Grand Junction said that Bermuda-length shorts are most popular among the store's customers, who tend to be more mature. Seid said there's nothing wrong with wearing longer shorts, because they're not so much a surrender to age but an adaptation to a changing body.

And youth doesn’t necessarily give someone carte blanche to wear short shorts, anyway. Not everyone looks good in them, and they’re not always appropriate in every situation. It’s a matter of being honest and soliciting honest opinions, being willing to hear a truthful answer to, “Are these shorts too short?”

Fashion journalist Melissa Magsaysay, writing in the Los Angeles Times, offered these tips on shorts length:

- Look in the mirror. And turn a full circle. If you’re not comfortable with any lumps or veins that might be visible, maybe go for a longer length. Also, sit down in the shorts. Does the crotch pinch or ride up so that you’re having to constantly pull the hem down? Again, go longer.

- Try on the shorts and be honest about what works. Flat tab fronts and trouser-style waistbands are more flattering on shorter shorts. And give serious, serious thought to any inseam shorter than four inches. There aren’t many situations in which shorts that short are appropriate.

- Embrace going longer as a fashion-forward choice of style. Not everyone can pull off a four-inch inseam. Consider, say, a seven-inch one — still cute and above the knee, but not so unforgiving to common trouble areas such as the inner thigh.

- Remember that there is such a thing as too long. Again, try before you buy. Certain lengths can make certain legs — often shorter ones — look stumpy. Once the shorts head below the knee, it’s time to be honest about how everything looks.

As for men’s shorts, Esquire magazine has this advice: “This is how shorts are supposed to fit — not too long, not too short, and hitting just above the knee. Don’t be one of those guys who wears really short shorts and doesn’t care that his boxers are peeking out the bottom. And don’t wear really long ones, either, since those are not, in fact, shorts but short pants. There’s a big difference. Huge.”

On his website, the Effortless Gent (effortlessgent.com) further elaborates: “You want to hit that sweet spot with shorts, anywhere from just past your kneecap, to just above it. That’s your safe zone. Any longer, and you start to wander into manpit territory.

“If your hemline starts to wander higher and higher above the kneecap (think 3 or above), you’re approaching Mom shorts length. Keep going and you’re all up in the hot pants zone.

“Anyway, you get the picture. Between 2 inches above and 1 inch below your kneecap is the sweet spot.”

But for both men and women, the goal of shorts is to stay cool in the hot summer months, and hopefully to look good while wearing them.

No limbo required.