



PICS: SANDEEP PATIL

# Feminine mystique

**Suneeta Sodhi Kanga** unveils the art of sitting, standing and walking with grace

**S**IR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE once said, “I have seen too much not to know that the impression of a woman may be more valuable than the conclusion of an analytical reasoner.” There words hold true even today.

Poise is the essence of a lady. You create it, and are responsible for what it says about you and who it attracts. Your body language and demeanour impact your success. The way you move, stand, sit, use your hands or place your feet silently communicate to the world that a lady has arrived.

This is the beauty that defines a woman and ‘cures’ as she ages making her eternally admired. This is style.

A woman’s beauty goes beyond her physical features. The contemporary woman does not age in years, she grows. A woman of poise and beauty is the eternal lady — every man’s woman and, more importantly, every woman’s woman too!

And this species, despite attainable characteristics, is a rarity. However, with a little conscionable effort, this is not an unachievable task.

## Stand with poise

Since posture conveys more than half of any message in any face-to-face encounter, how you act is vital to your aura. Although standing is something we do everyday most of us have never really given ‘the art of proper standing’ a second thought.

There is a distinct difference between the stance of a man and that of a woman. A man desires to create strong and straight lines, while a woman seeks to create shape and curve in her stance. Here are some tips to help you keep the correct posture when standing and add a special feminine touch to your stance:

**Head up:** Imagine that there is a string pulling the top of your head. You should be able to feel that you gain an extra inch or two in height with this. If you feel this, then you are doing it correctly. Even better is that you actually are gaining that extra height.

**Keep your chin parallel to the floor:** Stand with weight mostly on the balls of the feet, not with weight on the heels. Both knees and feet should face forward. This again keeps the line pleasing and feminine.

**Chest out:** Your chest should be out and up. This will naturally push your behind out ever so slightly, which helps to create a nice feminine line.

**Stomach in:** While we once had corsets to keep our stomach flab in check, we now need to rely on toning and tightening our stomach muscles. Use your stomach muscles to support the core of your body.

**Shoulders back and dropped into a relaxed position:** Women tend to carry their stress in their shoulders which results in the shoulders working their way up to the ears. It not only looks uncomfortable, it is uncomfortable for the body and sends a message to the world that you are stressed. Effortless grace takes a lot of effort.

**Knees relaxed, not locked:** Keep your weight on one leg and bend the other. A lady does not look attractive with two legs straight, side by side. Stand with the heel of one foot touching the middle of the other foot, while cocked at an angle from it. Put your weight on the toe of the foot at the back and when it gets tired, switch.

Elbows slightly bent, palms turned in, keep your arms close to the body, with a small gap between the body and the arms.

With all these tips you are sure to be able to strike a beautiful, feminine pose. Good posture may feel awkward at first, but with practice it will become relaxed and natural. Become acutely aware of how you are standing and remember to adopt a proper stance until it becomes second nature.

## Walk like a lady

A beautiful walk is the sign of a graceful, poised woman. To achieve this follow these steps. Lift your thigh slightly. Don’t lead with your shoulders. Shoulders should be relaxed and elbows close to your sides. Keep your head and shoulders relatively still as your body moves and try to appear as though you are walking into the wind to push your shoulders back



Ayesha Kanga, Times of India Fresh Face winner with her sister Trisha

and force your pelvis to lead you forward. For a feminine walk, the space between your steps should be about the length of your foot. Too long a stride is masculine, too short is ungraceful.

On each step, your heel should touch the floor first, and then quickly shift the weight forward to the entire foot as you take the next step. Keep your feet close to the ground when you lift them. Arms should hang relaxed at your sides with palms toward the thighs as they swing forward to the front of your body. Keep your toes pointed straight ahead and place your feet directly to the side of imaginary parallel lines running down the centre. Place each leg directly in front of the other leg, the way a cat does. Aim for your footprints to form a single line as if you are walking on a tightrope.

### Sit gracefully

When a lady sits down socially, it should look like poetry in motion! Here's how to sit gracefully. Step as close to the front of the chair as you can. Turn and prepare your body for the sitting posture. As soon as your back leg touches the chair seat, slide one foot back so that your feet are in a Y-position and then gracefully lower yourself into the seat. Always smoothen your skirt / dress under you and keep your knees together.

Keep your head high and chin parallel to the ground. Take your time to sit down on the edge of the chair in a calculated fluid motion and move back gracefully. Don't ever plonk yourself down heavily on a seat. Think like royalty sitting on a throne.

Since your knees are together, it is not possible to sit all the way back into the chair so now you have to pull yourself all the way to the back in another soft motion so that your spinal cord is supported by the back rest. This is where the etiquette of men pulling out a chair to help a lady has come from. In which case, you mustn't forget to thank the gentleman for his help! No matter what you do, your motions have to be smooth like those of a well choreographed dance routine.

If you are seated on a deep sofa, do not lean back all the way and do not slouch. And don't spread your legs after sitting down; instead, always keep your knees together. You can recline without looking lame, but it may take practice. Do not bring one arm to rest at the back of the chair/sofa. Be aware of what your body is doing no matter where you are.

Always sit with legs together and heels slightly to the rear. Curl one ankle over the other and place your legs slightly to a side of you. You can sit with legs in front of you, angle your knees to either left or right but never sit

According to the Institute of Etiquette, "When sitting, a woman should cross her legs at the ankles. For one reason, it is not considered lady-like to cross one's legs at the knees, especially if one is wearing a short skirt. Besides, crossing the legs can promote spider veins." To follow this dictum, always sit with legs together and heels slightly to the rear. Curl one ankle over the other and place the legs slightly to your side

with your legs apart. That is a mortal sin in poise!

If you are crossing your legs at the knees, there should be no space between the heel and the other ankle. When sitting at a social setting, a lady of etiquette will not cross her legs at the knees when wearing a short skirt.

According to the Institute of Etiquette, "When sitting, a woman should cross her legs at the ankles. For one reason, it is not considered lady-like to cross one's legs at the knees, especially if one is wearing a short skirt. Besides, crossing the legs can promote spider veins." If you're in a social situation and, in doubt, always err on the side of conservative — cross your legs at the ankle. Ideally, place your hands together on your lap with the palms facing upwards. But if you have nicely manicured fingernails and beautiful rings to display, you may keep them palms facing down as well!

Do not jump up or arise suddenly from your seat in an abrupt motion, nor should you lift your feet up as you get up.

All your actions speak louder than words! You add oodles to your charm and elegance quotient when you sit, stand and walk gracefully.

It is not just about being 'prim and propah' but infusing your behavior with effortless elegance that defines who you are.

And in a fast, contemporary world, it becomes your differentiating signature; the signature which you not only carry with you at all times but also leaves a stamp behind. The elegant stamp of the Global Gujarati in this fast integrating world.

So ladies, lets enjoy and celebrate the softness and sweetness so captivating of a woman, so Global Gujarati! 🇮🇳

