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SUITS, SPORTS JACKETS, ODD TROUSERS, AND TOPCOATS

Up until the late eighteenth century, it was often the man who dressed more flamboyantly than the woman, his wardrobe filled with laces and bows as well as high-heeled shoes with shiny buckles. Even our presidents were not immune, as a sartorially splendid George Washington appeared at his first Inaugural wearing a brocade jacket, lace shirt, silver appointments, and high-heeled shoes with diamond buckles.

However, as the country changed, so did clothing styles. With the emphasis on democracy and the glorification of the common man, clothing became less ornate, less ostentatious. By the time Thomas Jefferson was inaugurated, he followed the fashion of his time by taking the oath wearing a plain blue coat, drab colored waistcoat, green velveteen breeches with pearl buttons, yarn stockings, and slippers.

At the turn of this century, menswear was still heavily influenced by the Victorian era, as reflected in suits which at times resembled an extension of the upholstered look of the Victorian furniture popular in American homes in the period.

And yet the first decade of this century saw the important introduction of the sack suit, a style characterized by any shapeless coat without a waist seam, the body and skirt having been cut in one piece, and the Ivy League - style clothing from England. It was also during this period that certain other fashion innovations began to appear, such as the polo coat (introduced from England by Brooks Brothers around 1910) and the button-down collar (also introduced by John Brooks, in 1900, after he'd discovered it being worn by polo players in England in order to prevent flapping during play).

The 1920s were a time of experimentation, as the suit silhouette turned to the natural-shoulder look, and the first sports jacket - the Norfolk, modeled after the hunting suit worn by the Duke of Norfolk in the early eighteenth century - was produced. This decade also saw the rise and fall of jazz clothing, which had little semblance of balance or respect for the human form, with its inordinately long, tight-fitting jackets and narrow trousers; the cake-eater suit, named for college students who wore this slightly exaggerated copy of the natural-shoulder suit; and the knicker suit, featuring plus - four knickers that fell four inches below the knee. The 1930s was undoubtedly the most elegant period for menswear, as men gravitated toward the English drape style and the sportswear industry exploded. The British drape suit made it safely into the 1940s, though it was then referred to as the British blade, British lounge, and, finally, as the "lounge suit," a fitting name for its casually elegant style.

World War II resulted in a marked austerity in dress, due in large part to the restrictions placed on the clothing industry by the War Production Board. After the war, men were ready for another change in their clothing styles, and in 1948 the "bold look" began to be seen.

The 1950s are best remembered for the "gray flannel suit" worn by the conservative businessman. Now men were back to the natural-shoulder silhouette. As reported in

Apparel Arts '75 Years of Fashion, "No style was ever so firmly resisted, so acrimoniously debated - or more enthusiastically received in various segments of the industry. Natural shoulder styling eventually became the major style influence. Brooks Bros., once a 'citadel of conservatism,' became a font of fashion as the new 'Ivy Cult' sought style direction. Charcoal and olive were the colors."

In addition to the introduction of man-made fibers, this period also saw the arrival of the Continental Look from France and Italy, featuring short jackets and broad shoulders, a shaped waistline, slanting besom pockets, sleeve cuffs, short side vents, and tapered, cuffless trousers. This "slick" look made little inroad on those who were staunch adherents of the more conservative Ivy League look, but it was a significant phenomenon nonetheless, as it moved Americans further away from the stylish elegance of the 1930s.

The sixties brought the Peacock Revolution - a phrase popularized in this country by George Frazier, a former columnist for Esquire magazine and the Boston Globe - which began on Carnaby Street in London and featured a whole array of new looks, including the Nehru jacket and the Edwardian suit. In contrast to the fifties, during which time choices were limited, a wide range of alternatives was now available as the focus moved to youth and protest. The designer Pierre Cardin even created an American version of the slim-lined European silhouette, which, along with the immense popularity of jeans, led to the acceptance of extreme fittedness in clothing - a far cry from the casual, comfortable elegance of preceding generations.

During this period, the American designer Ralph Lauren was attempting to convince the American male that there was a viable alternative to this high-style clothing. This alternative was a version of the two-button shaped suit with natural shoulders that had been introduced by Paul Stuart in 1954 and briefly popularized by John Kennedy during his presidency. Lauren updated the Stuart suit by using the kind of fabrics usually reserved for custom-made suits and dramatizing the silhouette by enlarging the lapel and giving more shape to the jacket. Lauren's following remained small, however, as most men leaned toward the jazzier Cardin-style suit.

The seventies were the era of the designer. They were also a time of intense fashion experimentation, coming at a point when the largest growth in the number of people buying fashions occurred and manufacturers tried desperately to capture the one-third of the buying public that was spending two-thirds of the money. Toward the end of the decade, after years of following the fitted clothing styles of Milan and Paris, there was a dramatic turnaround as a number of European designers and manufacturers began biting off pieces of the American style of dress. Brooks Brothers' baggy garments and button-down shirts, both indigenously American, began to be produced in European versions, for Europeans had suddenly become attracted to the looser, more comfortable style of dress and were eschewing the tight-fitting silhouette they'd embraced in the past.

While the European look still retained a foothold among American men (represented by designers such as Giorgio Armani, Basile, and Gianni Versace), the pendulum had begun to swing in the direction of a less stylized, more natural-fitting garment. A new generation of American designers joined Ralph Lauren in presenting an updated, purely American style of clothing.

Today, American men's designers are continuing to rediscover the traditions of their

past, exploring the American heritage in menswear. Of particular interest to most is the 1930s, the era of elegance, in which designers continue to find much to inspire them. Yet the experience of the last twenty years has taught them that men want not only quality, shape, and elegance but comfort as well. Clothes that lead the marketplace today are made of high-quality materials. They are soft and comfortable, but their designs still reflect the qualities of traditional Old World style.

For nearly two hundred years now, men in prominent positions have been going to work wearing proper business suits. Over the years, there have been occasional rebellions against this custom, and, in fact, a mere twenty years ago the future of business suits in this country looked bleak, as dire predictions of men appearing at work wearing jump suits and the like abounded. Yet today, perhaps more than ever before, the business suit is the accepted uniform of the successful entrepreneur.

Naturally, this brings to mind the following questions: Why has the business suit enjoyed this longevity? What purpose does it serve? Why should a man even bother wearing one when it seems to limit self-expression and stifle individuality?

Perhaps a starting point in responding to these questions appears in an advertisement placed by the pre-eminent men's clothing store, Paul Stuart, which states that "a proper function of the business suit is to offer a man a decent privacy so that irrelevant reactions are not called into play to prejudice what should be purely business transactions."

While this is certainly true, there is no reason why a man in a business suit has to look bland. Even in a business situation, it is possible to dress within certain professional parameters while still managing to avoid the trap of looking as if one just walked off the assembly line. The business suit can and should at least offer the suggestion of character and a sense of individuality. If, for instance, one works in advertising as opposed to banking, one can get away with a bit more verve in a suit rather than adhering to the more conservative look required in the latter profession. But even a man working in banking should not exempt himself from thinking about dress, for whatever one wears says something about the wearer.

More than any other single item of clothing, it is the suit that ultimately determines the overall style of a man's dress. Although the shirt, tie, and hose all have an important contribution to make to a man's style, none plays nearly so major a role as the suit, which, since it covers 80 percent of the body, actually defines the general mood and impression of one's appearance. Accessories should relate to the suit and not vice versa. To think otherwise would be tantamount to beginning the decoration of an empty apartment by first purchasing an ashtray.

THE SILHOUETTE

"The silhouette" is the term used by the clothing industry to describe the cut or shape of a suit. Women have long realized that the shape of a garment sets the tone of their appearance, but only recently have men realized that they too have a choice of styles that accomplish the same important task for them.

For this reason, the silhouette should be the primary consideration in the purchase of any suit. The fabric and details, which may add to a suit's attractiveness, and even the

fit should be of secondary concern, since it is the silhouette that actually determines the longevity of the garment. If this statement sounds the least bit dubious, think of the tight-fitting rope-shouldered, wide-labeled, flared-bottom suits of fifteen years ago. Where are they now? In all likelihood, if one still owns these garments, it's been some time since they've seen the light of day.

Today, there are three distinct silhouettes that have demonstrated their longevity: the sack suit, the European-cut suit, and the updated American-style suit. The first two choices offer distinctly different approaches to dressing: the sack disguises the figure of a man, while the European model leaves little to the imagination. The third style, the updated American-style suit, is almost an amalgam of the other two, hiding the body as well as flattering it. To my mind, it is the one silhouette that looks most comfortable on the American physique: casual, but eminently proper, stylish but without the studied elegance of the European model.

The Sack, or Brooks Brothers Natural-Shoulder, Suit

The sack, or the Brooks Brothers natural-shoulder, suit has been, for almost a century now, the backbone of American clothing. First popularized near the turn of the century, it was a silhouette characterized by a shapeless, nondarted jacket with narrow shoulders (which were soft and unpadded) as well as by flap pockets, a single rear vent, and a three- or four-button front. Designed large in order to fit many sizes, it was the first mass-produced suit and it looks it. After all, it was not called the sack suit for nothing.

Perhaps the biggest strength of the sack silhouette is also its basic weakness: it hides the shape of its wearer and takes away any sense of individuality. The reason it has managed to exist successfully for such a long period of time is simply that it appeals to the common denominator. Since it is so anonymous, it offends no one, enabling the wearer to walk into any environment and be acceptably attired.

For those seeking anonymity in their clothing, or wishing to hide an ungainly figure, this may be an acceptable style. But for anyone else, the sack-style suit is woefully inappropriate.

The European Silhouette

Only since the late 1960s has the European-cut silhouette been a major factor on the American scene. This shape relies upon severity of line to project its style. The dominant shape and style in France and Italy for the past thirty years, it has been maintained in a jacket with squarish shoulders, high armholes, and a tight fit through the chest and hips. It is two-buttoned, its back is usually non-vented, and it has a much more structured feel to it than the sack suit. The trousers tend to have a lower rise and fit more snugly through the buttocks and thigh, sitting just under the waist so that one feels them fitting through the hips and thigh, hugging the line of the leg.

As Stephen Birmingham pointed out in *Vogue*, European



men liked to “ ‘feel’ the clothes they wore...a man in a European-cut suit was very much aware that he was inside something. Sitting down was a delicate operation, and crossing the legs was not to be undertaken lightly....”

In the 1960s and ‘70s, the European fit gained much popularity in this country, in part because of the mass acceptance of jeans and the notion that clothes ought to express a man’s physicality. This silhouette offered a radical alternative to the sack suit and appealed particularly to women, who perhaps unintentionally promoted this exaggerated style, which emphasizes a man’s sexuality at the cost of subtlety and comfort. While it is true that a man wearing this silhouette did look thinner, it is also clear that he was compromising taste and style in order to feel thin.

After the initial excitement of this style wore off, American men realized they were projecting a character that was not their own. Europeans, after all, have long dressed in a more formal, studied manner. Their clothing evolved to reflect not only their thin and lithe body types, but also their penchant for elegance and formality. Americans, on the other hand, have always preferred a more subtle and casual style. With their broader shoulders and wider chests, they require a softening in the lines of their clothing, not the hard angles identified with

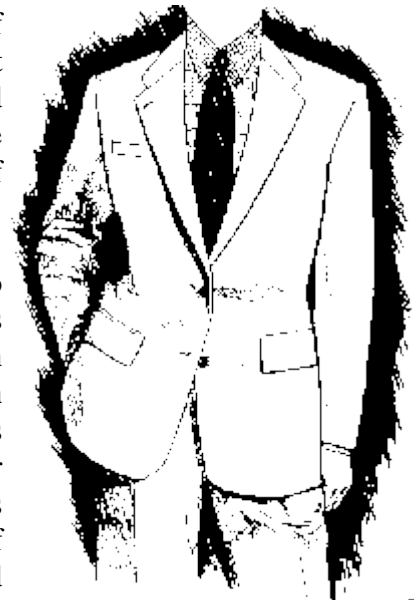
the European styles. Recognizing this, they are returning in greater numbers to endemic styles that are designed to complement their larger physiques; clothing that is soft and comfortable, but with a tasteful subtlety that is the purest idiom of the

American heritage.

The Updated American Silhouette

The updated American silhouette is a combination of the best elements of the sack and the European-cut suit. The jacket has some of the same softness and fullness through the chest and shoulder areas of the sack, to which it adds some of the European notion of shape.

Long the staple of fine dressers, from Clark Gable to Fred Astaire to Cary Grant, this soft, shaped suit was essentially a spin-off from the sack. The three-button sack coat was modified to a two-button version with some suppression at the waist by Paul Stuart. As mentioned earlier, this style was then modified further by Ralph Lauren, beginning in the mid-1960s. Both his espousal of it and the subsequent support of a score of young American designers gained, for this updated American style, the national recognition and the widespread acceptance it has today.



Like the European model, the new American-style jacket is tapered at the waist, giving the wearer something of a V-shaped appearance. The jacket, with its two-button design, has a longer lapel roll. In further contrast to the sack, this style also has a somewhat higher armhole and the chest is a bit smaller. All these details work to give it

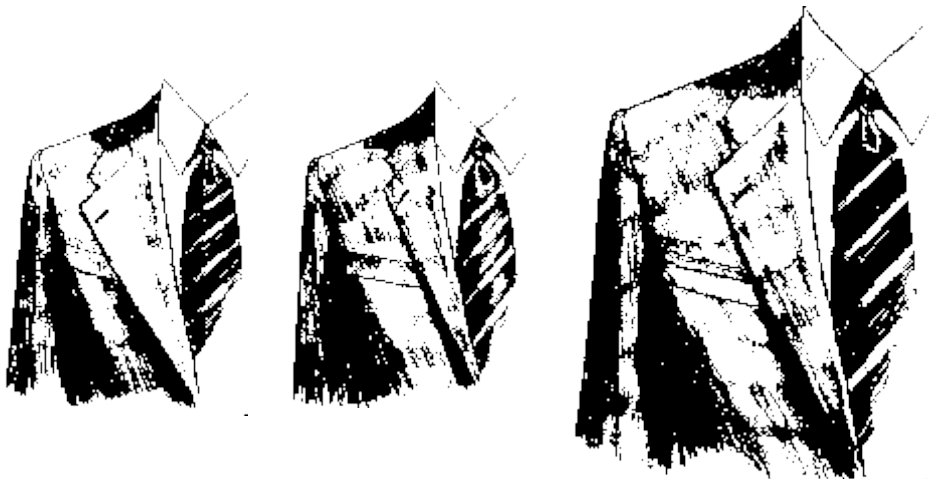
more definition than its dour predecessor.

These modifications give the updated American suit a freedom that allows the materials to adapt themselves to the wearer's physique. This is as it should be. Angular clothing tends to impose itself on the body. It has its own shape, and the wearer must fit into it rather than the other way around. The adaptation of clothing to the wearer's physique, on the other hand, is the ideal expression of oneself. Like a good haircut, the cut of a suit should never call attention to itself. Elegance or style can be achieved only through softness of line. This is why the updated American-style suit jacket has a modified natural shoulder and is cut with a slight taper at the waist, while the trousers take their line from the shape of a man's leg.

THE DETAILS

Lapels

Lapels have always been a reflection of the fashion of the moment, widening or shrinking in size to suit the taste of stores or individual designers. This is unfortunate, since their size should never be a matter of whim but always a reflection of the jacket's proportions.



The lapel of a well-styled suit should extend to just a fraction less than the halfway mark between the collar and shoulder line. In general, this size means a width of approximately 3 1/2 inches, thus honoring the main principle of classic tailoring, which is that no part, no detail, should violate the integrity of the whole.

Pockets

The flaps on the pockets should be consistent with the size of the lapels - neither too large nor too small. Like the lapels, they should not draw particular attention to themselves. In addition, their actual size should conform to that of the jacket. Patch pockets are fine on sports jackets or sporty suits, but for a dressy suit, a flap pocket or jetted pocket is more appropriate. The jetted pocket is the most dressy, which is why it is traditionally found on the tuxedo. The flap pocket will put a touch more

thickness on the hip, while the slit pocket gives a slimmer look.

Vents

Jacket vents have a military heritage. Before the advent of the automobile, soldiers traveled by horse and thus clothes were adapted accordingly. The slit in the tails of the coat permitted it to fall on each side of the horse, allowing greater comfort and freedom of motion for the wearer. This comfort and ease carried over into walking and sitting, as vents allow trouser pockets to be more accessible and sitting more comfortable.

There are three types of jacket vents: the non-vented jacket, favored by Europeans; the double-vented jacket, favored mostly by the English; and the single-vented jacket, favored by Americans.

The ventless jacket has wonderful form but functions poorly as a design. Whenever you choose to put your hands in your pockets, or sit down, there is no place for the jacket to go, and so it creases and bunches up in the back.

The single-vented jacket gives the wearer a boxy look in back by cutting him precisely in half, and when one puts one's hands in the pockets, the jacket appears to split open down the middle, often exposing the belt, the shirt, and the buttocks.

Those who were the best-dressed in the 1930s wore either the double-vented or the non-vented jacket. However, the double-vented jacket gives added shape to the garment by emphasizing the outside lines of the body. When the wearer is walking, you can

see movement on the side, as the jacket corresponds to the movement of the leg. This fluidity helps create a more attractive silhouette. Moreover, the distance from the floor to the bottom of the jacket is lengthened by an observer's eye moving smoothly up the length of the vent, thus giving the wearer the illusion of greater height. Beyond aesthetics, the double-vented jacket is a perfect example of form and function uniting. This is evident when you sit down or put your hands in your pockets: the flap comes up, which allows the jacket to avoid creasing and the buttocks to remain covered.

The only time one might avoid the double-vented jacket is if a man is excessively wide hipped and broad in the rear. Here, the single-vented jacket can do more to camouflage breadth.

The height of the vents should correspond to the bottom of the flap on one's jacket pocket. This means a slit of between seven to nine inches on a size 40 regular. If higher, the vents will simply call attention to themselves.

FIT

Once you've selected the proper silhouette, the next move is into the fitting room. Years ago, when men's fashions were less fickle and tailors were better versed in the manners of correct dress, this was a reasonable act of

faith. Unfortunately, this is not the case today. In all but the very finest stores, today's tailor is simply another cog in the assembly line. He is anxious to get you out with as few alterations and as little cost to the store as possible.

Frankly, then, it is not a good idea to put yourself completely in the hands of the store's tailor, who, more likely than not, has no particular point of view regarding fit. At best, he might offer a strange hybrid of his training, what the store has to offer, and the moment's fashion. As a rule, a customer doesn't know exactly what he wants, and unless the store sells only one style of clothing, he will find himself totally at the mercy of its tailor.

To combat this, it's a good idea to know at least some of the basic principles of fit.

Only one man in a hundred is likely to step into a ready-made suit and find it fits him correctly. Manufacturer standards vary from one to another, so that a size 40 doesn't necessarily mean that the shoulder widths are the same in any two suits. Additionally, no two men are likely to resemble each other in the same way that body parts often don't resemble one another. Both our arms are not exactly the same length, and the curve of the back is often different from one person to the next. This, taken along with the fact that cloths will stretch in varying degrees, means that one must allow for lots of variations in different suits.

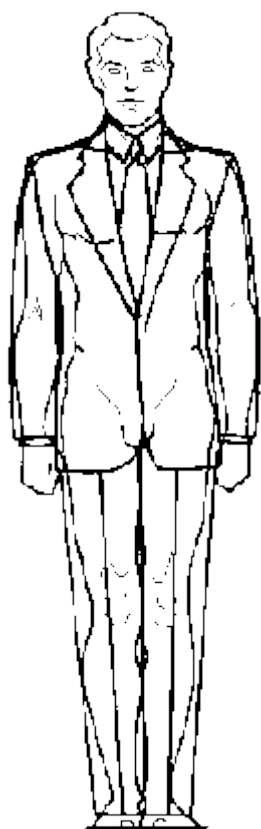
There are three critical areas to consider when selecting a suit: the shoulder and chest, the armhole, and the coat length. If the suit selected is not proportioned to your physique in the first place, no amount of tailoring can make it right.

Most men mistakenly use the shoulder width as a gauge for sizing their jacket. The widest part of the body, however, is the distance across the chest and upper arm. It is here that one should look when making a selection. In an effort to make a man appear thinner, many manufacturers cut the shoulder width so narrow that the upper arm protrudes. Make certain, then, that a jacket's shoulders are wide enough to allow the line down the arm from the top edge of the shoulder to fall perpendicular to the ground without bulges. The jacket must be broad enough across the chest to feel comfortable when buttoned. A good test for minimum fullness is to sit down with the jacket buttoned (years ago, it was considered improper to unbutton a jacket in public). If it is not comfortable, then the jacket is not full enough. Return it to the rack and try another. This is very important, since the chest area is critical to the fit of a jacket and, in all too many cases, jackets are cut too small.

Next, consider the armhole, another area that cannot be corrected in the fitting room. It should be cut so that the lower part fits comfortably up into the armpit but is not actually felt. This gives a cleaner look and permits arm movement without the jacket being pulled out of place. Conversely, a low armhole (the technical term for the lower part of the armhole) causes the sleeves to bind when they are raised.

Finally, there is the length of the jacket to consider. You should not attempt to shorten or lengthen a suit jacket any more than an inch or two, or the

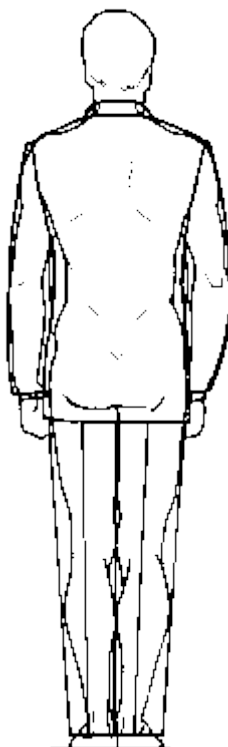
pocket height will be thrown out of balance, making it either too low or too high. Also, the jacket is usually half an inch longer in the front than in the back. This gives the jacket a line that makes it seem as if the jacket is dropping down into the body rather than standing back away from it.



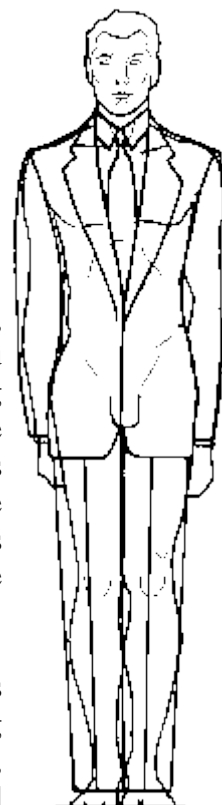
The basic criterion is that be long enough to cover the buttocks. In general, not be longer than it has accomplish this, since the the longer the line of the with the exception of the having the jacket just buttocks tends to cut him should be a little longer in a very tall man as well, him to look slightly also calls for the jacket to longer)



the jacket must the curvature of the jacket ought to be to shorter the jacket, leg. This is true short man, where cover the in half (the jacket this case), and for where it causes unbalanced (this be slightly



When the length of the jacket is being measured, tailor to talk you method of dropping measuring at the hand. There is variation in the arms as well as this as the sole



don't allow your into the traditional your arms and then halfway point of the simply too much length of men's their bodies to use method.

Once the correctly selected, the fitting along those items -

pen, address book, change, and so on - that you would normally carry. It makes no sense to have a breast-pocket billfold produce a bulge when the suit can be altered to hide it. It is also a good idea to wear the haberdashery that would normally accompany this kind of clothing. Wearing a dress shirt with the correct sleeve length and cuff will enable you to better judge the length of the jacket sleeve if it is to show the standard one-half inch of shirt cuff. The height of the dress- shirt collar also helps determine whether the jacket collar is low enough to permit the correct one-half inch of shirt collar to appear above it. A knotted tie controls the position of the shirt-collar points, which should not be covered by the neckline of the vest. Shoes aid in establishing the correct trouser length.

proportioned suit is room awaits. Bring wallet, cigarettes,

After slipping on the trousers and jacket, with the appropriate items in the pockets and wearing the proper dress shirt, assume a standing position that is comfortable and natural. Fitting a jacket to a stance, other than the one normally assumed, will ultimately result in the distortion of the line of the jacket when a man stands at ease.



The fitting should begin at the top. The collar should curve smoothly around the back of the neck while the lapels lie flat on the chest. If the jacket collar stands away from the neck, either the manufacturer was careless in attaching it or the collar needs to be altered to fit your particular physique. Since many



fabrics fit and drape differently, this is a common alteration that can be handled by most competent tailors. But if you do authorize the store's tailor to make the attempt, be certain you try the suit on in the store after the alterations have been completed. If the collar is still not smooth around the neck, refuse to accept the suit. There is nothing that can destroy the clean lines of a well-tailored jacket more than a collar bouncing on the neck. Instead of allowing the jacket to become a natural extension of the body, the bunching collar makes clear its incompatibility.

Once the shoulders, chest, and neck are satisfactory, continue the inspection downward. The jacket's waist should be slightly tapered, responding to the natural thinning of the body. Be careful not to have it taken in so tightly that the silhouette becomes exaggerated and movements constricted. The jacket is not supposed to fit like a glove (best leave that to the gloves), but it should make reference to the healthy body underneath. Often a great suppression of the waist will make the jacket spread around the hips, opening the vent or vents in the rear. The vents should never be pulled apart so that the seat of the trousers shows. Rather, the vents should fall in a natural line perpendicular to the ground.

Curiously, one of the most important aspects of a suit's alteration is the least complicated: adjusting the sleeve length. Most American men wear their jacket sleeves too long, which makes them appear dowdy. This is probably a vestige of the days when mothers bought coats and jackets with longer sleeves so that their sons would grow into them.



All that business of measuring up from the thumb a prescribed number of inches is a waste of time. Merely let your arms hang down naturally. Then have the sleeves shortened (or lengthened) to the point where the wrist and hand meet. Remember to make sure that the tailor

measures both sleeves, since arm lengths differ. The one-half-inch band of “linen” between sleeve and hand is one of the details that go into making a definably well-dressed man.

Vests

The vest as we know it today originated with the postboy waistcoat of nineteenth-century England. It was worn for warmth by the postboy, or postillion, who rode as guide on the horse attached closest to the coach.

Up until World War II, men always wore vests in the wintertime with their single-breasted suits. In recent years the vagaries of fashion have brought this custom in and out of favor. “Fashion” should not be your guide. If you have an opportunity to purchase a vest with your suit, do so. There are numerous advantages to owning a vest, not the least of which is the increased versatility of a three-piece suit. A suit worn with a vest always gives a slightly dressier look.

Vests should fit cleanly around the body, covering the waistband of the trousers and peeking just above the waist button (or middle button) of the suit jacket. Good vests are often cut so that one doesn't button the bottom button, a tradition that began when a member of English royalty appeared at a public function with his bottom button mistakenly undone. This faux pas was picked up by the middle class and has remained with us ever since, producing a casual, somewhat more open look.

Of course, there's no sense wearing a vest if it's not worn correctly. When the jacket is buttoned at the waist, one should be able to see just a small part of the vest above it. Any higher than this and the effect becomes strained, concealing too much of the tie as well. Also, the neckline of the vest should not cover the collar points of the dress shirt but should instead clip them slightly. In addition, the entire elegance of a three-piece suit is destroyed if the trousers are worn on the hips, below the inverted V at the bottom of the vest. This allows the shirt or belt to interrupt the smooth transition line from vest to trousers.

A well-made vest has a definite waistline, which is where the waistline of the trousers should hit. The front of the proper vest is normally made from the same fabric as the suit, while the back uses the same fabric as the sleeve lining of the suit jacket.

Vests are adjustable in the rear and traditionally have four slightly slanted welt pockets - two just below the waist and two breast pockets. The breast pockets are deep enough to hold a pair of glasses or a pen, while the shallow lower pockets afford one the option

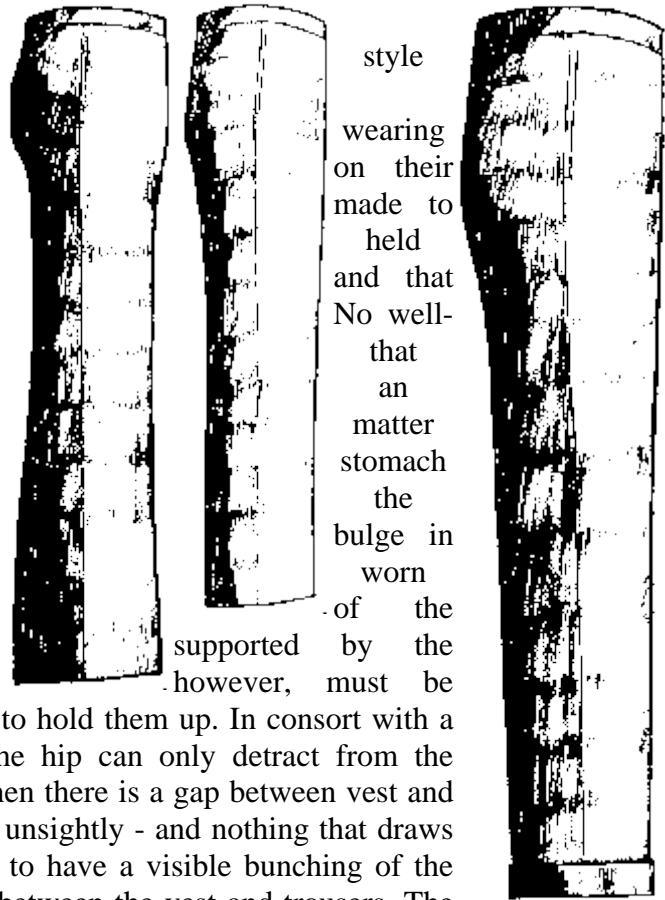


of sporting a pocket watch.

Trousers

In the last twenty years, the popularity of jeans and European-pants has unfortunately accustomed most young men to trousers that are too tight and rest hips. Trousers were originally be worn with suspenders, which them on the waist, not the hips, is where they look and hang best. dressed man would wear trousers rested anywhere else. This is not arbitrary gesture. Every man, no how thin, has a slight bulge in his area. When trousers are worn on waist, they pass smoothly over this an even drape. Furthermore, waist-trousers emphasize the smallness waist. They sit there comfortable, hips. Trousers worn on the hip,

belted tightly, for there is nothing to hold them up. In consort with a vested suit, trousers resting on the hip can only detract from the overall appearance, particularly when there is a gap between vest and trouser top. There is nothing more unsightly - and nothing that draws more attention to the waist - than to have a visible bunching of the shirt or the belt sticking out from between the vest and trousers. The solution is to reaccustom yourself to the way men used to wear trousers. It made sense then and it still does today.



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The line of the trousers should follow the natural contours of the body, tapering slowly from hip to ankle. With a waist of 30 to 34 inches, the trousers should have legs with circumferences of 21 to 22 inches at the knees and 18 to 19 1/2 inches at the bottom. Such a description obviously eliminates all types of bell-, flair-, and straight-bottom trousers. These styles, which run counter to the natural lines of the body, call attention to themselves, often cutting the wearer off at the knees. This is especially damaging to someone of small stature, who ends up looking even shorter.

Traditionally, the width of the bottom of a man's trousers was cut to balance the size of his shoe. This means that the width should generally correspond to three-quarters of the length of a man's shoe. The relationship between shoe and trouser bottom is also a convincing argument against having a trouser line that is anything but a slight natural taper.

When having trousers fitted on the waist, the crotch of the trousers should fit as high as is comfortable. This is especially important for giving a clean fit without sacrificing freedom of movement. The trousers should be worn wide enough across the hips so that there is no pulling across the front pockets. From the side view, the pockets should lie flat on the hips. Trousers to be worn with suspenders should be one-half inch fuller

in the waist and must also be a little longer.

Trousers have always been cut in two styles: plain front and pleated front. Traditionally, pleated-front trousers have been the choice of the well-dressed man. Again, there is a functional basis underlying the use of pleats. It was a device created to combine comfort and function. When one sits, the hips naturally widen. The pleat enables the trousers to respond. Additionally, the pleats help to break up the width of the front of the trousers and allow a graceful draping of the cloth, which is particularly evident when a man is walking.

In fitting pleated trousers, the key is to have enough fullness in the thigh that the pleat does not pull open when one is standing. If one is not prepared to wear trousers with a wider thigh, one is better advised to stick to the plain-front style.

When Abe Lincoln was asked how long a man's legs should be, he replied glibly, "Long enough to reach the ground." Such advice, somewhat modified, might be used to answer the question regarding the proper length of a man's trousers. Trousers should be long enough so that when you walk, your hose does not show.

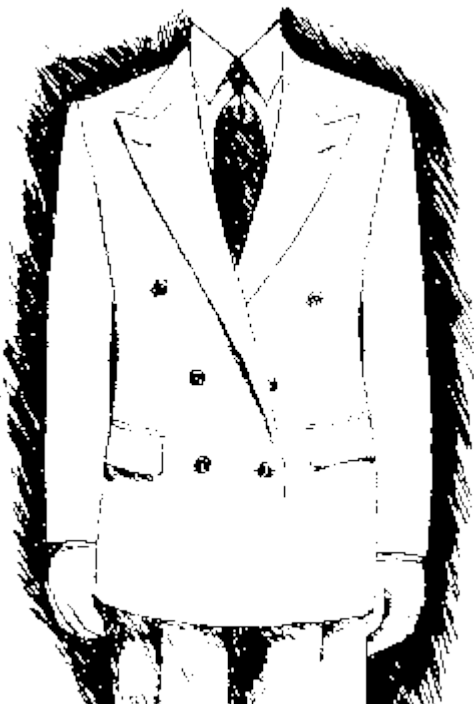
Cuffed trousers are hemmed on a straight line and should be long enough to break slightly over the instep. Cuffless trousers are hemmed on a slant so that the back falls slightly lower (just at the point where the heel and sole meet).

The use of cuffs is optional, although they do give more weight and pull, thereby emphasizing the line of the trousers. Like any other detail of the suit, cuffs should never be so exaggerated that they call attention to themselves. For this reason, the cuff should be 1 5/8 inches if the man is five feet ten inches or less and 1 3/4 inches if he is taller.

The Double-Breasted Suit

A major style of dress prior to World War II, was the double-breasted jacket. Indeed, in the 1930s, 50 percent of all dinner jackets purchased were double-breasted. In fact, it was the Duke of Kent, the Duke of Windsor's brother, who was the first to appear wearing a double-breasted jacket with the bottom button buttoned and with a long, rolled lapel. It wasn't long before other style setters, including Fred Astaire, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., and others, followed suit. As a result, this became the dominant style of dress right up until World War II, when ready-made fashions took over the marketplace and, because they were less expensive and easier to produce, single-breasted jackets became far more prevalent.

Although the choice between a single- and double-breasted jacket is simply a matter of personal taste, there is no well-dressed man who



doesn't have several double-breasted jackets in his wardrobe. This coat is undeniably dressier and, as in the case of pleated trousers, gives a slightly more sophisticated look to the wearer.

If one elects to wear a double-breasted jacket, one must keep the jacket buttoned, though there is a choice between buttoning the bottom button or the middle button (but never both). Buttoning only the bottom button gives the wearer a longer line and especially favors the shorter man. Contrary to popular misconceptions, almost anyone except someone exceptionally broad in the hips can wear a double-breasted jacket and look well if the jacket is cut properly. In the 1930s, some of the most elegantly attired Brazilian diplomats, none of whom were taller than five feet six inches, wore double-breasted clothing and it did nothing to mar their appearance. In fact, one of the advantages of double-breasted clothing, especially for the shorter man, is that the uninterrupted line of the lapel, when buttoned on the lower button, can make a man look somewhat taller, as it cuts diagonally across the body. On the other hand, buttoning the middle or waist button can break up the length of a tall man, thereby balancing him somewhat better.

With the exception of shawl-collared evening jackets, double-breasted jackets should always have peaked lapels. The notched lapels of recent vogue are an abomination and a boon only to manufacturers who produce them less expensively. Traditionally, each lapel took a buttonhole. (In Europe they have dropped the right buttonhole). Historically, the wearer took advantage of this arrangement to close up his jacket. Today, they are merely an aesthetic necessity, since without them the jacket appears unbalanced. For much the same reason, the double-breasted jacket should be double-vented, though a non-vented jacket is also proper.

Sports Jackets

In the first decade of this century, the sports jacket began life simply as the jacket of a dark blue serge suit worn with white flannel trousers and by certain "swells" at fashionable summer resorts.

I wasn't until 1918, however, that the first American sports jacket, based on the Norfolk suit of Harris or Donegal tweed, gained widespread popularity among the wealthy, who could afford a special jacket especially for sport. By 1923, nearly all the

best-dressed men at fashionable resorts, such as Palm Beach, had taken to wearing sports jackets, which were no longer simply suit jackets thrown together with odd trousers. The following year, the blazer jacket was all the rage. This sports jacket was based upon that worn aboard a British sailing vessel of the 1860s, H.M.S. Blazer. It seems that the captain of that vessel was disturbed by the way his crew dressed and comported themselves, and so he ordered them to wear dark blue serge jackets on which were sewn the Royal Navy buttons. Thus, they were uniformly dressed, so that their appearance - and one would assume their behavior as well - was markedly improved.

As the years passed and men dressed more informally, the popularity of the sports jacket grew enormously to the extent that today it is a staple of every man's wardrobe.

The fit and styling of a well-cut sports jacket closely follows that of the classic suit

jacket. Where the two might differ is in their materials and perhaps in some of the specific detailing. Sports jackets have more visible details, such as swelled or lapped edges on the lapels, patch pockets, leather buttons, or a yoke or belt in the back. These variations are as much a reflection of the independent origins of the two kinds of jackets as it is of their present differing roles.

In fitting a sports jacket, most of the same rules used in selecting a suit apply. However, a sports jacket ought to fit somewhat more loosely in order to accommodate a wool sweater or odd vest.

Today, sports jackets are ubiquitous and worn in a wide variety of situations, though not always appropriately. Do not forget that the sports jacket, because of its origins and tradition, conveys a casual image. While it may seem to be the perfect attire for a weekend or social get-together, it never looks serious enough in a business environment. If in doubt about the formality of a particular occasion, the safer choice is always a suit, since one cannot be faulted for being overdressed, although the reverse is not always true.

Topcoats and Overcoats

Generally speaking, a topcoat is somewhat lighter than an overcoat, but today the line between the two has become blurred, so that the terms are often used interchangeably.

At the turn of the century, due to the oversized suits, overcoats were quite long, ranging anywhere from 42 to 52 inches and extending well below the knee. As time passed, though, overcoats became trimmer and less bulky, with popular styles ranging from the Chesterfield, named for the nineteenth-century Earl of Chesterfield, to the Ulster, which was originally worn in Ireland.

The basic principles of silhouette and fit that guide one in choosing a classic suit should also be followed when selecting a topcoat. As with the suit jacket, the shape of the collar around the neck is the key area of fit. The collar should lie flat and curve smoothly around the neck, not ride up.

When you try on a topcoat, make sure you are wearing a jacket underneath. There should always be enough room for a jacket or sweater (with no feeling that you are being bound), since in most cases that is what you will be wearing underneath. Sleeves should be fitted slightly longer than the jacket sleeve, one-half inch below the wrist. No shirt linen or jacket sleeve should be visible.



Where most men err in fitting their topcoats is in the length. The bottom of the coat should fall just below the knees, or if you prefer a longer topcoat, then six or eight inches below the knees. This length is crucial. When topcoats are above the knee, a man looks bulky and stunted. Because the upper part of the body is massive compared with the rest, and because this massiveness is accentuated even further by the wearing of a jacket covered by a topcoat, the length of the coat is needed to rebalance the

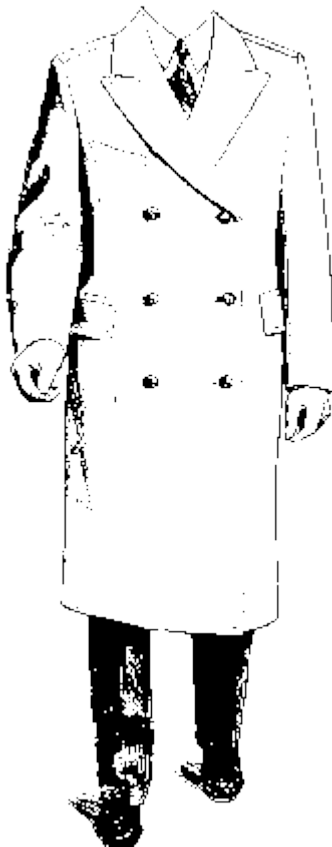
body's proportions.

On a purely pragmatic level, long coats offer greater warmth and protection. Why expose the knees and legs to the ice and cold when they can be comfortably enveloped in wool?

On the other hand, one's topcoat should never be so long that it functions as a street cleaner or touches the ground as one climbs steps.

In the same practical vein, one must wonder about manufacturers who produce topcoats with high rear vents. Not only does one look ridiculous when the wind blows open the long flaps, exposing the seat of one's pants, but it can be awfully cold and uncomfortable. Rear vents should never extend above the bottom curvature of the buttocks.

There is a plethora of overcoats manufactured today in a wide variety of styles, but only a few can be considered "classic." These few are certain to retain their stylishness in the future. For daytime wear, this might mean a single-breasted



Chesterfield in navy blue or charcoal gray with or without a velvet collar; a single- or double-breasted navy or gray herringbone overcoat; an English fly-front tan covert coat, again, with or without a matching velvet collar; a fawn-colored double-breasted British warmer; or a camel's hair "polo" coat, double-breasted, with a belt in the back. In the evening, consider a Chesterfield overcoat of black wool with a black velvet collar, or a dark tweed with a fur collar.



As I enumerated above, many of these fine coats come in both single- and double-breasted styles. One ought to remember that double-breasted coats tend to be warmer because of the second layer of material that crosses the front of the coat. There are also some handsome coats with raglan-shouldered sleeves. However, unless the raglan shoulders are cut wide enough, the suit jacket will produce a bulge underneath, impairing a smooth drape.

THE DISTINGUISHING QUALITIES OF A WELL - MADE SUIT

Often what distinguishes a fine, well-made suit from all others is simply a matter of the details. In most cases, the presence or absence of these details is a good indicator of the quality or the level of style of the suit in question.

Generally speaking, the more handwork that goes into a suit, the more expensive it will be. For instance, most of the less expensive suits today (those costing under \$300) have canvas fused or glued to the front of the jacket in order to stabilize the shape and cloth. In the finer suits, however, the canvas is stitched by hand, so that the cloth tends to shape itself to the body. (The one exception to this is with cotton suits, for which, because they wrinkle, fused fronts may be preferable.)

In most cases, the softer the feel of the suit, the better it is. One might try putting one's hand on the chest and squeezing the cloth. If it is soft to the touch, chances are it's not only a fine fabric but of quality manufacture. Perhaps the easiest way to experience the feeling of wearing a hand-made suit is to try on one manufactured by the Chicago clothing firm of Oxford. While the design is for the older man, it is the finest quality ready-made suit manufactured today.

Handwork

As stated above, the more pieces of a suit that are sewn together by hand, the better the quality and, naturally, the higher the price will be. Industrial technology today allows clothing companies to make a suit almost entirely by machine, but a fine-quality manufacturer will still insist on having some parts made by hand. Two areas are particularly significant, and one should check them before choosing a suit. First, look under the collar. A fine-quality jacket will have the collar attached to the jacket by hand.

The other important detail involves the setting of the sleeves to the jacket body. If they have been felled by hand, one can count on good fit and proper shape. This is the area that receives the most wear and pressure, so a strong binding is also extremely important. The best suits use fine-quality silk thread.

Hand stitching on the edge of the lapel is another detail one might look for. This stitching has no utilitarian value, but it is a nice finishing touch to a lapel and is evidence of a concern for quality on the part of the manufacturer.

Lining

A lovely trapping of fine tailoring is handsome lining. Traditionally, the body lining was color-coordinated with the suit fabric (this is still occasionally available) while striped linings were used in the sleeves. But the color is less important than the quality of the fabric. Make certain it is soft and neatly sewn into the coat.

Curiously, it is actually more expensive to make a suit without a lining than one with a lining. In an unlined jacket, all the inside seams must be perfectly finished. Yet when manufacturers made and tried to market unlined jackets in an effort to make clothing softer and cooler, American men refused to buy them. They believed that these "unconstructed" jackets must be of lesser quality, or else they simply preferred the ease of sliding into their clothing.

However, a lining does provide a jacket with increased durability as well as helping to maintain its line.

Buttonholes

The buttonholes are another indicator of a suit's quality. Another holdover from the past is the fact that all fine-quality suits have handmade buttonholes. You can tell a handmade buttonhole by looking to see whether it is smooth on the outside and rough on the inside; a handmade one will be just that, but a machine-made one will be smoother and more perfect-looking on both sides. Traditionally, buttons have been sewn on so that they are cross-stitched. The buttonholes should be well-finished, with no threads hanging. If a manufacturer would release a suit with one of its most visible aspects in disrepair, think how little care must have been given to those parts of the suit that don't show.

Real buttonholes on the sleeve - ones that actually function - have long been a symbol of custom tailoring. Mass manufacturers could not employ this detail because stores needed the capability to alter the sleeve length to fit different-size arms. The only way to alter a sleeve that has an open buttonhole is to remove the sleeve from the shoulder and then make the adjustment - a prohibitively expensive alteration. Originally, these open buttonholes might have served some real function, such as allowing a man to turn back the sleeves while working or, in the past, for using with detachable-cuff shirts. Today, however, they are simply a symbol.

Whether they are serving a function or not, buttons should be on the sleeves of jackets; four each on suit jackets and overcoats; two or four on sports jackets. The four buttons on a suit should be set closely together, with their edges "kissing," and the edge of the bottom button should be no more than three-quarters of an inch from the bottom of the sleeve.

The one working buttonhole worth having is on the lapel. After all, it is the most visible of all the buttonholes. Besides, a working buttonhole allows the wearer to sport a flower in the lapel, which from time to time can be a wonderful aid to a stylish look and on those occasions when one must wear a flower, there is nothing considered more *outré* than the stem being pinned to the lapel. For this reason alone, no fine suit lacks a functioning buttonhole.

Materials

There is only one immutable principle governing the selection of fine suit material: the cloth must be made from natural fibers. This means some type of fine worsted or woolen in the cooler periods of the year - worsted, flannel, gabardine, and so on - and in the summer, if not a tropical wool, then linen, cotton, or silk. There is absolutely no way a man can ever be considered well-dressed wearing a blended suit with more synthetic fibers than natural ones. These fabrics stand away from the body, stiffly retaining their own shape, rather than settling on the individual wearer. No matter how hard one tries, one's suit will somehow always look artificial.

In addition to look and feel, there will be less maintenance required for a natural fiber suit. A fine wool suite rarely has to be dry cleaned. Because air can pass through it, the wool can "breathe" and damp odor from perspiration will readily evaporate. Wool yarn

can also return to its original shape. If the trousers are hung from the cuff and the jacket hung on a properly curved hanger after a day's wear, the suit will return to its original unincreased form by the following day.

Perhaps the most important compensation of wearing natural- fiber suite is the comfort one can enjoy having a fabric next to the skin that somewhat simulates its properties. Natural materials have a soft, luxurious feeling. They act like a second skin, letting out perspiration and body heat when necessary and holding in warmth when it's cold outside.

Synthetic fabrics, on the other hand, are forms of plastic. They have no ability to "breathe." In summer, these suits are hot, holding in the warmth of the body; in winter, they offer no protection from the cold. One can choose a suit with 3 to 5 percent nylon reinforcement, but any larger amount of synthetic fiber will being to undermine the natural material's beneficial properties.

NECKWEAR

*"A well-tied tie is the
first serious step in life"*
- Oscar Wilde

The history of neckties dates back a mere hundred years or so, for they came into existence as the direct result of a war. In 1660, in celebration of its hard-fought victory over Turkey, a crack regiment from Croatia (then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire), visited Paris. There, the soldiers were presented as glorious heroes to Louis XIV, a monarch well known for his eye toward personal adornment. It so happened that the officers of this regiment were wearing brightly colored handkerchiefs fashioned of silk around their necks. These neck cloths, which probably descended from the Roman fascalia worn by orators to warm the vocal chords, struck the fancy of the king, and he soon made them an insignia of royalty as he created a regiment of Royal Cravattes. The word "cravat," incidentally, is derived from the word "Croat."

It wasn't long before this new style crossed the channel to England. Soon no gentleman would have considered himself well-dressed without sporting some sort of cloth around his neck--the more decorative, the better. At times, cravats were worn so high that a man could not move his head without turning his whole body. There were even reports of cravats worn so thick that they stopped sword thrusts. The various styles knew no bounds, as cravats of tasseled strings, plaid scarves, tufts and bows of ribbon, lace, and embroidered linen all had their staunch adherents. Nearly one hundred different knots were recognized, and as a certain M. Le Blanc, who instructed men in the fine and sometimes complex art of tying a tie, noted, "The grossest insult that can be offered to a man *comme il faut* is to seize him by the cravat; in this place blood only can wash out the stain upon the honor of either party."

In this country, ties were also an integral part of a man's wardrobe. However, until the time of the Civil War, most ties were imported from the Continent. Gradually, though, the industry gained ground, to the point that at the beginning of the twentieth century, American neckwear finally began to rival that of Europe, despite the fact that European

fabrics were still being heavily imported.

In the 1960s, in the midst of the Peacock Revolution, there was a definite lapse in the inclination of men to wear ties, as a result of the rebellion against both tradition and the formality of dress. But by the mid-1970s, this trend had reversed itself to the point where now, in the 1980s, the sale of neckwear is probably as strong if not stronger than it has ever been.

How to account for the continued popularity of neckties? For years, fashion historians and sociologists predicted their demise--the one element of a man's attire with no obvious function. Perhaps they are merely part of an inherited tradition. As long as world and business leaders continue to wear ties, the young executives will follow suit and ties will remain a key to the boardroom. On the other hand, there does seem to be some aesthetic value in wearing a tie. In addition to covering the buttons of the shirt and giving emphasis to the verticality of a man's body (in much the same way that the buttons on a military uniform do), it adds a sense of luxury and richness, color and texture, to the austerity of the dress shirt and business suit.

Perhaps no other item of a man's wardrobe has altered its shape so often as the tie. It seems that the first question fashion writers always ask is, "Will men's ties be wider or narrower this year?"

In the late 1960s and early 70s, ties grew to five inches in width. At the time, the rationale was that these wide ties were in proportion to the wider jacket lapels and longer shirt collars. This was the correct approach, since these elements should always be in balance. But once these exaggerated proportions were discarded, fat ties became another victim of fashion.

The proper width of a tie, and one that will never be out of style, is 3 1/4 inches (2 3/4 to 3 1/2 inches are also acceptable). As long as the proportions of men's clothing remain true to a man's body shape, this width will set the proper balance. Though many of the neckties sold today are cut in these widths, the section of the tie where the knot is made has remained thick--a holdover from the fat, napkinlike ties of the 1960s. This makes tying a small, elegant knot more difficult. Yet the relationship of a tie's knot to the shirt collar is an important consideration. If the relationship is proper, the knot will never be so large that it spreads the collar or forces it open, nor will it be so small that it will become lost in the collar.

Standard neckties come in lengths anywhere from 52 to 58 inches long. Taller men, or those who use a [Windsor knot](#), may require a longer tie, which can be special-ordered. After being tied, the tips of the necktie should be long enough to reach the waistband of the trousers. (The ends of the tie should either be equal, or the smaller one just a fraction shorter.)

After you've confirmed the appropriateness of a tie's shape, next feel the fabric. If it's made of silk and it feels rough to the touch, then the silk is of an inferior quality. Silk that is not supple is very much like hair that's been dyed too often. It's brittle and its ends will fray easily. If care hasn't been taken in the inspection of ties, you may find misweaves and puckers.

All fine ties are cut on the bias, which means they have been cut across the fabric. This allows them to fall straight after the knot has been tied, without curling. A simple test

consists of holding a tie across you hand. If it begins to twirl in the air, it was probably not cut on the bias and it should not be purchased.

Quality neckties want you to see everything: they have nothing to hide. Originally, neckties were cut from a single large square of silk, which was then folded seven times in order to give the tie a rich fullness. Today the price of silk and the lack of skilled artisans prohibits this form of manufacture. Ties now derive their body and fullness by means of an additional inner lining.

Besides giving body to the tie, the lining helps the tie hold its shape. The finest-quality ties today are lined with 100 percent wool and are generally made only in Europe. Most other quality ties use a wool mixture. The finer the tie, the higher the wool content. You can actually check. Fine linings are marked with a series of gold bars which are visible if you open up the back of the tie. The more bars, the heavier the lining. Many people assume that a quality tie must be thick, as this would suggest that the silk is heavy and therefore expensive. In fact, in most cases it is simply the insertion of a heavier lining that gives the tie this bulk. Be sure, then, that the bulk of the tie that you're feeling is the silk outer fabric and not the lining.

After you've examined the lining, take a look at the tie just above the spot where the two sides come together to form an inverted V. In most quality ties, you will find a stitch joining the back flaps. This is called the bar tack, and it helps maintain the shape of the tie.

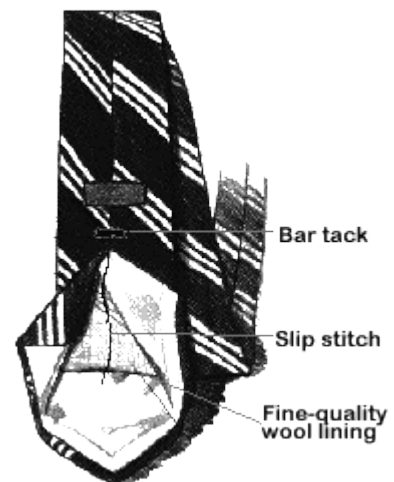
Now, if you can, open up the tie as far as possible and look for a loose black thread. This thread is called the slip stitch and was invented by a man named Joss Langsdorf in the 1920s to give added resilience to the tie. The fact that the tie can move along this thread means that it won't rip when it's being wrapped tightly around your neck, and that it will, when removed, return to its original shape. Pull the slip stitch, and the tie should gather. If you can do this, you've found a quality, handmade tie.

Finally, take the tie in your hand and run your finger down its length. You should find three separate pieces of fabric stitched together, not two, as in most commercial ties. This construction is used to help the tie conform easily to the neck.

NECKTIE KNOTS

There are several standard ways to knot a tie: the [four-in-hand knot](#) (which dates back to the days of the coach and four in England, when the men on top of the coach would knot their ties in this manner to prevent them from flying in the wind while they were driving); the [Windsor knot](#), purportedly invented by the Duke of Windsor, though he later disclaimed the invention; and the half-Windsor.

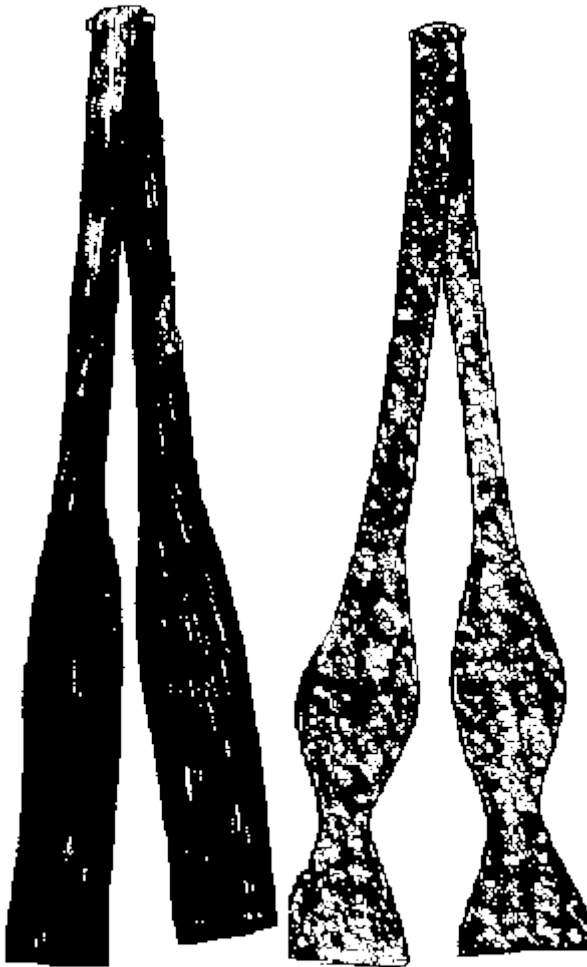
Though many men considered good dressers use the Windsor or [half-Windsor knot](#), it has always struck me as giving too bulbous an appearance. For the most part, the majority of men simply do not look good wearing this knot, though there are a few notable exceptions,



particularly Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. In any case, the [Windsor knot](#) only looks good when worn with a spread collar, which is how the Duke of Windsor originally wore it. My preference remains for the standard [four-in-hand knot](#). It is the smallest and most precise of knots, and it has been the staple of the natural-shouldered, British-American style of dress in this country and in England for the past fifty years.

But whether one chooses the [four-in-hand](#), the [Windsor](#), or the [half-Windsor](#), each should be tied so that there is a dimple or crease in the center of the tie just below the knot. This forces the tie to billow and creates a fullness that is the secret to its proper draping.

BOW TIES



The bow tie is derived from the stock worn several centuries ago. Stocks were made of washable fabrics and were wrapped many times around the neck and then tied in front. Eventually, this evolved into the single band around the neck, with the ends tied up in a bowlike configuration.

Recently, bow ties have enjoyed a renaissance. Worn for formal wear with a pleated-front shirt, they are appropriate and elegant. Worn during the day, they will give a man a casual or professorial look.

Bow ties should also avoid the extreme proportions. Tiny bows look just as silly and out of place as those huge butterflies that make men look as if their necks have been gift-wrapped. The general rule of thumb states that bow ties should never be broader than the widest part of the neck and should never extend beyond the outside of the points of the collar.

[How to tie a bow tie.](#)

TIE CARE

Ties are the most perishable item in a man's wardrobe, and as such they should be cared for appropriately. The proper care of your neckties actually begins when you take them off your neck. No matter how convenient it seems to slip the small end out of the knot, remember that you are significantly decreasing the longevity of the tie by using this method. Instead, untie the knot first, usually reversing the steps you used when you dressed in the morning. This reversal of steps will untwist the fibers of the material and lining and will help alleviate light creases. If creases are particularly severe, put the

two ends of the tie together and roll the tie around your finger like a belt. Slip it off your finger and leave it rolled up overnight. The following morning, if it is a woven silk tie, hang it in your closet. Knitted or crocheted ties should not be hung but laid flat or rolled up instead and then placed in a drawer. This should return the tie to its original state.

Most experts agree that one ought not send a necktie out to be dry-cleaned. While dry cleaners may be able to remove spots, once they press the tie, they will compress the lining and dull the luster of the silk. A water stain can generally be removed by rubbing it with a piece of the same fabric (the other end of the tie, perhaps). More serious stains will often respond to a spot remover such as [carbon tetrachloride](#). If none of this works, follow the example of Fred Astaire and turn your tie into a belt.

With proper care, your neckties can last almost forever. And if you've chosen them with a proper eye toward proportion, there's no reason you can't wear them at least as long as that.

FOOTWEAR AND HOSIERY

by Alan Flusser.

It is entirely likely that prehistoric footwear consisted primarily of tree bark, plant leaves, or animal hides tied around the bottom of the foot simply to provide protection against rocks and rough terrain. However, it wasn't long before footwear became a touch more sophisticated while at the same time growing somewhat more attractive, to the extent that, as with a hat, a man's status could be judged merely on the basis of what he wore on his feet. In fact, many relief paintings from Egyptian times depict fine-looking sandals of interlacing palms and papyrus leaves worn by royalty along the order of Tutankhamen.

Eventually leather, which is pliable, durable, and was easy for man to obtain, became the dominant material used in footwear. As it is a living substance and therefore breathes, it allows air to circulate freely about the feet, adding appreciably to the comfort of the wearer.

Historically, the lower classes continued to wear sandals while those of higher position and rank chose to wear intricately designed slippers. In the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, when men's legs suddenly became a focal point of fashion, shoes took on new importance, as highly decorated bows and buckles were added to make them more attractive.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, the pendulum had begun to swing the other way, as shoes took on a more functional look. Styles became rigid, almost clumsy; colors vanished; and footwear was, for the most part, to be found only in black and brown leathers.

In this country, Massachusetts quickly established itself as the shoemaking center of the Colonies. Thomas Beard, who settled in Salem soon after arriving on the Mayflower in 1629, is widely considered the pioneer of the American shoe industry. Following his lead, other craftsmen set up shop in many of the small towns surrounding Salem. The industry grew, and by 1768, nearly thirteen thousand pairs of shoes were being exported each year by Massachusetts shoemakers to the other Colonies.

Up until the middle of the nineteenth century, shoes were slowly and painstakingly produced by hand. But as soon as Elias Howe's sewing machine was adapted to the tasks of shoemaking, the industry began to join the Industrial Revolution.

In the meantime, footwear fashions ran the gamut from slippers to boots, which became popular in the early part of the nineteenth century. There were boots with spring heels, developed in 1835, and there were boots with no heels at all, popular in the middle part of the century. Boots began to fade from the scene somewhat just before the turn of the century, at about the same time that the rubber heel was first introduced.

During the first twenty-five years of this century, shoes were rather dull and lackluster. But by the time the 1930s rolled around footwear with more style and imagination began to make a long-awaited comeback. American manufacturers copied styles of English custom shoemakers, who were turning out new models every few months. Brogues became popular and once again color was added to footwear, with black-and-white "co-respondent" shoes (that is, shoes with contrasting colors). From the 1940s to the 1950s a wide variety of shoes existed, yet styles did not change much from year to year and one simply wore shoes until they were no longer in good enough condition to be worn any longer.

It wasn't until the 1960s and the advent of the Peacock Revolution that shoe fashion began to change radically, with new models introduced each season. The choices were mind-boggling: platform shoes; sleek, pointed English mod shoes of wild, iridescent colors; boots, from cowboy to hiking to frontier styles; and sneakers. Italian shoes - sleek and lightweight styles produced to go with the European cut suits - flooded the market and immediately became a favorite of the American man. Today the choice remains wide as to the kind of shoe a man can wear. There are men who wear practically nothing but sneakers or running shoes, while others enjoy the opportunity to change styles with each business and social engagement.

Hosiery, stockings, or leggings began simply as a binding or wrapping of the legs in order to provide protection. In Europe during the Middle Ages, people tied coarse cloth or skins around their legs, holding them up at the knees by the use of garters. By the eleventh century, when breeches were shortened to the knee, the lower leg was covered by a fitted cloth known as "chausses" or "hose" (probably derived from the Old English hosa).

At the time America was first colonized, early settlers were wearing heavy homespun woolen stockings in russets, blues, browns, and gray-greens. For the most part, styles in hosiery closely mirrored the styles being worn back in Europe, with the wealthier Colonial dressers able to afford hosiery of fine silk.

It wasn't until the early to middle nineteenth century, however, that knitting mills were established in this country, at which time the stocking industry found a home in several Connecticut towns. By this time, trousers had made their descent to just above the tops of the shoes, and as a result, hose was shortened accordingly. Over the next few decades, due to a need for extra warmth and comfort, hose length extended up, over the calf of the leg, and became known as the "sock" (probably from the Latin soccus, which was a light covering for the foot).

It was not until the twentieth century, though, that the hosiery industry began to flourish, as cotton, wool, and combinations of these fabrics in vivid colors and patterns caught

the fashionable man's fancy. It was also during this period that sports hose in knitted wool, mixtures of wool and silk, and wool and cotton gained in popularity. This interest in patterns continued until the 1950s, at which time synthetic yarn for hosiery was introduced, permitting

the manufacture of stretch hosiery, one-size-fits-all. Retailers, pleased to be able to reduce their inventory, didn't care that the hose was producible only in solid colors. Combined with the newfound interest in patterned trousers, solid hose regained popularity and fancy hose faded from the fashion scene. The industry has yet to recover. While today more patterns and colors are available for sports hosiery, a man looking for stylish dress hosiery has his work cut out for him.

Shoes are perhaps the most functional item in a man's wardrobe. And yet, in addition to serving a utilitarian purpose, shoes can often be the most obvious sign of a man's sense of style and social position.

As George Frazier often remarked, "Wanna know if a guy is well-dressed? Look down." And as Diana Vreeland, Frazier's counterpart in the women's fashion world and special consultant to the Metropolitan Museum's Costume Institute, advises concerning the development of a wardrobe: "First, I'd put money into shoes. No variety, just something I could wear with everything ... Whatever it is you wear, I think shoes are terribly important."

And they are. They reveal a good deal about the person wearing them. A man who buys fine leather shoes today shows that he respects quality, that he has confidence in his taste and in his future. Like other items of quality apparel, a well-made pair of shoes will give years of fine service if they are properly cared for. They must be of a design, however, that remains stylish through the years.

Quality Shoes

The key to a quality shoe is the way it's made and what it's made of. Eric Lobb, the great-grandson of the legendary English bootmaker John Lobb, discusses the criteria that go into the construction of a well-made shoe in his book *The Last Must Come First*. The last is the wooden form around which a shoe is made; hence it also determines the shape of the shoe itself. Lobb's pun, which was directed at the art of custom shoemaking, is actually a good guide for buying read-made shoes. Examine first the last, or the shape of the shoe.

The shape of a shoe should follow as closely as possible the actual shape of one's own foot. The foot is not a particularly attractive feature of the anatomy, and a well-styled shoe will work to diminish its ungainliness by making it appear sleek and smaller. Think of the way a glove fits the hand: there are no excess bulges or gaps. A shoe should be cut similarly: no bulbous toes or crevices in front, a smooth line of leather following closely along the instep down to the edge of the toe. A custom-made shoe is designed to follow the shape of the foot so closely that the outside line and sole are curved (like the foot), while the inside, instead of being symmetrical, follows an almost straight line. A last of this sort in a ready-made shoe is a sign of elegance and knowledge on the part of the manufacturer.

The sole must also work to lighten the effect of the shoe. A heavy weighted sole or double soles on a shoe make the foot appear thick and inelegant. The double-soled shoes that many businessmen wear today, either in a heavy-grain leather or with wing-tip perforations, were marketed after World War II by manufacturers who based their design on army issue. These shoes really seem more appropriate for storming an enemy camp than for strolling along a city street. Look for a shoe with a sole no thicker than one-quarter inch. The heels should be low and follow the line of the shoe; they should not be designed as lifts. Most important, both sole and heel should be clipped close to the edge of the shoe with no obvious welt around the outside. Used chiefly for fine-quality wing-tips, cap-toes, and brogues, the welt is that narrow strip of leather stitched to the

shoe upper and insole. The sole of the shoe is stitched to the welt, which gives the shoe a sturdiness and allows it to be resoled. In less expensive shoes, the sole is cemented to the upper. The sole's function is simply protection and support. It should not interfere with the shoe's shape or be overly visible.

The vamp is what one sees most on a shoe. It is the piece of leather that covers the top of the foot. By keeping this piece of leather low on the instep (a short vamp), the front of the shoe will appear shorter, making the entire foot seem smaller. This deaccentuation of length gives the foot a sleeker look. Naturally, the vamp should not be cut so low that the shoe can easily fall off.

In sum, a man should look to purchase only those shoes that have a small, well-shaped toe; thin, closely clipped soles and heels; and a vamp that is short enough to maintain a refined look.

Choosing The Right Shoe

The most important factor involved in the choice of a man's shoe besides fit is its appropriateness to the style of clothing he is wearing. The finest makers of shoes today are the English and the Italians, but for the updated American style of dress, only the English-style shoes (though they may be made in either Italy or America) should be worn. This is so for two good reasons. First, the shape of the updated American-style clothing is on the fuller side, and thus the shoe ought to be on the fuller side as well, if for no other reason than that of balance. Also, the updated American-style clothing uses fabric of greater weight and texture, and it is therefore necessary that the shoe correspond to these elements. Italian shoes are trim-lined and lightweight, made to go with the European-cut suit, and as a result are totally inappropriate to the American style of dress.

The Italian ready-to-wear men's shoe industry began as an offshoot of the women's industry. It brought with it an interest in lightness, softness, and color, criteria that have always ruled the women's market. The fine calfskin uppers are glued to the leather soles with no welts and no inner soles to encumber the sleek look. They are made almost completely by hand with a craftsmanship and finesse that is unequalled elsewhere.

On the other hand, the British men's shoe industry came into its own immediately following the end of World War I, with the companies that had made army boots turning to the commercial marketplace to make up for the loss of their military contracts. The qualities of strength and durability that had made their boots legendary during the war were now built into shoes for the consumer. Unlike people in Italy, where the climate is generally dry and warm, the English have always had to contend with the worst elements of rain and cold. Their shoes were thus constructed of heavier skin that was not glued to the sole but sewn with a leather welt. British manufacturers, moreover, inserted a second leather sole - a middle sole between the outer sole and the inner - to make the shoes even more durable. All this interest in protection and durability gives the British shoe and its American offspring a fuller, more solid and substantial, look - the perfect balance for the updated American style of clothing.

This is not to advocate heavy, cloddy shoes, however. To the contrary: shoes should look neither too heavy nor too light. Nor should the style and color make them look too contrived. Trying to match the color of the shoes to the color of the suit is a woman's concept that has no place in the boardroom. A man's business shoe should never be a lighter shade than that of the suit; black or medium to dark brown have always and will continue to offer the proper balance to the business suit. As for shoe styles, there are approximately seven that tradition and good taste dictate as appropriate for business wear, and a man concerned with taste and style would do well to choose from among them.

The Cap-Toe Brogue

The cap-toe, either plain or with a medallion decoration, is the most dressy business shoe one can wear, and for years this shoe has been the staple of the businessman's wardrobe. This lace-up shoe comes in black and various shades of brown. It is to be worn only with business suits of worsteds or flannels. In Boston it is considered perfectly proper to wear a highly polished brown version of this shoe with a navy suit, whereas in London it would be construed to be in poor taste to wear this combination.



The Wing-Tip Shoe

The traditional wing-tip or brogue shoe is a fine alternative to either the plain or the medallion cap-toe. It should be worn only in black, brown, or cordovan, and because of its heavy broguing, its wear can be expanded to include suits made with more textured fabrics, such as tweeds, chevots, and flannels.

The Slip-On Shoe or Dress Loafer

Slip-ons or Loafers have practically taken over the shoe industry because young men appreciate the convenience they offer. Yet much of what is worn today is of Italian style derivation and is much too sleek and lightweight for American-style suits. The simple slip-on, designed with understatement and using the shape and a version of the toe detail of the cap-toe or wing-tip style, should in no way be confused with the Gucci-style Loafer, for instance. This style shoe, with its identifiable gold or silver buckle, is far too casual and is thus inappropriate to be worn with the dressy business suit.



The Monk-Strap Shoe

The monk-strap is a plain-toed, side-buckled shoe whose design was originally European. It is available in black or brown calf or chocolate-brown suede. Its plain front balances the sportiness of its design, thus giving it a wide range of sartorial applications. First popularized in the 1930s by European custom shoemakers, it is for the man who appreciates a little extra panache. The suede version made by Church is an enduring classic.

The Suede Shoe

Unlike the Duke of Windsor, suede shoes were considered proper only for country attire. Once he took them to town, however, men immediately recognized the kind of soft elegance a suede shoe could offer in juxtaposition with the severe worsted suit. It remains the most elegant accompaniment to the business suit. The suede tie-up - either a wing-tip or cap-toe - offers practically limitless versatility, for it is a proper complement to as wide a range of wear as that encompassed by a seersucker suit to a sharkskin worsted, in any color from gray to green, in any season. Needless to say, it is probably not the shoe to wear in a stuffy bank atmosphere, or in a drenching spring downpour. But with these exceptions, there is probably no other shoe that can play so many roles in a man's wardrobe.

The Tassel Loafer



This originally sporty shoe has gained increasing acceptance as a shoe appropriate for business wear. The push has come from Americans' growing penchant for sporty comfort rather than proper styles. The black tassel Loafer - originally popular with the Ivy League set in the 1920s - offers about the same level of dressiness as the blue blazer, which itself falls on a somewhat ambiguous line between the business suit and the sports jacket. Thus, any place the blazer is not quite right, this shoe is not either. Brown tassel Loafers are even more sporty, with cordovan somewhere in between brown and black. There is probably no shoe (except perhaps the white buck) that has more identity as an American shoe than the tassel Loafer. It remains a lovely, casual shoe, the kinetic motion of its tassel projecting a jaunty sense of well-being. But still, it should not be confused with proper business footwear.

Summer Shoes

Today most men choose to wear their brogue business shoes twelve months a year and are quite correct to do so. However, for those who prefer a change of tempo when the summer months arrive and their seersucker or cotton suits come out of the closet, there are some alternatives. These include the cap-toe or wing-tip shoe in medium brown calf or suede; the classic white buck lace-up with red rubber soles; and the black-and-white or brown-and-white suede and leather co-respondent shoe.



Unfortunately, the co-respondent shoe, perhaps the height of summer elegance, is difficult to find today in an acceptable version that uses white buckskin instead of the heavier thick suede or imitation leather. While there is the temptation in summer to wear a lighter-colored shoe, none of these look well with dark business suits. The principle that a similarity of tone ought to exist between the shoe and the suit should prevail even in summer. These lighter shoes are meant to be worn with the more mid-shade tropical worsteds and gabardines or the more casual poplins and seersuckers.

Fit

From the time the government banned the use of X-ray machines, fitting a pair of shoes has become strictly a matter of feel. There are no real secrets in this regard. The size that feels comfortable for you is the size to choose. However, most men's feet are each of a slightly different size, and so one should buy the shoe to fit the larger foot, which means, of course, that both shoes should be tried on. Remember that certain soft leathers, particularly in Loafers, will stretch up to a half size. A good fit should allow one to wiggle one's toes while the heel fits snugly into the back of the shoe. There should be good support underneath the instep, and the shoe should be widest at the ball, where one's foot is the widest. Also, make sure there is enough room under the toe box so that there is no pressure on the top of your toes, and see that the insole is flat and extends to the shoe upper.

Shoes should feel comfortable from the moment you try them on. If they're not, it's highly unlikely that they will ever be "broken in" entirely to your liking.

Care

The best way to care for a pair of leather shoes is to keep them polished and give them ample rest. Polish protects the leather from water and from scuffing. To clean leather, use a cream to lift the dirt and then follow with a wax to protect and polish the shoe.

Many men buy new shoes and are so eager to wear them that they forget to rub on a first coat of polish. This pre-conditioning of the leather will increase the shoe's resistance to dirt and water and is perhaps the most important first step in preventative maintenance.

Leather absorbs moisture. This is what allows it to stretch and why it is so important for shoes to be given time to rest. Never wear a pair of shoes for more than one day at a time. Leather breathes like cotton or wool. It needs at least a day or two to dry out, in order to release trapped moisture (if your shoes do get wet, be sure and keep them away from sources of excessive heat, such as a radiator), and to return to its original shape. By alternating shoes and keeping shoe trees in them, there is no limit on the years they can last. But if shoes are worn day after day and especially if they have not been adequately polished, the skin becomes moldy and attenuated until finally the suppleness disappears and the leather begins to crack. Leather is a skin. Treat it with the same respect and care you give your own.

If you have suede shoes, they can best be cleaned with a suede brush or artist's gum eraser. However, you should be careful not to over-rub, as this will destroy the nap of the suede.

It is best to keep shoes in constant repair. Worn heels will throw one's whole body out of alignment and cause the shoe to stretch out of shape. Shoes should be reheelled and resoled as soon as this appears to be required.

THE FINER POINTS

Skins

It is the skin in the upper part of the shoe that more than any other factor determines the quality and cost of that particular shoe. The softer, more supple the leather, the higher the quality. Supple leather will last longer, as it does not easily crack. Such leather generally comes from smaller animals - kids and calves - which means there is less of it; hence its higher cost.

Calfskin is leather made from the hide of young cattle. It is lightweight, supple and fine-grained, and is generally used for quality business shoes. Cowhide is somewhat heavier than calfskin. It can be grained, embossed, or finished to enhance its natural texture and is generally found in casual shoes and boots. Kidskin is made from the skin of young goats. It is soft and light and is generally used for dress and tailored slip-ons. Suede is leather that is finished on the flesh side of the skin in order to produce a nap. The finest suede today is made from the male deer (buckskin). Cordovan is leather from the rump of a horse, and it is distinguished by its red-brown color. It is perhaps the most durable of all leathers. Patent leather has a synthetic surface that produces a glossy finish, and it is used mostly for dressy, evening shoes.

Before purchasing a shoe, feel the leather. Bend the shoe and watch how the leather moves. It should be soft and flexible and return quickly to its original shape.

Soles and Linings

The surest marks of a fine-quality shoe are leather soles and heels and leather linings within the shoe. It is said that a man exerts as much pressure on the soles of his feet when walking as an elephant does. Whether or not this is completely accurate, the pressure per square inch is nevertheless enormous. The sole provides a kind of shock absorber, and good leather does this better than almost any other material. A leather heel provides further cushioning with just enough give to make walking pleasant. Rubber soles can also cushion but because they will not slide on pavement, friction is built up when walking. Over a period of time, this can make your feet feel hot and uncomfortable.

Inside the shoe, the extra layer of leather that covers the interior offers further protection from the cold and gives greater structural support to the shoe. It also increases the shoe's life span. Aesthetically, a leather inner lining is a handsome detail that separates the fine quality shoe from the mass market model.

The Waist

The waist is the narrow part of the last where the front and back of the shoe come together under the instep. Like the vamp, a small waist can be helpful in creating the appearance of a more elegant shoe. Instead of having a blocky look, a small-waisted shoe curves smoothly in and then out, giving a cleaner, more streamlined look.

Vamp Decorations

Loafers with buckles or chains across the vamp have become increasingly popular since the Gucci Loafer was first marketed in the United States in the mid-1960s. One should be careful not to allow these gold or silver decorations to become so large or gaudy that they destroy the integrity of a man's look by drawing immediate attention to his shoes. More effective as vamp decorations are the leather penny saddle (Weejun shoe) or tassels. These work to break up the vamp, thus making it and the shoe look smaller and finer. And yet, because they are made of the same color leather as the shoe, they are not so obvious as to attract attention.

HOSIERY

A pair of hose is meant to keep your feet warm and to prevent irritation from rubbing shoes. This, of course, is the most basic definition of a pair of hose. They can do much more, however. Wear black hose with a dark blue suit, and they only serve their pragmatic purpose. But put on a pair of burgundy wool hose, and suddenly you've created aesthetic interest where none previously existed. Instead of a splash of color just at the top of the suit where the tie and handkerchief fall, you now have a subtle response at the bottom.

As a general principle, the dressier the clothing one is wearing, the finer the hose should be. This ranges from sheer silk or cotton lisle in formal wear, to fine ribbed wool or cotton in business wear, to cashmere or wool argyles for sports jackets and odd trousers. The hose should reflect the level of formality of the suit. One doesn't wear argyle socks with a pin- striped worsted, nor would one wear fine cotton lisle with a Harris tweed sports jacket.

The best type of hose is that made from natural fibers - cotton or wool. These materials allow a better flow of air, cutting down on perspiration and heat. When they are thin, as they should be, they are naturally delicate. However, because of the introduction of nylon reinforced heels and toes, your hose should serve you a reasonable length of time.

The length of hose ought to be either calf height or above the calf. Ankle-high hose are definitely to be avoided. Nothing looks worse when a man's legs are crossed than an exposed patch of skin separating the top of his hose and the trouser bottoms. The surest antidote is above-calf hose or calf-high socks worn with garters. While garters may sound like a bother, they do keep up one's hose and free one from having to wear high socks, thus eliminating their stockinglike sensation.

Good dressing dictates that the color of hose (or one of the predominant colors in their pattern) should relate to something above the waist, such as a tie, shirt, or handkerchief, with the hose always on the darker side of that color. Generally, the best dressers try to do something a little special with their hose. Anyone, they figure, can wear hose that match his trousers. They look for hose with interesting colors and patterns. Unfortunately, the wonderful clockface French lisle hose of the 1940s and `50s are nearly extinct, as are the fine-gauged ribbed English wool embroidered hose. Still, with a little enterprise, one can find a fine two-or three-color bird's-eye or other subtle pattern that will accomplish the same end. In these cases, the accent color of the pattern ought to relate to something above the waist.

Though the easy way out may be merely to stick to plain blue or black, why not try a medium gray wool with a dark suit? Or perhaps burgundy, or even a subtle pattern? It won't only be your feet that will enjoy the change.

FORMAL WEAR

The notion of a man "dressing up" after the sun goes down, whether it be in top hat and tails or simply in his best finery, has been with us for centuries. In fact, in the great European opera houses of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the "dress circle" meant just that, with no one allowed in unless he or she was properly attired.

However, the idea of wearing black for evening wear was, according to the English clothing historian James Laver, first introduced by the nineteenth-century British writer Edward Bulwer-Lytton, who utilized it "as a romantic gesture to show that he was a 'blighted being' and very, very melancholy."

And it was Bulwer-Lytton who gave further impetus to this notion of black as the color for formal wear by writing, in 1828, that "people must be very distinguished to look well in black." Naturally, the moment this statement was noted by would-be dandies, the style became decidedly *de rigueur*, and it wasn't long before black became popular for daytime wear as well.

Although for years white tie and tails were the traditional mode of formal attire, the introduction of the dinner jacket added another viable alternative from which the well-dressed gentleman could choose.

The original dinner jacket was simply an adaptation of the "Cowes" jacket - a sort of compromise between a mess jacket, a smoking jacket, and a dress coat - invented for or by King Edward VII when he was Prince of Wales, and worn by him first at dinner aboard his yacht at Cowes and then later at other semi-formal evening gatherings away from London. The original single-breasted model was simply a tailcoat without a tail, worn with white pique, vest and later with a matching black vest of the same fabric as the jacket and trousers.

The dinner jacket made its debut in the United States in 1896, when a celebrated dandy named Griswold Lorillard wore it to a white-tie-and-tails ball at an exclusive country club in Tuxedo Park, New York. Tuxedo Park, founded in the 1880s by a group of prominent and wealthy New Yorkers as a residential club colony, was an "informally formal" community. Apparently, society

had had enough of tails, which had traditionally been worn for formal evening wear, because Lorillard's "invention" was immediately accepted in even the stuffiest of circles. The use of the term "tuxedo," sometimes lamentably abbreviated to "tuck," or, even worse, to "tux," is pretty much confined to the United States. The garment is known abroad, and generally in this country as well, by its correct name of "dinner jacket," or (frequently in the New York area) "dinner coat." It is probably seldom, if ever, called a "tuxedo" in Tuxedo Park.

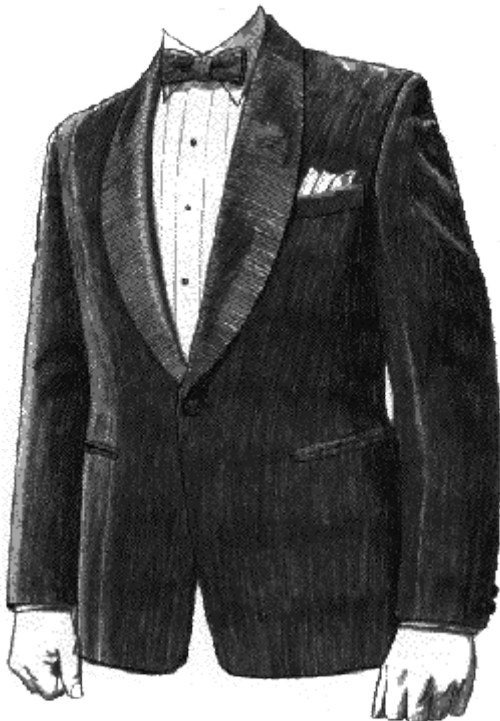
The dinner jacket remained just as its inventor intended until the 1920s, when the next Prince of Wales - later to become the Duke of Windsor - ordered a new dinner jacket (by this time, Lorillard's tuxedo had taken the name of its American birthplace), and specifically requested that the fabric be not black, but blue - midnight blue, to be precise. Under artificial light, midnight blue appears black - blacker than black, in fact - whereas black, under the same artificial conditions, tends to take on a greenish cast. The new color caught on, and is now counted among the great sartorial inspirations of that bygone era.

In the 1930s, the prince once again tinkered with tradition, appearing in a double-breasted dinner jacket. Although the double-breasted dinner jacket was first ordered from a Savile Row tailor by the English song-and-dance man Jack Buchanan (who also wrote extensively on fashion), it was most certainly the prince who popularized this style. Worn with a soft-front pleated evening shirt, this innovation brought a new level of informality to the traditional dinner jacket - but with no lowering of the standards that separated those who dressed correctly from those who simply dressed up.

Throughout the remainder of the twentieth century, the tuxedo has undergone various stylistic changes, including the excesses characteristic of the decade of the sixties. And yet, fashion aside, the proper tuxedo, whether it be single-or double-breasted, still endures as the most elegant attire for any man.

For a man, no other form of dress is as steeped in such a ritualistic sense of propriety as formal wear. There is something so elegant about the simplicity of black and white, with its stark contrast and lack of pattern, that when the elements are properly put together, they present a man at his most debonair.

After dark or 6 p.m. - whichever arrives first - there are two ensembles that can properly be called formal: white tie, which means tails, or black tie, better known as the tuxedo. The more formal of these ensembles is white tie, which includes a tailcoat with matching trousers trimmed by two lines of braid on the outside of each trouser leg, white piqué, tie, white piqué, single-or double-breasted waistcoat, and wing-collar shirt with stiff piqué, front.



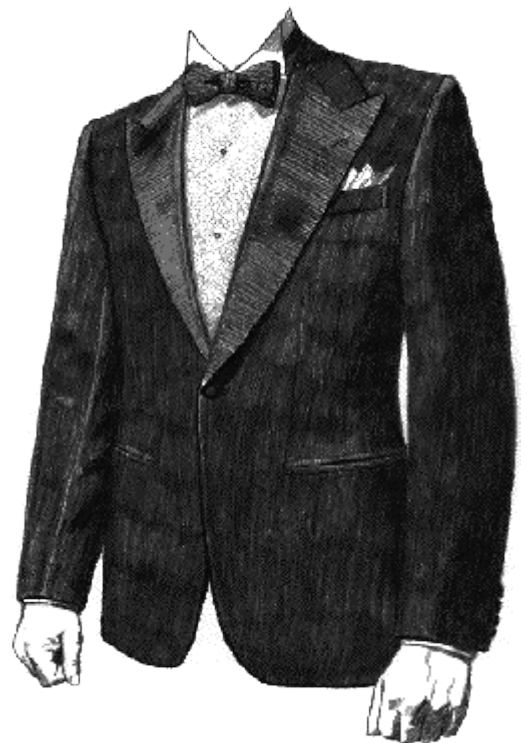
However, with the exception of a man's wedding day, or occasions of state, a man will probably never be called upon to wear white tie. Nevertheless, anyone residing in a city, large or small, will probably find himself attending affairs requiring black tie at least several times a year, as more and more people today are reexperiencing the pleasures of dressing up. Thus, a properly styled tuxedo is one of the smartest and potentially most enduring investments a man can make for his wardrobe. Unfortunately, though, like most solid investments, a fine tuxedo is not easy to find.

There are four proper styles for the tuxedo: the single-or double-breasted with a peaked lapel with grosgrain facing on the lapel, or the single-or double-breasted shawl collar with either satin or grosgrain on the lapel facings. These are the only proper choices.

Yet American manufacturers, in order to save on costs and increase profits, have taken to producing a notched lapel - the same style manufactured for their normal daytime suits - and facing them in satin. This unfortunate trend began in the sixties, when men were experimenting with alternative styles of dress. Once manufacturers realized it was less costly to produce this model, they persisted. Today the man seeking a proper dinner jacket, with either peaked lapels or shawl collar, has his work cut out for him. One might try searching the better men's specialty stores, but even the venerated Brooks Brothers sells the notched style. The more adventuresome man can explore the second-hand shops. Or, finally, he can have his formal wear custom-made.

The most versatile jacket style is the single-breasted, peaked-lapel model. It was the original black-tie model, the direct descendant of the tailcoat, and its angular lapels look best with a wind collar, the tailcoat's original complement. It can be worn with a vest or cummerbund, and even with a turndown collar. Peaked lapels look equally elegant on the double-breasted version of this coat. The double-breasted model offers the advantage of allowing the wearer to dispense with a vest or cummerbund.

The shawl collar model, either single-breasted or double-breasted, has a more subtle look than the peaked-lapel models. Because of its Old World image and the fact that it is a jacket style worn only for evening wear, it is especially factored by the most sophisticated dressers. However, if one's build is on the portly or rotund side, one might want to avoid the shawl collar, as it tends to accentuate the roundness.



Both single-and double-breasted jackets are at their best either without vents or with moderate side vents. Whichever style one chooses, the pockets should never be in the flap style, which is traditionally associated with day wear.

The color should be black or, if one is lucky enough to unearth one in this color, midnight blue, in a finished or unfinished worsted. In summer or at a resort, a white or midnight-blue dinner jacket in a tropical-weight worsted is always correct.

Trousers

Tuxedo trousers follow rules identical with those applying to day wear. Made of the same fabric as the jacket, they should have a natural taper, following the shape of one's leg. The bottoms should be plain-never cuffed-and break just on top of the shoe. On each trouser leg, there should be a satin braid, a remnant of detail first introduced on military uniforms to cover the exposed outside seam.

White plain-front trousers are more common, pleated trousers add a touch of elegance. If one chooses pleats, be certain that their folds open toward the center for proper fullness. In either case, the waistband must never be exposed. It is the job of the vest, the pleated cummerbund, or

the closed double-breasted jacket to keep it hidden. And the recent invention of an all-in-one waistband-cum-cummerbund is simply no substitute for the real thing.

The Shirt

There are two proper shirt styles from which to choose. The more formal is a white winged-collar shirt with stiff piqué, bosom and single cuffs (see the illustration on page 126). The second choice, less formal but decidedly more comfortable, is the turndown collar shirt with soft-pleated front and double French cuffs—yet another sartorial contribution of the Duke of Windsor. (See the illustration on the facing page.)

Wing-collar shirts look fine on a person who has a long neck, setting off the tie and framing the face, but they should be avoided by those with shorter necks. Though winged collars attached to shirts can now be purchased, the classic and still preferable alternatives, because of their stiffness, are the detachable-collar shirts. These detachable-collar shirts are sold all over London and, in this country, at Brooks Brothers.

Pleated-bosom shirts should be bought in fine cotton or, for the ultimate in luxury, a dull, eggshell-color, lustrous silk. For piqué-front shirts, the customary body fabrics are batiste, voile, or a light cambric. The finer the bead of the piqué, the finer and more elegant the shirt front.

A couple of fine points to remember: the pleated bosom or stiff front of the shirt should never extend below the waistband of the trousers, or the shirt will bow when you sit down or bend over. It is also a good idea to have a tab with a buttonhole sewn in the front of the shirt that can then be attached by a button to the waistband of your trousers. This will further prevent your shirt from billowing out over the cummerbund or vest.

Ideally, your shirt should have eyelets for studs, since buttons are properly worn for day wear. Piqué-front shirts take one or two eyelets, while soft fronts require two or three.

Vests and Cummerbunds

As already stated, formal dressing demands that the waistband of the trousers never be exposed. For this reason, a formal vest or cummerbund is always worn.

The formal vest, though also a descendant of the nineteenth-century English-postboy riding vest, differs considerably from the traditional business vest. It is cut with shawl lapels, either single- or double-breasted, and has a deep V front so as to display the special front of the formal shirt. The vest is normally made with three buttons, which can be replaced by studs. The traditional vest is in the same fabric as the dinner jacket.

The pleated cummerbund, which usually matches the facings of the front of the coat, was originally a sash worn in India (from the Hindu kamarband) and was brought to the West by the British. The folds of the cummerbund should always point up because, traditionally, the cummerbund had a small pocket between the folds fashioned to hold opera or theater tickets.

The Necktie

The formal tie is, of course, a bow tie. It should never be of the clip-on, pre-tied variety, since, as a practical matter, if one is wearing a wing collar, the clip will be well within view. Aesthetically, a hand-tied bow tie is always more elegant. The color should be black or midnight

blue; the style, no larger than the medium-size butterfly (see the illustration on page 126) or the more narrow bat wing shape (see the illustration on page 128); the fabric should always be silk, in a twill, barathea, or satin weave. The texture of the tie should always relate to the facings on the lapels: satin for satin lapels, twill or barathea for grosgrain.

Shoes

Formal wear requires a formal shoe. Again, there are two choices: The patent-leather oxford or the pump. The pump is a low-cut slip-on made of patent or matte-finish leather with a dull ribbed silk bow in front. The oxford is a plain-toe lace-up shoe made with thin soles and a small toe. The more elegant is the pump. While the oxford is clearly the more popular model today, because the pump is considered by many men to be effeminate, it is nevertheless the calf pump that is the choice of the more sophisticated dressers. A direct descendant of the opera pump, it can double as a stylish shoe for entertaining at home.

Hosiery

The choice of hose depends upon the color of one's trousers. This means black or dark blue, with shell white or colored clocks, if available. Traditionally, the hose would be of sheer silk. Today semi-sheer lisle, cotton, or fine wool is acceptable.

Jewelry

Simplicity should govern the choice of jewelry for formal wear. Studs and matching cufflinks can be made of plain gold, black enamel, or semi-precious stone. Mother-of-pearl, also handsome, is perhaps more appropriate for white tie. Fine sets of studs and matching cufflinks can be found in antique shops that specialize in old jewelry (the most interesting examples are those made between 1890 and 1930). You might also look for a gold pocket watch and chain. If you choose to wear a wristwatch, remember that the thinner the watch, the more tasteful it is. Black bands are recommended.

Handkerchiefs, Scarves, and Flowers

A properly folded (points showing) white hand-rolled linen handkerchief in the breast pocket is *de rigueur*. Silk is not quite so elegant because it lacks the body of linen and thus the points go limp when folded. A white or colored silk scarf worn with the outercoat adds yet another touch of style, and a flower provides a dot of color. Never, but never, pin a flower to a lapel. If your jacket does not have a proper buttonhole for a flower, do not wear one.

The Outercoat

It is hardly mandatory in order to be considered well-dressed to have an outercoat specifically designed to be worn with formal or semi-formal wear, but if you decide to make the investment, the single-breasted, fly-front black or dark blue Chesterfield style with velvet collar is the proper complement to the rest of the outfit.

Interesting Options

The greatest modern dressers have always expressed their individuality by bending-though not breaking-the rules. This has been true even in formal wear. If your evening clothes are grounded in the classics, there is no reason you can't add your own particular stamp.

If the whim strikes you, here are some possible interesting options you might try.

For a winter alternative to the tuxedo jacket, there is the single-breasted shawl-collar velvet smoking jacket in garnet, navy, or green. For summer, there is the classic Bogart Casablanca white shawl-collar or the colonial tan shawl-collar in silk shantung, both correct in either the single-or double-breasted models. As for bottoms, there are burgundy or white wool trousers.

For a different formal shirt, one might try a pleated front in ivory, blue, pink, or yellow in cotton or silk. The alternative vest choices include black silk, brocade, or a more dressy look in white piqué. For an alternative to the staid black cummerbund, there is solid maroon silk or a fancy brocade.

Like the trousers and vest, the bow tie also lends itself well to expressions of personal creativity. As an accent to the black-and-white motif of the tuxedo, the colors of burgundy, deep red, and purple are the most traditional and most elegant. A small black-and-white pattern is also smart. If you choose a pattern, make certain that the bow tie is woven, not printed, as the latter is not formal enough.

For hosiery, the options are more limited. Choose either burgundy to match the tie or cummerbund, or a medium gray cotton lisle.

As for footwear, monogrammed or motif-embroidered velvet slippers are elegant possibilities.

ACCESSORIES: SUSPENDERS, BELTS, HANDKERCHIEFS, AND JEWELRY

From the time man first chose to wear trousers, either leather belts, rope, or cloth sashes were used to hold them up. It wasn't until the time of the French Revolution, however, when short vests and trousers reaching to the armpits were worn, that the suspender first appeared. These early examples were merely straps of leather that fell directly over the shoulders and were fastened to the waistband of the trousers by means of a hook.

Within a short time, suspenders, which were originally quite heavy and rather uncomfortable, became the favored choice of nobility and were eventually considered the mark of any well-dressed gentleman. In fact, no properly attired Victorian man would have dared consider himself affianced to any young woman of breeding until she had presented him with a pair of suspenders embroidered by her own dainty hands.

In this country, suspenders were also considered the only choice of the well-dressed man, but by the end of the nineteenth century, this thinking began to undergo a slow yet inexorable change. This change was due, at least in part, to the uniforms men wore during the various wars that flared up during the late nineteenth century. Belts became more popular as shoulders were emphasized and waists pulled in, simply in an effort to appear more threatening and imposing.

By the early 1900s, folded belts were all the rage. They were fashioned by joining two «-inch strips of cowhide, then stitching the edges to produce a rounded, pliable belt one inch in width.

Also popular during this period was the Sam Browne officer's belt, which appealed not only to veterans but to other men as well.

But it was probably S. Rae Hickock, a successful dealer in leather goods, who did more than anyone to ensure the success of the belt industry when he began to manufacture belt buckles with etched monograms around 1910.

By the time American men returned home from world War I, they were wearing coarse yarn belts, which quickly caught the fancy of the general male populace. However, during the summer, when vests and jackets came off, belts went on as men chose not to expose their suspenders. Also during this period knickers became popular, further limiting the use of suspenders. And although suspenders maintained their popularity well into the decade of the 1920s, by the time the stock market fell, most men's trousers were being held up by belts.

Though they have recently experienced a renaissance of sorts, today suspenders are but a small part of the haberdashery industry. Belts, on the other hand, come in many colors, widths, and all sorts of materials, ranging from leather to fabric to plastic.

The first handkerchief, probably used either to cover the head or to wipe perspiration from the face, was made of small mats of woven grass. However, the first handkerchief solely for the face was used in conjunction with religion. These early handkerchiefs, called "facials," were simply small pieces of silk tissue used by priests at the altar and then left there when the service was completed.

In early times the handkerchief functioned both as a utilitarian accessory and as a showy dress item, carried in the hand as opposed to being tucked into a pocket. By the time of the early Renaissance, handkerchiefs were considered an essential accessory, prompting Erasmus to note that "To wipe your nose on your sleeve is boorish." Soon handkerchiefs became more ornate, at which point they also began to serve as tokens of a man's love for a woman, and vice versa.

By the turn of this century, handkerchiefs made of silk, linen, or cotton were de rigueur for the breast pocket of a gentleman's suit jacket, and he could not be considered properly dressed without one. Of course, during the 1960s most men eschewed handkerchiefs in their breast pockets, but today - as in the 1930s - they are still the choice of the well-dressed gentleman.

For the most part, a man's jewelry has always been utilitarian in nature, though this is by no means to say that it has not always been worn with an eye toward personal adornment.

Those of wealth and nobility were, of course, the ones who naturally gravitated toward jewelry, including rings, shirt studs, various kinds of pins, and recently, wristwatches, tie bars, cufflinks, and collar bars. Of all these, it is the wristwatch that is the most modern. Said to originate with the French, it came into vogue during World War I, when it was worn by soldiers in the trenches.

Today a man has several choices as to the kind of jewelry he can wear, jewelry that should relate to his style of dress. It is possible to select jewelry that enhances one's appearance while at the same time serving a practical function.

Many men feel that once they have selected the proper suit, shirt, and tie, the other accessories can be added with little further consideration. Yet the fact is, the use of a handkerchief or jewelry can subtly alter the mood or entire effect of the ensemble. Besides, where one must be somewhat conservative in one's choice of suit, shirt, and shoes in order to be properly dressed, the choice of suspenders or belt, handkerchiefs, or suitable jewelry allows a welcome freedom.

Suspenders and Belts

At least from the turn of this century suspenders have been identified with business wear while belts were considered an accoutrement of sports clothing. There are several practical reasons why suspenders are still the proper choice to be worn with the business suit, especially one with pleated trousers. Suspenders permit the trousers to hang best, supporting the front of the pants as well as the rear. They allow the pleat to establish its proper line and make the crease of the trousers more apparent. Additionally, suspenders are more comfortable than belts, which must be drawn tight around the waist in order to hold up the trousers. With suspenders, trousers can be worn loosely around the body, the only contact one feels coming at the point where the suspenders cross the shoulders. One might also note that during the summer months the wearing of suspenders actually promotes a certain coolness, as the roominess of the trousers around the waist area makes for improved air circulation.

Suspenders also have the added advantage of allowing the length of the trousers to remain constant. Normally, a man's trousers stretch at the waistband during the course of a day. Suspenders eliminate the need to pull them up two, three, four, or more times a day. For all these reasons and more, suspenders will always remain preferable to belts in dress wear.

Frankly, there is simply no place for belts in the realm of tailored clothing. They cut a man's body in half, interrupting the smooth transition of the suit from shoulders to trouser cuffs. And they are particularly disruptive when one is wearing a vested suit. Either the belt creates a bulge under the vest or else it sticks out beneath it, completely destroying the line.

Today the finest suspenders are made of rayon, replacing yesteryear's silk. Produced only in England but available in America, they come with leather fittings and adjustable brass levers. (Elasticized suspenders are not a substitute; not only do they lack style, but they function poorly and are less comfortable.) The straps of most fine suspenders are cut in 1½ or 1¼ inch strips. Any smaller and they will bind; wider, they feel unnatural.

Trousers to be worn with suspenders should have two buttons in the back that are equidistant from the center of the fork of the suspenders. In front, there are four buttons: one over each of the main pleats, the other two just forward of the side seam. They may be sewn inside or outside the waistband, depending upon personal preference. Trousers should always be worn larger at the waist so that they are actually "suspended" from the shoulders.

Needless to say, belts should never be worn in conjunction with suspenders. It is considered in poor taste. Therefore, if the trousers you're wearing are to be worn with suspenders, make sure your tailor removes the belt loops.

Perhaps the only person who might encounter some difficulty wearing suspenders is someone with sharply sloped shoulders. In such a case, the back fork of the suspenders can be raised to compensate. This may be accomplished simply by using the excess material from the hem of the trousers to make tabs that can be sewn to the back, thereby effectively raising the fork higher on the back, which in turn will keep the suspenders from sliding.

While almost all aspects of businesswear are designed to enhance the impression of seriousness of purpose on the part of the wearer, suspenders offer perhaps a singular opportunity to lighten up an austere image. There are no limits to the colors and patterns that are deemed acceptable. There are successful, serious men in the financial community who wear embroidered dollar-sign suspenders, and others who wear those embroidered with golf clubs or naked ladies. Against all

vagaries of fashion, they have been doing it for years. No doubt they will continue to do so. When the opportunity is there, fine dressers make the most of it.

Belts

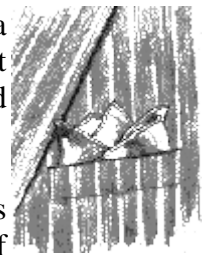
Once again, it must be emphasized that belts are properly worn only with sport clothes. However, if one does choose to wear a belt with a business suit, it should be simple, with a small buckle that does not call attention to itself. The buckle can be made in either gold or silver color, generally matching the color of the jewelry one wears. If there are initials embossed on it, make sure they are your own and not some "designer's."

The belt itself should be between $\frac{1}{2}$ and 1 inches in width. Its color can relate either to the color of your suit or the shoes you are wearing. It should never be so long that the belt's extra piece overlaps more than a few inches past the first loop after it's buckled, nor should it be so short that it just barely makes it through the buckle.

Simplicity and understatement should be the keys to dress belts. Perhaps the most elegant belts are those of black or brown pin seal, lizard, or the ultimate in luxury, crocodile. All take a simple nonornamented gold or brass buckle.

Handkerchiefs

The suit jacket is made with a left breast pocket not to hold pack of cigarettes or a pair of glasses but to hold a handkerchief. Without one, an outside breast pocket appears to be an unnecessary detail, and a man looks as if he hasn't finished dressing.



A simple white handkerchief is all that is necessary to complete the business ensemble. It is also the least expensive way a man can quickly elevate his level of style. The handkerchief, like the hose, gives a man one more opportunity to do something a little out of the ordinary, something a bit more inventive. A white handkerchief placed in the breast pocket of a dark suit offers a touch of elegance and is sure sign of a confident and knowledgeable dresser.

The finest white handkerchiefs are made of linen with hand-rolled edges. While they are difficult to find today, they are worth searching for. The virtue of linen is that because of its inherent stiffness, it retains its starched quality throughout the day. It is the only handkerchief fabric that looks as fresh in the evening as it did in the morning, when it was first folded.

While a white linen handkerchief is the easiest choice for many, since it is always proper, for those more adventuresome dressers, there are handkerchiefs in colors and patterns. In this case, it is generally the tie that is the determining factor in choosing the proper pocket square. The pocket square must complement the tie, though it should never directly match it in pattern or color. Some of the nicest colored handkerchiefs are made of linen in traditional Oxford shirting colors, or in pure white with colored borders. Another possibility is silk. These come in a wide array of solid colors. But instead of solids, wear silk in the traditional English ancient madder patterns, such as paisley or foulard. The colors in these are muted and give a more subtle effect.

If your tie is of silk, a handkerchief of a dry linen fabric looks best, while if your tie is of wool or cotton, silk in the breast pocket will add the proper textural balance to the chest area.

There are four ways to fold a handkerchief properly: [square-ended](#), [puffed](#), [multi-pointed](#), and [triangle fold](#). The multi-pointed and the triangle effect are certainly the most elegant and are for use with handkerchiefs of linen or cotton with hand-rolled edges. Silk handkerchiefs look better with the puffed method. The square end (or TV fold), a popular style in the 1940s and `50s, seems a little staid today. Yet whatever method is chosen, the placing of the handkerchief must not appear overly studied. The material should show above the pocket no more than an inch to an inch and a half.

If you choose to have a monogram on your handkerchief, never let it show.

Jewelry

For men who like jewelry, there is plenty of opportunity to wear it when one is dressing up. There are the collar bar, tie holder, cufflinks, watch or key chain, wristwatch, and ring. Almost all are functional, but each may add an element of elegance to the wearer. Men's jewelry looks best when simple. Leave Florentine gold to the women. Stay away from rococo and baroque designs. If you want to wear something a little different, do it with humor or whimsy, not ostentation. Try cufflinks in the shape of hearts, or perhaps a tie clip in the shape of a tie.

If you wear cufflinks, never choose those with a clip on one side. They look as if you could only afford the gold or jewel on the outside. The best-made cufflinks and the most elegant ones are those with matching sides. After all, cufflinks are supposed to link both sides of a French cuff, not clip them together.

If you choose to wear a collar bar, select one in a gold or silver safety-pin style. Contrary to popular notion, holes made by the pin in the collar will close up after the shirt is washed. The clip models occasionally have interesting designs but never hold securely to the collar edge and must be adjusted throughout the day. The bar with a ball on either end, one of which screws on and off for use, is also very smart. The shirt collar must have holes sewn specifically for this particular bar. When worn properly, this method of securing the collar is not doubt the most elegant.

The wearing of a tie holder is optional, but it certainly produces a neater, more controlled look. It should not, however, be large or gaudy. A narrow gold bar with a plain design or a small clip looks best. The clip should never dominate the tie or stand out. It should be placed in the bottom half of the tie at a forty-five-degree angle downward, adhering to the rule that nothing ought to cross the body directly.

The most elegant watches are those with thin faces, trimmed in gold. The thinner the watch, the dressier it is. If you choose a pocket watch, make sure the chain is long enough to create a natural curve.

As a general rule, the color of all jewelry a man wears ought to be the same. If your cufflinks are a gold color, then your collar bar should be the same. Unlike female jewelry, men's jewelry should never be the focal point of what is being worn. Its role is functional and in this regard one might well adhere to a tenet of the architect Mies van der Rohe: "Less is more."

THE DRESS SHIRT

Up until one momentous Monday morning back in 1872, shirts and collars were all of one piece. This particular "blue" Monday was wash day for Mrs. Orlando Montague of Troy, New York. However, Mrs. Montague had finally had enough of laundering the week's worth of filthy shirts her husband had worn, and realizing that it was not the body of the shirt but the collar that seemed to be attracting the lion's share of the day's grime, she decided to do something about it. In an "inspiration of the moment," she wielded a pair of scissors and deftly snipped the offending collar from its moorings, then tied strips of the string to it to fasten it back on after she'd washed it.

Thus was born the first detachable collar, an invention that was soon seized upon by the Reverend Ebenezer Brown, who wisely foresaw the vast commercial possibilities of the item. He immediately began stocking them in his dry goods store, and the women of Troy picked up some extra spending money by laundering collars for him.

Other clever entrepreneurs soon caught on to the notion of detachable collars, so that a gentleman, when he went to work, could do something more than simply roll up his sleeves in order to keep his shirt ink-free.

It wasn't long before Troy, New York, rivaled that other fabled Troy halfway across the world and a couple of thousand years back in history, as the former became renowned as the detachable-shirt-collar capital of the world.

The detachable collar remained popular right up until World War I, when returning American Servicemen, having lived in their army uniforms for a couple of years, once again discovered the assets of the soft attached collar. Once the boys experienced that kind of comfort around their necks, they weren't about to go back to those stiff, starched collars, and detachable collars soon went the way of the dinosaur.

In the nineteenth century the shirt industry was not particularly sophisticated. As Apparel Arts noted in 1931, "A square of cloth gathered into a yoke at the shoulder, with shapeless sleeves and a hole for the neck, was called a shirt. Neckbands had but three sizes: fourteen, fifteen and sixteen inches." But to go that one (or even two) better, shirt sleeves had only a single size: long, to accommodate any length arm. Your shirt didn't fit you so much as you fit your shirt, and if you didn't well, that was just too bad. In fact, it wasn't until the beginning of the second decade of this century that measured sleeves lengths replaced the arm band as the method of setting one's cuffs correctly, and this, not coincidentally, occurred about the same time that soft cuffs were being introduced on shirts. After a prolonged absence, comfort was finally making a comeback.

Changes came slowly in the shirt industry. It wasn't until the late 1800s, for instance,



that color was finally introduced into shirts; and it was about this time that manufacturers found that if they laundered the shirts before offering them for sale, they appealed more to the prospective shopper's eye and, as a result, moved off the shelves that much more quickly.

Innovations continued during the twentieth century. In 1920, the semi-stiff collar was introduced by John Manning Van Heusen; eight years later, Cluett Peabody & Co. invented the Sanforizing process, which prevented the shirt from shrinking when it was laundered; and in the 1950s, Brooks Brothers became the first store to offer a polyester-blend dress shirt, a move that, up until the oil crisis of the late 1970s, kept the cost of shirts down and unfortunately had the effect of sanctioning the use of synthetic fibers in the industry.

Since the 1950s, while manufacturers' changes have been few, styles have changed radically. Paralleling the excesses of the Peacock Revolution, shirt collars grew to disproportionate lengths while colors took on the nightmarish hues of Day-Glo paints and subway graffiti. Today, the palette has sobered and the collar styles have returned to more traditional proportions that are more in keeping with the current conservative mood of the country. It's quite simple, really: fine-quality dress shirts are made of 100 percent cotton. Naturally, they cost more than polyester blends, but what you pay for is unrivaled comfort and a look that bespeaks luxury and tradition. As a natural fiber, cotton respects the natural needs of the body. It breathes, allowing the body to cool itself when necessary, and it absorbs moisture when the body perspires. As the article of clothing most in contact with the body, the shirt needs to act almost as a second skin. Cotton performs this function best.

Beyond comfort, finely combed cotton shirtings look better because of the density of their weave as well as because of cotton's ability to take color, thus giving a truer response to dyes. There is a clarity and richness to their color which simply cannot be duplicated with blended fabrics.

The natural sheen of fine cotton shirting is warm and subtle, not at all like the harshness of pure polyester. Except during the 1920s, when, perhaps due to the influence of those like the fictional Jay Gatsby, there was a brief flirtation with silk, cotton has always been and continues to be the shirting fabric of the well-dressed man.

Once the shirt material has been examined, the next place to look is the shirt collar. Indeed, there are some haberdashers who would suggest that this might be the first place to look, since the collar is all one ever sees of the shirt, that and perhaps one-half inch of cuff. In many respects, the shirt collar plays a role similar to that of the silhouette of the suit. It sets the tone of one's dressing style and is probably the key to the shirt's longevity.

Perhaps the most important aspect to consider is the relationship of the shirt collar to one's own physical proportions. Proper balance is the ideal. If a man is large, with a broad face and bullish neck, nothing will appear sillier under his chin than a tiny collar - rounded, spread, or otherwise. Conversely, a high-set collar with 3 1/2-inch points will overwhelm a small man with delicate features.

For the average-size man wearing a standard regular straight-point collar, the collar points should be no smaller than 2 3/4 inches nor larger than 3 1/4 inches. A man much larger would do better with a 3-inch to 3 1/4-inch collar. Generally speaking, the larger

the man, the larger the collar he can take. But one oughtn't push this notion too far. The proportions of the shirt collar can either draw attention to a man's physical irregularities or de-emphasize them, which is generally the more flattering course to follow. Therefore, if you have a short neck, look for shirt collars that lie flat. If your neck is particularly long, a higher band collar seems to shorten its length. No matter what size your neck is, however, the shirt collar should always show approximately one-half inch of material above the collar of the jacket. In the end, let common sense prevail.

The ideal shirt collar forms an upside down V, with the edges of the collar meeting at the throat. No space should be left between the edges. If the shape and width of your tie is appropriate to the shape and size of the shirt collar, no extra space is ever needed. Such collars are not always easy to find today because mass manufacturers want their shirts to fit any size tie and knot. However, one should try to find shirts whose collars have the least tie space between them so that a small elegant knot will not be left in a vacuum between the collar points.

One more thing to remember about a shirt collar: a fine collar is always stitched around the edges to stiffen and hold the folded material in place. In general, this stitching should not be more than one-quarter inch from the collar's edge. The finer the shirt, the finer the stitching. High-quality shirts are sewn with a single needle, which produces a very small stitch - usually twenty-two to twenty-four to the inch. Contrast stitching will act to destroy the quiet relationship between the tie and shirt and can easily appear to be an affectation. No stitching at all gives the collar a cheap, mass-produced look.

In choosing the proper shirt collar to wear with a specific suit or sports jacket, one must first consider the image the suit projects. Sports jackets and tweedy suits are informal, casual. Obviously, then, they should not be worn with a highly starched white collar but, rather, with a soft button-down or rounded collar, or perhaps even with a straight-pointed collar that can be gathered together with a pin. For dark, more dressy attire, one should wear a stiffer collar with sharp points that are straight or widely spread, such as the short cutaway the Duke of Windsor used to sport. Somehow, a button-down collar just looks too casual after 6 P.M. if one is trying to dress for the evening.

COLLAR STYLES

Today there is a wide spectrum of shirt collars from which to choose. Of these there are seven that a man can add to his wardrobe, confident that they will continue to survive the whims of fashion.

The Button-Down Collar

The button-down collar was first introduced in this country by Brooks Brothers, patterned after the polo shirt worn in England. As explained earlier, the collar was originally fastened down in order to prevent flapping in the player's face during a match. This collar, unlike all others, is soft and meant to remain that way. It is without doubt the most comfortable collar and represents nothing less than the American spirit by producing a casual image so in tune with our heritage. It has been popular every decade since the twenties, and since its



origins are definitely in sport, it is not considered a particularly dressy collar. Since it never lies exactly the same way, it offers an unpredictable buckling about the neck, thereby reflecting the wearer's individuality. It is a collar long associated with the Ivy League look and is especially complementary to the natural-shoulder suit. It is appropriately worn with tweed sports jackets and women suits. The Brooks Brothers original model remains the best version, for its points are long, permitting a "roll" that changes as the wearer moves. The button-down collar will accommodate a Windsor knot or a four-in-hand, and when worn with a bow tie, it projects the ultimate professorial image.

The Regular Straight-Point Collar



The regular straight-point collar with medium points should be the basic staple of any man's wardrobe. It is a shirt collar that can be worn with any style suit. In the seventies, this collar became very short in length. Today, though it has lengthened somewhat, it is still on the short side, especially in relationship to the width of both the tie and the jacket

lapels. Ideally, the collar points should be $2 \frac{5}{8}$ to $2 \frac{7}{8}$ inches long to balance with the classic jacket lapel width of $3 \frac{1}{2}$ inches and the tie width of $3 \frac{1}{4}$. Because it embodies the least number of associations, this collar tells the least about the man wearing it. However, its lack of associations allows untold versatility. There is no suit style for which it is inappropriate.

The Pin Collar

This is the same collar as the straight-point except that it is worn with a pin that goes through the collar, with collar bars that snap only the collars, or with a bar that has a screw and ball that connect through eyelets. Popular during the late twenties, it is a style that is favored by the most meticulous dressers, since it clearly takes more effort to assemble and lock the tie in place. It



suggests that the wearer has a highly refined interest and enjoyment in wearing clothes. Shirt collars designed with eyelets for use with a bar are stylish and can be worn with either sports jackets or business suits. Worn with a starched, pointed collar, the shirt is dressy; worn with a softer oxford-cloth collar, the look remains sporty. The first preference should be for the models with eyelets and the screw and ball; the next choice should be the style with the pin through the collar; and finally, the snap-on variety, which has a neat and stylish appearance but does not secure the collar as well as the other two. There is no need to worry about putting pinholes in your shirt collar, as after washing the shirt, the hole will naturally close up. This collar looks best on men with a medium to long neck.

The Windsor Collar



The Windsor collar was first popularized in the 1930s by the Duke of Windsor in order to accommodate the larger knotted necktie to which he was partial. It is the most formal of all collar styles. Because of its formality, it has never quite made

it into the mainstream of American clothing, gaining popularity only during those periods when American dress has been heavily influenced by the English. This is a shame, because with its open angled, starched, stiff collar, it heightens the dramatic

gesture of the collar. Though often worn with single-breasted clothing, it looks best with double-breasted jackets since its crisscrossing collar suggests the crossing lines of the jacket. Clearly this style would look highly inappropriate with informal attire such as sports jackets or tweed suits.

The English Spread Collar

Alas, one style innovation not introduced by the Duke of Windsor, the English spread collar is, in fact, attributed to his brother the Duke of Kent, a more conservative but still stylish dresser in his own right. The collar is a dressy one meant to accompany suits or possibly a blazer. The collar itself is less spread than the cutaway Windsor, but because of its high band, it sits farther up on the neck. Its overly large presentation often seems out of balance with today's softer, more naturally styled clothing. The collar has long been a favorite of London's German Street custom shirtmakers and gained international prominence with the marketing success of Turnbull & Asser. Prince Charles as well as his father are two of the most famous adherents to this shirt style.



The Tab Collar



The tab collar, yet another style innovation created by the Duke of Windsor, holds the tie in place by utilizing tabs attached to the collar and held together under the knot of the necktie. Though it is actually a more precise way of holding the tie in place than the pin, since the tab is in the same place each time, it is seen as less fussy and thus more acceptable in the business world. Today the tab comes with a snap button or plastic tab. However, the original style, which involves using a brass stud, is still far more elegant.

The Rounded Collar

The rounded, or club, collar, first popularized by English schoolboys attending Eton, has been a staple of the Ivy League set since the 1920s. Worn starched with or without a pin, this style complements a dressy suit. Worn soft pinned or unpinned, it looks equally well with a sports jacket. While versatile, the rounded collar does not flatter a man with a round face since it only accentuates the circularity.



Each one of these collar styles has its various adherents and each can look good under the proper circumstances. Thus, unlike the silhouette of a suit, there is no reason a man must confine himself to only one style.

FIT

In fitting a shirt, think first of comfort. The neckband should never choke or chafe, nor should the body of a shirt bind a man's torso. The neckband should fit snugly so that the collar doesn't fall down the neck, with an air space of one-quarter inch in front, allowing the head to turn without chafing the neck. Unfortunately, 80 percent of men wearing dress shirts wear the neckband too tight, either because the shirt has shrunk or because, due to age, the neck has thickened. However, if the neckband is too tight, it

will spread the collar, creating a larger space where the tie knot sits. This is not only unsightly, giving a sloppy appearance to the wearer, but is also exceedingly uncomfortable.

The body of the shirt should have no more material than is necessary for a man to sit comfortably. Excess material bulging around the midriff could destroy the lines of the jacket. If you do buy a shirt with too large a body, a seamstress can take in the side seams or put darts in the back to reduce the size. The darts are actually a bit more practical, since if you put on weight they can be removed. The length of the shirt is also an important concern. It should hang at least six inches below the waist so that it stays tucked in when you move around. It should not be so long, however, that it creates bulges in front of the trousers.

As for the sleeves of the shirt, they should show a full half-inch beyond the sleeves of your jacket. Generally, a good rule to follow is that they should finish approximately one-half inch below the break of the wrist. If you bend your arm and the cuff recedes behind the wrist, the sleeve is too short. A proper size sleeve will allow you to move your arm in any position without withdrawing the cuff. The cuff itself should fit snugly enough to hold its place on the wrist without appearing as a tight bracelet. But it should be small enough that the hand cannot go through it without it being unbuttoned. Or, to put it another way, the cuff should bear some reference to the size of one's wrist.

Cuffs

There are two types of shirt cuffs from which to choose: the barrel and the French. The barrel cuff fastens with one or two buttons. The French cuff is much more expensive to produce, so naturally manufacturers have taken to marketing mainly the barrel cuff. The French cuff, however, is far more elegant. When worn under a dark suit, the double fold of the French cuff combined with the bit of light that is the cufflink adds a richness to a man's attire that a single cuff and button simply cannot replace.



The means by which the cuff itself - either the barrel or French - has been attached to the sleeve is often a reliable indicator of the quality level of the shirt's manufacture. This attachment is no simple task. A big sleeve, one that can fit comfortably around the biceps and forearms, must be reduced in circumference and then sewn to a cuff that fits the smaller wrist. Often the sleeve is simply tapered in its shape so that there is little extra fabric to tuck into the cuff. But if instead the sleeve has been carefully folded into several pleats and then attached to the cuff, the shirt as a whole has undoubtedly been made with care. In England the custom shirtmakers actually sew small pleats in a complete circle around the cuff. French shirtmakers use a symmetrical pattern, folding two or three pleats into the cuff on each side.

Plackets, Yokes, and Gauntlets

These three items of obscure terminology can offer further clues to the quality level of a shirt's manufacture.

The placket is that piece of material on the front of the shirt where the buttonholes are placed. In the past, it used to be a separate piece of cloth sewn to the front, but today

shirtmakers merely fold the edge of the material to simulate this look. All fine dress shirts are made with a placket that is approximately 1 1/2 inches wide. This placket gives the shirt a definite center line and makes a clean finish where the shirt sides join to be buttoned.

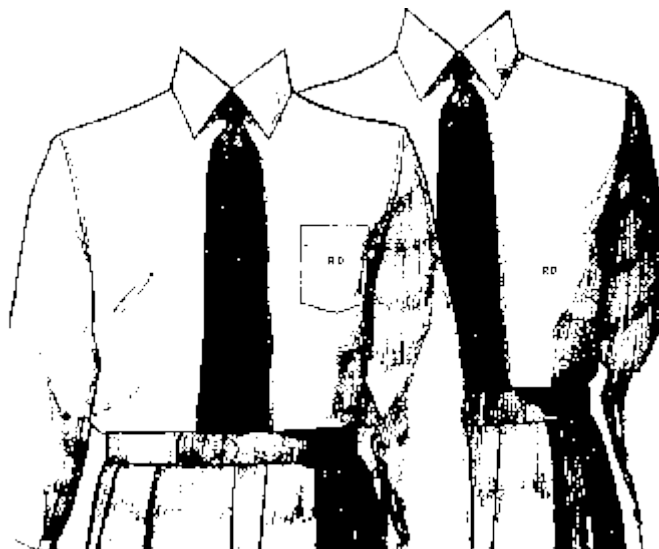
The yoke is the strip of material sewn across the shoulders to attach the front and back pieces of the shirt. Custom shirtmakers use a split yoke - two yokes jointed in the center - so that they can adjust each shoulder separately for a custom fit. Occasionally you will still see a split yoke, but unless the shirt has been made especially for you, this detail doesn't serve any real function. However, it does indicate a finer-quality shirt.

"Gauntlet" is the English term for the sleeve placket, that open area just before the cuff. A well-made shirt has a working button on the placket so that this gap can be closed when the shirt is being worn. The gauntlet button originated in order to enable men to roll back their cuffs while washing as well as to hold the cuff in place. Obviously, a gauntlet button is not one of life's dire necessities, through in certain circles a show of bare forearm is considered in as poor taste as a show of skin between hose and trouser cuff. On the other hand, a buttoning gauntlet does permit a better fit around the forearm and is one more indication of a quality shirt.

Mention should also be made here concerning the buttons of a shirt. While most buttons today are of man-made material, a mark of a finer shirt are buttons made of mother-of-pearl. Unfortunately, mother-of-pearl is a more fragile substance than plastic, but its wonderfully deep luster more than compensates for its fragility. A man interested in fine style doesn't mind the effort of having to replace such buttons every once in a while.

Monograms

Monograms are a nice way of personalizing your shirt, though not when they are ostentatiously placed on cuffs or on the collar of a shirt so as to act like a billboard. Keep the lettering simple and the initials discreet (no larger than one-quarter inch high). Place them approximately five or six inches up from the waist, centered on the left half of the shirt. If the shirt has a pocket (and many custom-made shirts do not), center the initials on it.



Shirt monograms are usually associated with custom-made shirts, but they can be sewn on any store-bought model. The extra cost they incur will show people that you care enough about the way you dress to take the time to individualize your shirt, as well as helping to avoid possible confusion when it is sent to be cleaned.