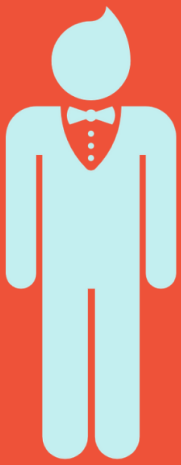

The Ultimate Men's Fashion Guide

7 Easy Steps to be Stylish Forever

GARRETT M. CARLSON

The Ultimate Men's Fashion Guide

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Introduction

Now that 2020 is finally over, and vaccines are beginning to roll out, what better time than now to look at your wardrobe. Of course, when I wrote the first ultimate men's fashion guide, I hadn't expected the entire world to be in lockdown, thus rendering any article of clothing that didn't have the word "sweat" in its name to be useless. Yet what I wrote a year ago remains true today. Many vital lessons around fashion are timeless: make sure your clothes fit (get yourself a good tailor), buy pieces of clothing that will last a long-time, and own a nice suit.

For the 2021 ultimate men's fashion guide, I want to keep some of that timeless advice while adding in a couple of new rules for the new year. As always, I'll include a couple of my favorite men's clothing items for 2021 underneath each practice so you can check out precisely what I'm talking about.

Fashionable or lazy?

I categorize men's fashion into two styles: fashionable or lazy.

"Lazy" is the style for most of us. It's sweatpants, t-shirts from high school with holes under the armpits, and Adam Sandler. It's what we've been wearing nearly every day since quarantine began.

"Fashionable" is where you want to be. It's the cover of GQ, perfectly fitted suits, and Idris Elba.

"Fashionable" is more of the category that I am looking for.

I've rarely fit in nicely into either category as my fashion sense could be correctly described as "attempting to be trendy but doesn't know how to match colors or pick out the right clothes." Last year I started my fashion journey; this year, I plan to show it off.

In my attempt to understand what's going to be fashionable, I reached out to 12 of the biggest men's

fashion influencers to ask them for some timeless fashion advice. I initially assumed this article would be a roundup of what's "in" and what's "out," but almost everyone I chatted with encouraged me to discard the year and focus on timeless male fashion advice. After hearing what they had to say, I turned this piece into a thorough men's fashion guide for beginners, complete with tips and tricks from 12 of today's most prominent male fashion experts.

I'll first cover why I am in such desperate need of expert advice and the journey I've been on to discover my style as an adult. From there, I'll move on to three new rules for 2021 and some of the timeless fashion advice that will be useful to you whether you're fresh out of college or getting ready to retire.

3 lessons from a lifetime of faux-pas

I've always admired fashionable men. And the problem has been that I don't independently understand what "fashionable" really means. My attempts at trendy style is a chronicle of deplorable failures.

Let me paint you a picture: when I was six years old, Mom took me to the barber. Attempting to teach me a lesson on self-empowerment, she told the barber, "Let him get whatever cut he wants."

1. Never get a haircut based on your favorite wrestler.

Mom didn't realize that I had been planning for that moment all morning. I knew I was getting a haircut, and I knew exactly what I wanted.

No, I didn't want a mohawk.

And not a buzzcut.

I could have asked for anything.

I asked for a rat tail.

Yes, that kind of rat tail.

The same type of rat tail hairstyle made famous by such characters as Joe Dirt, New Kids on the Block, and my favorite wrestler at the time, Sting. I remember it now, the summer heat on Marilyn Drive interrupted by the wind whipping my rat tail back and forth as my bike tires rolled across the pavement. There are photos of me that cannot be untaken.

2. Never take fashion advice from anyone named "Rusty."

As I grew up, my fashion choices worsened.

In sixth grade, I idolized a kid named Rusty in my karate class. Rusty wasn't that great at karate—he wasn't that great at much of anything. But he did have cool parents, and his cool parents let him get a sick ear piercing in his left ear.

I pestered. I whined. I begged. I wanted the earring so bad that I threatened to pierce my own ear. Mom caved. I waltzed into Claire's Jewelers with Ric Flair's

swagger, picking out the most obnoxious "pig stud" earring.

After that first earring stayed in long enough, my grandparents bought me a quarter-sized hoop to graduate into new accessories.

I looked like a goddamned pirate.

Soon after, the shine started to dwindle. I heard enough "yaaar" in the middle school hallway to want to crawl under my bed and set down a permanent anchor. After all the convincing that went into getting the earring, Mom wasn't having it.

She made me wear it for the next few years.

When my wife looks at my old school photos, she asks, "Why did you get that earring again?"

The piercing: a curse, a tragedy, a nightmare… but not my worst fashion decision.

3. Never wear yellow on yellow.

Fashion has only a few straightforward rules. A sampling of the ones I managed to break before graduating high school includes:

Never sport double jeans (i.e., Justin Timberlake circa 2001)
Never wear Jnco's unless you're soap shoeing
Never wear jorts and high white socks
I broke each of those rules before graduating high school. And none of those days were as bad as the day I inadvertently dressed as a banana.

It was 2002. My grandparents had gifted me with a stylish new outfit from Aeropostale: a bright yellow t-shirt with matching yellow shorts. Because I was 13 and that kid from Big Daddy who was allowed to dress himself, I slapped on my yellow shorts and yellow t-shirt and hopped on the yellow school bus in blissful ignorance of my Chiquita-like features. My mop of brown hair even topped off the outfit.

As I walked down the art-wing hallway next to my high school crush, I saw a reflection of myself on the freshly cleaned tile floors. The banana peel like shape of my body, my stem-like thin neck, and dark features: if you stood at the other end of the hallway, you'd ask your friend, "Yo, is that guy in a banana costume or just wearing too much yellow?"

My crush noticed too. She stopped, her head scanned my fruitful body. "It's an interesting choice to wear that much yellow."

No wonder I was a virgin until college.

The day I discovered style.

The late bell was about to ring; I loudly informed my students that I would have to mark them as tardy if they didn't get in their seats. Byron, one of my favorite students, stood up and announced to the class, "Yo, get your Mr. Crocker ass out of here."

I looked around the room, but Byron's gaze remained on me. It was Mr. Crocker. I froze.

Mr. Crocker is the antagonistic school teacher from The Fairly OddParents! He wore the same outfit every day: a white dress shirt, black tie, black shoes, and thick-framed glasses — the same outfit I had been wearing for the past couple of days.

As a male educator, our clothing options are limited: a dress shirt, dress pants, a tie, and the occasional polo shirt on dress-down Fridays. It's all about how you mix and match your outfits, which was a slight problem because I had no idea how to combine colors.

Byron should have frozen, too, seeing as he was about to get detention. Instead, the troubled 17-year-old pushed, staring at me quixotically. "What's going on, Carlson? You're not blinking. Is he dead?" I snapped back and, without witty retort, wrote up a yellow slip.

I wasn't dead on the outside, only a little dead on the inside.

Once again, I was "pig stud" Carlson. I was Chiquita Carlson all over again. This was every major fashion faux pas from middle and high school coming back. It was as if I was six years old again picking random clothes off the rack at a generic department store, trying to figure out what I thought would be cool.

I went home and walked through my closet of professional clothes: plain black or brown slacks, a collection of solid-colored ties, and an unimpressive shelf of plain white dress shirts. Thanks to Byron, I realized I was on the wrong fashion path, and I needed help. So I entrusted my fashion future to the only folks I knew to be reliable and ready to help whenever I needed it.

I joined Pinterest.

Pinterest introduced me to a world of color-coordinated dress attire, fashion advice, and something called "boat shoes." Though I'd never actually been on a boat, I knew I needed them.

Once logged in, I searched my favorite colors and found outfit ideas. With the power of the internet alongside me, I bought a bevy of new sweaters, shoes, and ties, each tied to a pinned outfit that I thought looked good. Pinterest made it super easy for me to put together outfits in the morning and mix and match different dress shirts and ties to create unique outfits.

Pinterest became a game-changer, and not only for work. I started using it to organize my date outfits: I bid adieu to my "lucky flannel" and hello to nicely matching sweater and shoe combinations. I really like this Guide to Matching Colors by Batch. They suggest that when building your wardrobe to stick with solid colors like blues and neutrals because you will "have more outfitting options and versatility" when you begin to start adding more color to your closet—the more outfit options in your wardrobe, the better.

One morning, I wore a black sweater with a burgundy tie, matched with a beautiful pair of burgundy boots. Byron stopped in the doorway, his eyes looking me up

and down. "Nice outfit, Carlson." As he found his seat, I corrected him: "That's Mister Carlson, Byron."

Byron taught me two things about fashion that school year: Pinterest is a life-saver, and high school kids can be assholes.

The Ultimate Men's Fashion Guide for 2021

In my quest to become fashionable in 2020, I reached out to a variety of well-coiffed individuals in the hopes of finding out what I've been missing out on all these years. In 2021, I took all of their timeless fashion advice and added it to our ultimate men's fashion guide. You'll soon realize that true fashion isn't about trendy clothes, the latest trends, or hopping along whatever bandwagon someone named "Rusty" is jumping on.

No. Men's fashion trends come down to three things: timeless style, long-term investments, and fit.

Here were my biggest takeaways.

Start to curate your own "timeless style."

When I think of a timeless style, I think of Marlon Brando's leather jacket or David Beckham in any color suit. I think about perfectly trimmed hair and well-coordinated color patterns. Our men's style guide needs you to know that timeless style means just that: something that will stand up for years and years.

Robert Van Tongeren, the owner of Restart Your Style, suggests, "My advice for 2020 is no different from any other year. If you focus on developing a timeless style, your future self won't look back on pictures wondering what you were thinking."

Tongeren is right. Think back to the fashion icons of 1999: Fred Durst, Kid Rock, and Chris Kirkpatrick. Would you be caught dead wearing a slightly stained tank top, backward red New York Yankees baseball

cap, and whatever pineapple thing was going on with Kirkpatrick's hair?

Probably not.

Tongeren's point is that, like everything, trends come and go, and it's important when picking out clothing to identify what items are going to stand up through the test of time.

With so many timeless options available, how do you choose which clothing items to go with?

Sergio Ines, founder of What My Boyfriend Wore, tells me, "Fashion is cyclical, so don't worry about what's coming in 2020 or beyond. Choose a classic style that speaks to your personality and makes you feel comfortable, and invest in quality pieces that will last the fashion cycle. You'll never be able to keep up, so best to put a peg in the ground and hang your hat on it – assuming that hat suits your style, of course." Not only should every piece of clothing you buy be focused on what will be timeless, but it's also vital that it fits who you are. Ines makes it a point to illustrate that your outfits should be an extension of your personality.

To do that, Sven Raphael Schneider, founder of Gentleman's Gazette, advises, "Rather than trying to go with the fashion every season, ask yourself what it would be like to create a personal and unique style identity. Just like your humor, wit or eloquence, people will remember you as the guy who is always dressed to the T, or the bow tie guy, or the flannel shirt guy." If you're looking for a place to start, pick an article of clothing or accessory that you enjoy, and invest in incorporating that style into your daily wear.

Think about how you want to present yourself to the world; what kind of man do you want to be known as? Sven Raphael Schneider continues: "If you find something that is truly you and live it, people will remember you for it. Of course, mastery requires time, and your style will change over time. That's OK because it is a journey, but it is nevertheless something that defines you in the eyes of others." Raphael makes sure to point out that identifying your style identity is going to be something that takes time. Defining your style is a marathon, not a sprint.

Takeaways:

Men's fashion trends come and go—instead of focusing on what's "in," focus on curating a "timeless" style.

Invest in expanding one part of your wardrobe that you particularly enjoy wearing, be it funky socks, oxfords, or chambray shirts. Be the "[fill-in-the-blank] guy."

Wear clothes that are an extension of your personality—clothing that feels "you" feel "right." Keep what's working and discard the rest.

Grooming is an essential part of men's fashion.

Zoom calls and working from home is excellent: you only need to wear nice clothes on the top half of your body, no one can smell if you haven't washed your hair in a couple of days, and it's not your fault that you haven't gotten a haircut in what seems like a year. Those days of indoor pleasure are sure to be almost over, which means it's once again time to step up your grooming game.

While not technically an article of clothing, men's fashion is highly dependent on making sure you take of yourself as well. That's why during quarantine, I've

taken it upon myself to learn more about men's grooming and everything that has to come with it. Here's a link to some of my favorite men's grooming gifts for the new year.

Let's start with your hair. For a long time, I never had a specific hairdresser: sometimes I'd go to the cheapest barber around the corner, other times I'd visit a chain hair salon. Sometimes I'd just have my mom buzz it all off. But once one of my friends took to haircutting, I finally understood the importance of having a good, and more importantly, reliable barber. So the second you have an opportunity (and you feel comfortable), find a classic barbershop in your area and make an appointment. Build up that rapport because most barbers genuinely care about their customers and their work.

A simple Yelp search of the best men's barbershops will reveal a lot, but check out their websites as well. Heck, even poke your head into the building to see if the vibe of the shop matches what you're going for. While you're there, ask them about what products they use or which ones they recommend. It never hurts to use what the pros use.

Now, with your hair well-coiffed, it's time to think about how you treat your hair. While going through some of the best men's eco-friendly shampoos, I realized how much of a difference a good smelling (and washing) shampoo could be to self-confidence. I mean, what dude wants to walk around smelling like farts anyway? Of course, we like to smell good (and masculine). That's why I suggest ditching the store-bought shampoos in place of something more specialized.

I've been a big fan of Duffy's Brew Craft Beer Shampoo for the last couple of months. It features a rich, manly smell while also being sulfate and paraben-free (i.e., good for the environment). My wife's noticed that my hair has been softer since starting to use this product, and I mean, it's made from craft beer. How cool is that?

Now comes facial hair. Your quarantine beard is probably looking a little more ZZ Top than you'd like to admit. Don't fret; if you feel overwhelmed, you can always ask your barber for a nice trim with a hot towel wash afterward. Alright, even if you're not overwhelmed, get yourself a warm shave. Life-changing.

That being said, you don't always want to have to make an appointment to trim up your beard, which is why I took the time to review men's beard trimmers. What I learned is that there really is a beard trimmer for any dude. Need something precise, check out the Norelco One Blade. Sick of cleaning up all of those hairs in the sink? The Remington Vacuum Trimmer has you covered.

And after you're finished cleaning up your beard, it's time to move on to some beard oil. You can check out my favorite beard oils of the year if you want a good list to get you started. It'll help your skin moisturize while also allowing facial hair to grow softer, longer, and healthier.

There might be no better time than now to start focusing on your grooming habits. Whether it's your beard, hairstyle, or even face moisturizer, we're all going to have to go out in public again soon, and blurry video calls will once again be replaced by meeting rooms. But more importantly, good grooming is the difference between looking, smelling, feeling confident, and not. You know how good it feels to smell nice or walk out of the barbershop with a fresh haircut.

In more ways than one, setting yourself up with a healthy grooming routine is an investment in yourself, which is why it's number two on our list for the ultimate men's fashion guide in 2021.

Spend big now to save in the future

I quickly learned the downside of fashion is that items can soon fall apart, requiring you to replace them within six months to a year. This phenomenon is called "fast fashion." Fast fashion is mass-produced, inexpensive clothing that is developed in response to the latest trends. Typically these items have a short shelf life as the quality tends to be lower. Examples of

fast fashion men's retailers include H&M, PacSun, and Express (the brand name couldn't be more apt).

As I've aged, I began to understand the importance of buying pieces of long-lasting clothing. Almost every expert said that a men's fashion trend for 2021 should be purchasing high-quality clothing destined to last a lifetime.

For example, Brock McGoff, the owner of The Modest Man, says, "Focus on quality over quantity. This can apply to how to spend your time, what you consume, and your personal style. Be intentional about the clothes and accessories you buy. Make a plan, and try to buy the highest quality you can afford at any given time. It's easier than ever to get sucked into consumerism and fast fashion, but a true man of style will always focus on quality." So if you've taken a look at Pinterest or other men's fashion resources (like any of the sites linked in this article), the next step is to think about what clothes are most essential for you to purchase.

Think about how long they will last. A high-quality piece of timeless fashion is worth infinitely more than a bit of fast fashion that'll fall apart within a couple of months.

These pieces of high-quality fashion items will help to build your style identity. Dan Trepanier, the founder of The Articles of Style, suggests, "Buy less, buy better. Investing in the best quality you can afford, wearing it as often as possible, and not replacing it is the single most sustainable way to shop. It also happens to be the best way to build personal style. The beauty of menswear is that you only need a small collection of timeless garments that are well made and fit properly…and these will become pieces that you cherish and have a long-term relationship with as they break in and build character. A true gentleman gets better with age like a fine wine – his clothes should too." Trepanier's advice to start small is a way to save your wallet some money. Don't go to the store thinking you need to purchase a whole new wardrobe because a small collection of multifaceted items goes a long way.

Tommy Lee, the founder of My Belonging, adds, "For anyone who is entering their 30s, it's important to start thinking about wise, long-term investments. I started in my early 20s, and I am still wearing pieces I've invested in. Over time they will prove their value because a Saint Laurent military jacket or Rick Owens / Acne Studios leather jacket will get you much

further than something we'd normally get from a fast-fashion retailer." Of course, lower quality equals lower cost, and if you're looking for something name brand, you're going to have to spend more money.

But high fashion doesn't need to be so expensive. Lei points out; you could buy your nicer clothes "second-hand at ecoms like TheRealReal or Grailed (the latter has a phenomenal selection for dudes, especially). Retail establishments, like COS and Uniqlo, are also great for affordable, timeless basics that you can live in forever. We have to start thinking beyond just our wallets and looking at how the overall environmental impact apparel manufacturing has on our planet as well. I'd rather cozy up in an outfit or uniform I could wear for decades to come than spend frivolously on a trendier, louder piece for the sake of flexing." There are plenty of options for men to find name brand clothing at less-than name-brand prices; it's all about finding the right deals.

Do your research, and don't be afraid to purchase second-hand items if they are from top quality clothing brands.

Takeaways:

Focus on quality over quantity. A curated number of high-quality items goes a lot further than a large closet of clothes that will fall apart.
Look to respected brand names for your clothing purchases.
Use second-hand shops to buy gently used quality apparel.

Eco-friendly clothing is the future.

2020 was a shit-show. Let's do our part to make sure 2021 (and our future) is a lot better by focusing a bit more on our clothes' impact on the environment. Our fourth rule for the ultimate men's fashion guide is to

start looking at eco-friendly clothing as an alternative to fast fashion.

When I'm looking/reviewing an item of clothing for Dudefluencer, I try to focus on these four questions:

Is it made from natural ingredients?
Is the manufacturing of the product environmentally friendly?
What are the working conditions for those making the product?
Is clothing sustainable?

Our friend Janson Wigo, from Opok, told us, "The best way to know if a company utilizes sustainable/ organic manufacturing is through their certifications. If they are GOTS certified, B-corp, etc., then consumers have a better understanding of how they utilize clean energy." It's essential to go through a clothing company's website before purchasing to look at what they tell you about their certification process. The more information the company provides, the better.

You'll find a lot of clothing that fits into one or two of these categories, which is better than none, but we still want to aim for hitting all of them. That being said, you should also expect to pay a bit more when it

comes to eco-friendly clothing because it takes more work/energy to develop organic dyes, organic cotton, and sustainable energy resources.

Thankfully, many clothing outfitters have stepped up their game over the past couple of years regarding sustainable clothing. Brands like Opok are leading by example by developing men's underwear, that is 100% organic and environmentally friendly. Pact also does a beautiful job with a wide variety of different men's clothing options made from organic cotton in fair trade factories. Even companies like Brave Gentleman and Tranzend are developing eco-friendly suits.

As a piece of timeless fashion advice for our men's fashion guide, look to buy high-quality, eco-friendly clothing items over cheaper, fast fashion alternatives if possible. I am not telling you to throw out your entire wardrobe. The more you wear your clothes, or even donate them so others can wear them, you're still helping out the environment.

Invest in clothing options that will last long-term, which means spending a bit more and purchasing items that have been developed with the environment in mind. I'll include a few of my favorites below.

Takeaways:

Spend the extra money on organic clothing: it will last longer and protect the environment.
While many clothing companies claim to be organic, please pay attention to whether they use organic dyes to manufacture their products.
Sustainable fashion doesn't have to be straightforward; look at modern companies releasing well-constructed, well-designed organic clothing options.

Suit up

What men's style guide would be complete without a section about men's formal wear?

If there were anyone day I needed to look my best, it would be my wedding. Of course, I wasn't planning on upstaging the bride, but I at least wanted to be the perfect complement to her. That meant I needed to buy the right suit with the right fit and select the proper attire for my groomsmen. I mean, it's a formal occasion, so that means nice suits with clean long-sleeve shirts and an appropriate colored tie.

After a few trips to various suit stores, I found myself in Men's Wearhouse looking at a dark grey suit with a matching vest. I wanted a classic look for the suit, with the tie being the point of popping-off articulation. Navy wouldn't work with the bridesmaid's dresses, but a dark grey and cranberry red combination looked stunning together. The cranberry wasn't a bright color but added just enough flair to my formal wear that it made a statement.

Of course, I got this idea from Pinterest.

Don't be afraid to hit up Macy's or another traditional department store for a suit on a budget. Just make sure you spend some of the money you saved on a tailor to make sure it fits you perfectly because a good fit can always be better.

Andy Gilchrist of Ask Andy About Clothes shares some of his knowledge about neckties. "There may be fewer places they are worn now, but we've tried to replace neckties with turtlenecks in the early 1970s, which didn't work. A necktie draws other's eyes up to your face and gives you a vertical line right in the center of your torso, projecting an image of being taller and thinner." To choose the right size necktie, it's essential to look at your body type. Larger men wearing larger suits should try to find broader and longer ties, while smaller men should focus on skinnier and shorter ties.

As for length, the tip of the tie should end right at your beltline for a perfect fit. But Gilchrist has one more word of caution, though before buying your necktie: "The problem may be men still wearing the same size shirt collar they wore in high school!"

If you're looking for the perfect pocket square, Gilchrist says, "The only reason for the breast pocket in a suit or sports jacket is to display a pocket square. It gives men an additional element of fashion to provide some color and personal expression to their ensemble." When looking to add some of your personal (timeless) style to your suit, the pocket square

is the perfect weapon. It can be classy while adding a bit of pizazz and elevating any outfit.

Warning: pocket squares can be very addictive to any male fashion connoisseur.

Lastly, I needed to find the perfect pair of shoes to compliment my outfit. I chose a simple pair of black Cole Haan shoes. Still, if you want to change things up a bit, Gilchrist says, "[Black shoes are] OK if you're a funeral director, at a job interview, getting married, with formalwear or making a high-level boardroom presentation, but not necessary for any other occasion. Try various shades of brown. Brown is more sophisticated and goes perfectly with navy and gray." Again, shoes are an opportunity to express some of your style in your formal wear.

Takeaways:

If you're a larger guy in a larger suit, choose a larger, longer tie. If you're smaller, go for slimmer, shorter ties. The end of your tie should be at your beltline.
If you have a breast pocket, pop in a pocket square that suits you and your style.

Go for brown shoes over black unless you're attending a funeral, getting married, or attending another black-tie event.

Accessorize.

Barney Stinson from "How I Met Your Mother" re-introduced men to the benefits of wearing a suit. Now, dudes, it's time to take things up to a whole new level. I'm talking about accessories.

The first one to come to mind with any suit is a good tie. That's pretty self-explanatory, but please stop wearing all-black suits with black ties unless you're at a funeral. Instead, take the opportunity to show off a bit of your personality and flair by introducing a colorful (patterned) tie into your wardrobe.

Anthony Orisses, the founder of Rare Cut, said to us recently, "I found this quote on Instagram, and I love it. It makes a lot of sense to me. 'It's become clear to me why the 1818 pandemic was followed by the roaring twenties. And why people were dressing up to go just about anywhere.' I think people are itching to take out a nice outfit that they have from the closet that's all dusted up and hasn't seen the light of day in almost a year. [They] have an excuse to go out and look good and feel good." This means it's not only time to bust out your finest suit, but it's also beyond time to impress with your accessory game.

Think about it: if everyone is planning on stepping back out into the world in a couple of months, they will probably be wearing their nicest clothes. But if you want to stand out, fashion is all about the flavor you add to your everyday attire.

So other than the obvious (a fashionable tie), I'd also like to point out the beauty of a pocket square. If you're wondering when is the best time to start rocking a pocket square, then the answer is right now. Well, maybe not with athleisure clothes, but any time you decide to go out wearing a suit jacket.

While wearing a tie, you'll want to make sure that your pocket square matches with it. As for folding a pocket square, I suggest watching this video (folding pocket squares are the bane of my fashion existence):

Another option is to look at a company like Rare Cut. They developed a pocket square designed to stay up no matter what due to their patent-pending technology. It's an item that's incredibly useful that you never knew needed to exist until it's in your hands. I love mine even though the only time I've gotten a chance to wear it was around the house.

I'd also love to mention the benefits of a good watch. I'm a watch guy, have always been a watch guy, will probably always be a watch guy. That being said, you don't need to spend a ton of money to get a nice looking watch that will accent your outfit.

One suggestion for watch ideas would be to take a visit over to R/Watches. There's a great community over there that offers recommendations on any kind of watch you want, at nearly any price point. In my summer fashion essentials guide, I also mentioned that it might not be a bad idea to mix and match your masks. Since masks will continue to be a staple of our daily lives for at least another year, it wouldn't hurt to at least take a glance at what else is available.

So if you're ready to suit up this 2021, then my ultimate men's fashion guide suggests taking the next step by accentuating your style with a fun pocket square or watch.

Takeaways:

Don't be afraid to pick out a poppy pocket square to flare out your business suit.
A good watch can be a great conversation starter.

It is the little accessories that help your personality shine.

Make the clothes fit you.

I'd always been skeptical about Men's Wearhouse; my previous experiences have been underwhelming. The customer service was lacking, the selection was limited, and the clothing was overpriced.

But my experience at Men's Wearhouse for my wedding was completely different: the gentleman attending to me listened to my ideas. He immediately started pulling suits off the rack for me to try on. We measured my body to find the perfect suit jacket fit (slim fit for the win). And to top off the whole outfit, a well-tailored vest to compliment my suit and the groomsmen.

Within a few weeks, the tailors had finished their work, and my wedding attire was all put together.

But it wasn't just what I was wearing that made a difference; it was how the suit made me feel. I'd felt self-conscious about my hair, body, and clothing for decades, yet whenever I put on my wedding suit, my

confidence skyrocketed. I felt good because I knew I looked good. The extra cost for a tailored suit made all the difference.

And that feeling of self-confidence helped me enjoy my wedding even more. I wasn't worried about people and how they thought I looked, nor was I always fussing with my outfit pieces. I knew I looked great, and I knew that my wife knew that I looked great, which meant I got to enjoy being in pictures or spending time on the dance floor.

Andrew Snavely of Primer Magazine advises, "At Primer, we focus more on understanding great style than keeping up with the latest fashion heading down the runway. And one of the most important concepts is fit. Many men wear their pants far too long and their shirts and suit jackets a full size too big. Before you 'Add to Cart' on a new piece you think will finally lock in your style, consider heading to a tailor with the pieces you already have." A well-fitted outfit can go a long way in terms of building self-confidence. Buying a long-lasting, well-fitted item of clothing is something that can last for a long time. Again, trends change quickly, but having a style designed around your body type is timeless.

Style is all about confidence, not comfort. Tug Samarreta of The Undershirt Guy says, "Never compromise comfort over style. While it's always a good idea to look good, it's more important to feel good. If any part of your outfit makes you feel uncomfortable, that can have a negative effect on your confidence. The more comfortable you are, the more confident you'll feel. That's not to say you shouldn't dress nicely. It just means to seek out clothing and footwear that fits you properly." A lot of personal styles is about feeling confident in yourself while wearing any outfit.

Ethan Wong from Street x Sprezza advises those who prefer more relaxed attire, even for their suits. He says, "try being slouchy with your tailored outfits. Wide legs. Pleats. Loafers. Soft shoulders. You'll get the old school charm while being extremely comfortable!"

Go to a few local stores and try on some high-end clothes to see how each article of clothing makes you feel. If you're walking around with your head held high and can imagine yourself on a night on the town rocking this new jacket or pants, then you may have found the one.

Takeaways:

Take the clothes you already own to a tailor so that they fit you correctly.
Get measured before purchasing any suit and buy for your body measurements.
Make sure you're comfortable in the clothes you're buying; if your clothes are damaging your confidence, it's time to donate them.

Conclusion

Style doesn't have to be difficult. In fact, simple is often better than something loud, or bright.

And dudes…get a tailor. They are magicians that can make clothes look incredible with just a couple of adjustments.

Remember the basics, and if you ever get confused, visit us at dudefluencer.com for more articles about fashion.