uterine ring was used - a mechanical device resembling a plug that was inserted into the vagina to hold the uterus inside the body. Ironically, patents on these rings were often depicted attached to a corset. In addition, doctors claimed that corsets deform the female glands, especially the nipples, making it difficult or impossible to breastfeed.

Women who wore tight corsets during pregnancy and immediately after childbirth (and there were most of them) put themselves at great risk. There were, however, special corsets for pregnant women, which could be stretched as the fetus grew. But they were not much different from fashionable tight corsets. Even with moderate lacing, these corsets inhibited the growth of the uterus. This led to miscarriages and complications during childbirth, and pregnancies in women with such figures were held with complications.

But was it really dangerous to wear a corset? And what, in fact, was the need to wear corsets? Firstly, their main function was to stabilize the figure. Before the era of mass

tailoring, clothes were sewn to order and were expensive, the dress was carefully monitored and cared for, trying to extend its service life. The corset made it possible to "fit" the figure a little under the dress (and, by the way, with the constant wearing of the corset, it was more difficult to eat).

The size of the corset was selected according to the figure.

Secondly, the corset gave the figure a fashionable silhouette - it smoothed the body line from the chest to the hips, raised the chest and formed the waist.

Were these waists so inhumanly narrow? Indeed, there were ladies stretching to a waist of 16 inches (about 40 cm). Fashionistas of the late 19th century compared the size of their waist in a corset with the neck of their fans. To become even slimmer, they even removed a couple of ribs, and this was when there was no complete anesthesia. Or they sat on a kind of diet, of course, the church contributed to this, which condemned that a woman should not get any pleasure, even from food, which is why the girls literally ate air, someone trying to lose weight, suppress appetite drank vinegar, and there were those who took more risky steps. They swallowed the eggs of tapeworms, they ate all the food in the stomach and not only, and when they grew up, tubes with bait were inserted into the ladies, worms crawled into them, and the tube was taken from the lady along with the worms.

Of course, it is easier to achieve a small girth in a corset if the waist circumference is small. An example is the wedding dress of Empress Catherine II, according to the measurements of which her waist was, taking into account underwear, 43 cm with a height of 157 cm. But she was only sixteen in the year of the wedding, and, according to her notes, she was very ill a year before the celebration and was "thin as a skeleton".

Wedding dress of Catherine II, 1745.

When we see corsets preserved in museums, we must remember that they were not tightened end-to-end, but laced with a gap behind, so that corsets with a waist of 50 cm actually meant that the real waist was 60-65 cm. In any case, fanaticism will not lead to good. A corset can be

beneficial if you pull it up to 10cm, for example, at a waist of 65 cm, pulling the corset up to 55cm will be a good solution and there will be no consequences

Alas, it was only in 1895 that Professor Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen (Würzburg, Bavaria) took the first X-ray to show the public the essence of the anatomical deformities caused by corsets. After 6 years, he will receive the Nobel Prize for his invention. And another scientist, the Frenchman Louis O'Falloval, in order to draw attention to one problem, took pictures of the torsos of several women. First with metal corsets, and then without them. The pictures clearly show how rigid metal corsets squeeze the chest and the internal organs located there.

This pressure had a lot in the literal sense of the word. During the First World War, members of the American War Industry Commission made the following conclusion: "The refusal of American women from rigid corsets freed up 28 thousand tons of steel - enough to build two battleships."

Also, the war did not leave women's fashion without influence, women became the owners of "men's professions". Because of this, women were allowed to wear trousers, and over time, the wearing of the "instrument of torture" came to naught.

Also, many designers have influenced fashion. And finally, in 1906, the designer Paul Poiret refuses the corset and offers women light dresses with a high waistline. The dress required a different underwear - an elastic and light bra. Simple things for us at that time were a real revolution.

Fashion was changing, the situation in the country too, women had more privileges, but as soon as the suffragettes loosened their belts and achieved the right to vote, and Coco Chanel consolidated their success, Christian Dior entered the fashion scene, selling a new look to a generation that longed for elegance for World War II.

It is a mistake to think that New Look is the name of the DIOR collection itself. This phrase was coined by the legendary editor of the American Harper's Bazaar, Carmel Snow, who mentioned the designer's dresses as a completely new look. And so a new term "new

look" appeared, which characterized an entire era

But unfortunately, many women did not accept this style. For example, Coco Chanel found it unacceptable to return uncomfortable corsets and tight dresses to fashion. In addition, the post-war period had a strong impact on the country's economy - there was a shortage of fabrics. Most women cannot afford to wear the Dior collection, since 40 meters of fabric were used in the creation of the skirt alone. The British government was outraged and compared the new fashion with a gold check, because of the high cost and inconvenience

Activists of the 60s again recaptured this territory, but here the corsets came in handy Vivienne Westwood - as a punk slap in the face to public taste.

Around this time, the corset evolved from a symbol of female oppression into an emancipatory practice, finally enshrined by the Madonna. In 1990, the pop diva made Jean-Paul Gaultier's iconic item, a corset with famous cones, the main accent in her stage costume during the Blond Ambition tour.

"The blossoming freedom of female sexuality, whose seeds were planted back in the 60s, culminated in Gaultier's costume for Madonna's world tour," fashion critic Susie Menkes wrote, alluding to the second wave of feminism. The rebellion of the corset happened when the catwalk and the stage merged, and the audience saw how the designer imagined the sconces back in the catwalk collections of the early 80s. Since then, experiments with corsets or corset elements have been seen in the collections of Mugler, Versace, Stella McCartney, Saint Laurent, Tom Ford and Balenciaga. These designers understood the corset primarily as a spectacular accessory, rather than a piece of underwear designed to make the waist thinner. But corsets, only repeating the curves of the female body, and not shaping them, were perhaps the first to be made by Issei Miyake in 1980. In the autumn-winter collection, the fashion designer showed corsets molded from plastic directly to the shapes of the model, clearly stating that clothes and body are inseparable. In the 1990s, Alexander McQueen went further and for the first time presented

corsets-armor on the catwalk: they again repeated the anatomical features of the body, not distorting the proportions, but emphasizing the strength of women.

Thus, the corset was forgotten, then remembered again, left in the past, and famous designers and fashion designers began to use it in their collections in a new way. Over the years, this "instrument of torture" has undergone such a kind of evolution, once it was used to tighten the chest (when it was fashionable), and then to show it in the best light, created to support a straight back, emphasize the waist or just fit into the mother's dress, and now there are hundreds of types of corsets, now they are sewn from a variety of materials and fabrics, They are used as underwear or an independent wardrobe item, combining with various skirts and sometimes jeans. Modern designers create corsets according to individual measurements with different styles in different price ranges, so that any girl, woman can afford it and open up. After all, "Fashion should be a form of escapism, not a form of imprisonment" – Alexander McQueen.

## References

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