



4-H Fabrics & Fashions

Consumer Education

Intermediate Level (12-14 Years)

Consumer Buying for Young Men

How to buy shirts

Shirts play an important part in any young man's wardrobe. You can change the appearance of your entire outfit simply by changing your shirt. You may select a plain color or pattern, pin stripe, wide stripe, dobby, check plaid, geometric, or other design. These may be chosen in many colors.

There are two major shirt styles – the dress shirt and the sport shirt. The dress shirt is not as full in cut as the sport shirt. Materials for dress shirts include broadcloth, oxford and chambray, and the polyester and cotton blends. All of these fabrics may also be used for sport shirts, along with percales, gingham, and knits.

Collar Styles

The most noticeable thing about your shirt is the collar. There are several collar styles and you should find the one most becoming to you. Select a collar style that is becoming to the shape of your face.

Become familiar with two descriptive terms – points and spread. The points are the distance between the neckband and the collar tip. The spread is the distance between the collar points.

Look at your face in the mirror. Is it round, long and slender, or average? What type of collar will give you the effect you need? Here are seven basic shirt collar styles. Study them to learn which style is

most becoming to you.

- **Short point:** this is excellent for the long-necked, slim-faced person.
- **Spread:** this style has short points with medium spread between the points. It is very becoming to young men with thin faces or average builds.
- **Regular:** this type can be worn by a majority of all figure types. It has a medium point and a medium spread.
- **Button-down:** this collar is casual and youthful-looking and worn for both dress and sport occasions. It looks well on a figure of average build and flatters a young man with a broad build and short neck.
- **Tab:** this is a dressy style which looks well on the young man with the average face.
- **Low slope:** the low slope is cool, comfortable, and excellent for the thin neck.
- **Rounded:** this type is also youthful-looking and may be worn by a person with a thin or average face.

Cuff styles

If you select a long-sleeve shirt, you will have several cuff styles from which to choose.

- **Single or "barrel" cuff:** this one fastens with a lap and attached button.

- **French:** this type, often called a double cuff, is folded back and worn with cuff links.
- **Single cuff, with cuff link openings.**
- **Convertible:** this is a barrel-type cuff with an extra buttonhole which permits it to be worn with cuff links or as a regular buttoned cuff.

Shopping tips

- The buttonhole stitches should be close and firm and have no loose threads. The buttonholes should be placed exactly in the center front.
- Check to see that the buttons are smooth and clear. They should be stitched on securely.
- Study the label carefully for information such as colorfastness, perspiration resistance, shrinkage control, and fiber content. If a shirt is guaranteed not to shrink more than 1 percent, fit will not be affected after washing.

Selecting quality clothing

Good quality clothes are clothes that will be in style for a number of years and will hold up to hard wear while retaining their good appearance. They are not necessarily the most expensive clothes, but they may be. First, determine the quality of clothing you need to suit your needs. Items that are seldom worn do not have to be the best quality. They should have a good appearance, but durability will not be a concern. The clothes that are worn often, on the other hand, will need to be the best quality you can afford. Before making a major purchase, estimate what the item will cost per wearing.

Cost per wearing

To determine the cost per wearing, add the purchase price of an item to the care costs and divide by the number of times you think you will wear the item. For example, a suit you can wear for all but the coldest

months of the year costs \$300. You will wear the suit twice a week for nine months of the year, and it will last for three years. The suit will need to be cleaned about four times a year at a cost of about \$7 per cleaning.

Two wearings per week for nine months = $2 \times 4 \times 9 = 72$ wearings.

Seventy-two wearings per year for three years = 216 wearings.

Four cleanings per year for three years = $4 \times 3 = 12$ cleanings.

Twelve cleanings at \$7 per cleaning = \$84.

Purchase price of \$300 + \$84 (cost of care) = \$384 total cost.

Total cost of \$384 divided by 216 (number of wearings) = \$1.77 (cost per wearing).

If the suit is worn only once a week instead of twice the cost per wearing almost doubles.

Fabric

When selecting quality, durable clothes, the first thing to consider is the quality of the fabric. Look for a label or hangtag. The law requires that all garments have information stating fiber content of the fabric. Look, too, for information about special finishes, what care the garment requires and the name of the manufacturer or retailer.

Fabrics for slacks and suits should be firmly woven or knitted to retain shape and appearance for longer-lasting garments. Loosely-woven or knitted fabrics may be less durable than tighter construction, but they add a casual look to shirts, pullovers, and sports clothes.

Wool and cotton are the most popular

fibers used in menswear. Used alone or blended with polyester, they offer comfort, ease of care, wrinkle-resistance and aesthetic characteristics most men prefer. The addition of polyester to a natural fiber will add ease of care and wrinkle-resistance properties.

Wool or wool/polyester blends are ideal for suits because they hold shape and resist wrinkles. Wool has long been a favorite for men's suits and coats. Wool tailors easily, holds its shape well and resists wrinkles.

There are two types of wool fibers – worsted and woolens. A worsted fabric is made of long, fine woolen fibers that are tightly twisted. This twist makes the fabric particularly durable. Worsted will take a sharp crease and hold its shape. If you crumple them in your hand, they will spring back to shape. Gabardine and sharkskin are worsted fabrics. They will become shiny after wear and cleaning. Plaids and stripes in worsted will not show shine readily.

The second type of wool fiber is woolens. Woolens are fabrics made from fibers that are too short to be twisted. These fabrics are soft, do not hold pressing as well and are not as durable as worsted fabrics. They do not wrinkle easily and are thicker and fuzzier than worsted. Examples of woolens are tweeds, twists, some flannels and homespun.

The quality of a suit

After you have taken a look at fabric, notice some other things about the suit. There are some definite signs of good quality and workmanship.

- **Straight of grain:** Grain means the lengthwise yarns are perpendicular to the crosswise yarns, if the suit is not cut on the true grain, it will lose its shape in wear and cleaning. The crosswise yarns should run straight across the chest and sleeves without sloping down.

- **Matching of a pattern:** in the best quality suits, the cloth is cut so the patterns match exactly. The matching of patterns does not make the suit wear better, but it does increase the value and quality of the suit. Plaids should match at the center back seam of the jacket, the side seams, and armholes, where the coat fronts meet when buttoned and where the collar rolls over and meets the back. Fabric patterns should match on the pocket flaps and welts and where the collar is notched.
- **Lining:** a firm twill weave will give more service because it is the most durable.
- **Buttonholes:** any well-made buttonhole will have close, even stitching on both the underside and the topside and will have well-reinforced ends.
- **Coat front:** the coat front is important. This is the foundation fabric between the coat material and the lining. The material is sometimes referred to as hair canvas or interfacing. The more wool the interfacing has, the better it will hold its shape. A good quality interfacing will spring back when you crush the coat lapel in your hand. Look at some suits. Select a high-quality one and crush the lapel to see if it will spring back. Then select a low-quality suit, give it the same test, and compare what you see. Having done this, you have begun to judge quality.
- **Coat pockets:** Coat pockets of good quality suits should be made of cotton twill – a durable, closely-woven, and lightweight fabric.

Know good fit

A suit must fit well in order to look good. It will also wear better and will cost less for

upkeep. Let the salesperson measure you and help you determine your proportions. The size of a suit is determined by chest measurement. Jackets are proportioned so you can get short, regular, long, or extra-long lengths. The size of slacks is determined by the waist measurement (taken over shirt) and the length of the inside seam.

When you find a suit you like, try it on. Try on both the pants and the jacket, not just the jacket alone. Look at the suit carefully. Walk around, move your arms back and forth, and sit down. Does the suit feel comfortable? Are the chests, back, and under collar areas of the jacket free from wrinkles? Do the armholes feel comfortable? Is the seat of the trousers comfortable? Is the waistband snug but comfortable? A well-fitted suit will hang straight and not pull or appear baggy anywhere. Study these sketches carefully to determine how your suit should fit.

Workmanship

If the quality of the fabric is good, the next thing to consider is the workmanship. Turn the item inside out and carefully check the following points:

- The fabric design should match at the seams, sleeves, pockets, and front button closing.
- The inside seams should be wide enough for altering, if necessary. Exposed raw edges that can ravel last longer when overcast or finished.
- Check for adequate ease in the cut of the garment.
- Check stitching for straight, even, secure seams.
- Check linings for proper ease and smoothness.
- Check buttons and buttonholes for neat, even, secure stitching.
- Check for added reinforcement of points of stress – pockets, fly, belt loops.
- Check for smooth sleeves, lapels, and collars.

- Check pockets for adequate depth, secure stitching, and durable fabric.
- Check collars, cuffs, lapels, and waistband for proper interfacing to hold shape for the life of the garments. Squeeze the lapel in one hand. It should spring back without wrinkles.

Accessories

Accessories add the finishing touch to an outfit. As with other items in your wardrobe, select accessories with your wardrobe and activities in mind and buy the best quality you can afford for accessories that you will wear often.

Shoes

Shoes that fit well are essential to your health and well-being. Never sacrifice fit and comfortable shoes for fashion and good looks. As with other accessories, shoes should complete your outfit, not be the focal point. A well-balanced wardrobe will have casual, dress, sport, and work shoes. Select a basic color and style shoe that will go with a number of outfits. Dress or business shoes will usually be leather slip-on or lace-up in black or dark brown. Casual shoes may be made of leather, canvas, or other fabric and will vary in style (penny loafers, deck shoes). Smooth leather shoes usually hold their shape and look better longer than non-leather shoes. Casual shoes come in a variety of colors; however, a basic dark color will go with more things and not show soil as easily as lighter colors.

Be a good shoe shopper

Misfitted shoes are the major reason that 90 percent of women and 10 percent of men have foot troubles. Most of the troubles have developed before the age of 15. Take time to fit your shoes correctly.

When selecting shoes

Have your feet measured each time you buy a pair of shoes. Stand when this

measurement is taken, since your feet are longest when standing. Try on both shoes. Walk around in both shoes and take time to be sure they fit. Check the following:

- The fit at the heel (should not slip).
- The fit at the sides (should hug the foot).
- The fit at the instep (does not bulge).
- The toes (sufficient room – about ½ inches).

A properly fitted shoe supports the weight-bearing areas of the foot. Select styles which look attractive on your feet. The price you pay depends on how often you plan to wear the shoes. Economize on the shoes you seldom wear. For the shoes you plan to live in, buy the best you can afford.

Do

- Allow plenty of time to shop for shoes.
- Shop for shoes in the early afternoon.
- Buy shoes to fit the occasion.
- Learn to recognize quality leather.
- Buy shoes with good quality lining.

Don't

- Expect a shoe to fit better after it is broken in. If it doesn't fit in the store, it will never fit.
- Rely on numerical size. Your correct

size may vary among brands.

- Wear the same pair of shoes every day.
- Pass on hand-me-downs. They can cause foot problems for someone else.

Belts

Belts should coordinate with shoes in style and color. A leather belt 1 to 1¼ inches wide is most often used for dress or business. A leather black and brown reversible belt with a simple gold or silver buckle is a good choice for dress and business. Casual belts come in leather, canvas, or other fabrics. Select one that will compliment your casual shoes.

Ties

Just the right tie can pull together an outfit of unrelated colors that may otherwise look out of place. For instance, a navy blazer, grey shirt, and green slacks would look totally uncoordinated unless pulled together with a tie that has those exact colors. A tie should be tied so the tip will reach the belt buckle but not extend below it. Clip-on ties are acceptable only if they are the right length, which they seldom are.

Select a color that blends with your suit, sport coat, shirt, and pants.