The Ultimate Guide to

# **CASUAL** STYLE

Presented by Real Men Real Style



## Copyright, Legal Notice and Disclaimer

This publication is protected under the US Copyright Act of 1976 and all other applicable international, federal, state and local laws, and all rights are reserved, including resale rights: you are not allowed to give or sell this Guide to anyone else.

Please note that much of this publication is based on personal experience and anecdotal evidence.

Although the author and publisher have made every reasonable attempt to achieve complete accuracy of the content in this Guide, they assume no responsibility for errors or omissions.

Also, you should use this information as you see fit, and at your own risk.

Your particular situation may not be exactly suited to the examples illustrated here; in fact, it's likely that they won't be the same, and you should adjust your use of the information and recommendations accordingly.

Any trademarks, service marks, product names or named features are assumed to be the property of their respective owners, and are used only for reference.

There is no implied endorsement if we use one of these terms.

Finally, use your head. Nothing in this Guide is intended to replace common sense, legal, medical or other professional advice, and is meant to inform and entertain the reader.

So have fun and learn to dress sharp!

## Contents

Introduction	4
The Varied Wardrobe	5
Items You Might Not Own (But Probably Should)	7
Jackets and Coats & Sports Jackets	7
Jackets and Coats Visual Overview	9
Trousers and Pants	10
Shirts and Tops & Dress Shirts	11
Footwear and Accessories	13
Dressing For Special Occasions	16
Dressing for Class (High School)	16
Dressing for Class (College)	16
Dressing for Graduate School	18
Dressing for Work: Office Casual	19
Dressing for the Weekend: Daytime Errands	20
Dressing for the Weekend: Evening Socializing	21
Dressing for a Date (or When You're Looking for a Date)	22
Dressing for a Job Interview	23
Summary	26
Dress Young, Dress Sharp	26

## Introduction

Looking good without looking old.

Custom suits and imported silk ties look great, but they're not a lot of use to young men in their late teens and early 20s.

Even if you could afford that kind of a wardrobe (most can't), there's nowhere to wear it.

It's far too formal for socializing with 20-somethings, and very few men are walking out of college and straight into a high-powered financial or legal office.

So a lot of the advice on how to dress well as a man isn't all that useful for high school and college students, or even for post-grad students and working 20-somethings.

A good suit is useful to own, but not something you're going to be wearing when you go out with friends.

So what to wear instead?

The trick is diversifying – taking the same casual level of dress that most young men wear, and adding new looks to it to stay sharp without looking stuffy.

Sincerely

Antonio Centeno

Founder, Real Men Real Style

0 Centeno



## The Varied Wardrobe

It's safe to assume that most young men have a couple pairs of jeans, some T-shirts, and a sweatshirt or two in the wardrobe.

If you don't have those, you're either unusually well-dressed or very inventive. The way to go from looking like everyone else to looking sharp and stylish is to take those basic wardrobe pieces and add alternatives to them.

When everyone else is wearing jeans and T-shirts or hoodies, you stand out by being the guy in something different.

Be aware of how many alternatives you have that aren't necessarily any more formal.

Here are a few basic staples of most young men's wardrobes, and some alternatives to them that can be worn stylishly but casually:

### Blue Jeans

Swap them for colored corduroys, earth-tone cotton slacks, gray wool flannel trousers, or just jeans in a darker color and close fit.

Even the simple upgrade from light blue work jeans to dark, stylish, contrast-stitched jeans goes a long way in improving your style.

### T-shirts

Replace them with polo shirts, lightweight long-sleeve T-shirts, heley shirts, Breton tops, and other light but distinct styles. If you do wear a T-shirt, something with a solid background color and either no design or an artistic design (rather than a band name or sports team) is best.

### **Hoodies**

Swap them for casual collared shirts, plaid flannels, cotton sweaters, lightweight cashmere sweaters, sweater-vests, and cardigans.

Are You Ready to Take Action?

Click here to get your Free Style Consultation with me!

### Coats

Keep the thick winter coat for when you really need it, but add blazers and sports jackets to the fall and spring wardrobe. Throwing a casual jacket on over even just a T-shirt and jeans instantly upgrades the look.

## **Sneakers**

Swap 'em for casual leather shoes. Saddle shoes, wingtips, brogues, loafers – there's a lot of options here.

If you do want to keep sneakers in the wardrobe, go for colored canvas options like Converse All-Stars to keep it stylish.

These are all just examples of a simple point: the more things you have in your wardrobe that aren't the same old blue jeans and T-shirts, the sharper you'll look. Small upgrades go a long way in casual company.

Improve your style without shocking your friends. Watch this video to find out how.



## Items You Might Not Own (But Probably Should)

So what are some pieces that young men can wear to break out of the mold a little?

These are a few that are worth knowing about.

You probably can't add them all to the wardrobe at once, but if you're working on adding variety a few pieces at a time, these would be worth your while:

## Jackets and Coats & Sports Jackets

These are probably the easiest way to dress up any casual outfit. Throw a blazer or sports jacket on and suddenly you're classy.

Not particularly formal but certainly sharper than your peers.

There are almost infinite variety of colors and patterns out there to choose from. You can add quite a bit of uniqueness to your wardrobe with only a few pieces.



#### Blouson

A tight-waisted descendent of WWII-era field jackets, this is a good option for times when a sports jacket with lapels feels a little too dressy.

It has a timeless feel that reminds people of old movies, war heroes, and Middle America.



#### Leather Jacket

Another good casual jacket option, you've got your choice of a couple styles, ranging from the heavy, lined bomber jacket to tight-fitted moto jackets.

They have a little "tough guy" swagger to them.



#### Jean Jacket

Again available in lots of styles, these shouldn't be worn with matching denim (blue jeans and a blue jean jacket is no good), but look great with slacks, corduroys, or in some cases darker denim, though mixing denims should always be done carefully.



#### Overcoat

A long wool overcoat is something many young men lack, and something that becomes invaluable in cold or wet weather when you're dressing up.

Throwing a puffy winter parka over a suit or nice jacket ruins the whole look. Keep an eye on second-hand shops if you can't afford one new off the rack - a good Chesterfield or polo coat is the ideal companion to your nicer outfits.



#### **Duffel Coat**

Also called toggle coats for their typical style of button, duffel coats were originally military surplus and later became a staple of European intellectuals and students.

They're still classic campus wear, and striking these days for their uniqueness (especially on American campuses, where they were never quite as ubiquitous).



#### Barbour Jacket

Wet weather gear from England, the Barbour has various imitators from brands like L. L. Bean and Land's End, but the originals are studier - waterproofed cotton with a quilted lining. They look rugged and outdoorsy, and have the added benefit of keeping you dry without being a shiny plastic poncho or something similarly unstylish.

## **Jackets and Coats Visual Overview**



<u>Click here</u> to see Real Men Real Style Men's Winter Jacket Infographic – Visual Style Guide To Cold Weather Coats.

### **Trousers and Pants**

#### Odd Trousers

This is the catch-all term for pants that don't match your jacket, but generally implies casual wool trousers. Blue jeans worn with a jacket are technically odd trousers, but most people wouldn't say that.

Instead, you should be thinking about colored and patterned wool or cotton slacks - everything from plain gray flannel trousers to plaids and houndstooth is fair game, and looks good paired with a casual jacket.

### Corduroys

These can come in any color, ranging from staid earth tones to neon-bright primary colors. The former is a good casual companion to a tweed sports jacket; the latter works well in lively evening outfits with a sharp blazer or casual shirt.

In either style they're comfortable, sturdy, and more breathable than denim, making them a good alternative to jeans.

### **Gray Flannel Trousers**

A staple that every man should own, these are for when you want to look dressy and a little more conservative and/or grown-up.

Pair them with a decent dress shirt and a blazer and you're set for a work day in most offices; skip the blazer and wear a more casual collared shirt (plaid "lumberjack" shirts work well) for an off-duty look.

### Cargo Pants

Have a pair for doing manual labor in, and don't be afraid to wear them from time to time with a collared work (not dress) shirt in blue or plaid.

Multiple pairs are appropriate if you're someone who actually does a lot of physical labor.

#### Fitted Jeans

Looser jeans are fine for manual labor and very casual wear, but most of your jeans should be fitted to your side, with a bit of taper in the lower legs and no sag in the crotch or bottom.

That makes them dressy enough to pair with casual sports jackets, particularly if the jeans are in a dark color. Deep indigo is your best bet, though black and gray have their roles as well, and daring men can go for white jeans with a dark top.



How do you pair jeans with a jacket? Click here to watch the video.

## Shirts and Tops & Dress Shirts

Everyone needs one or two in plain white for dress occasions; for the rest go for light patterns and colors. They should still be based in white or a very light pastel, but both stripes and checks are fine for most occasion.

#### Casual Collared Shirts

Useful for evening casual wear in particular, shirts that have the same basic cut as a dress shirt but a bolder pattern or color go well with everything from gray wool slacks to blue jeans.

Variegated stripes (multiple stripes of varying width and color), deep colors like purple and red, and figure patterns (repeating designs rather than line designs like stripes and checks) are all good options for casual collared shirts.

#### **Work Shirts**

Another collared style, these are made of softer cotton or denim. Blue Oxford work shirts are a classic, as are plaid "lumberjack" shirts.

The latter are sometimes made in virgin wool instead of cotton, as with the iconic Pendleton brand.

#### Polo Shirts

Useful for all warm weather needs, everyone should have a few. One in white, one in a solid dark, and one with a few narrow stripes (the classic golf look) is a good start to the collection.

Avoid wearing polos with a company logo on the chest unless you're actually on the clock and working for that company, however - your Best Buy polo isn't good casual wear.



## **Rugby Shirts**

Something like a long-sleeved polo shirt, these usually have broad horizontal stripes and in some cases a team logo or school crest on the left breast. They're good for a collegiate look that doesn't rely on a hoodie or T-shirt.

### **Henley Shirts**

Similar to a T-shirt, but with a small, buttoning "fly" in the front, below the ring collar. They can be long- or short-sleeved, and both are a nice alternative to a plain tee.

### **Breton Top**

Familiar to most people as "the French shirt" - a three-quarter length sleeve shirt with horizontal stripes in alternating white and navy blue (or white and black; other colors are occasionally seen as well).

A unique and eye-catching look for bold dressers. Don't pair it with a beret unless you're trying to look like a caricature of a Frenchman, or are a mime.

## Guayabera

A traditional South American style sometimes (and inaccurately) called a Cuban shirt.

They have multiple front pockets, a soft collar, and decorative columns of pleats or embroidery, and can range from plain white to brightly colored and extravagantly decorated.

A good touch of the exotic for a North American summer wardrobe.

### Cardigans

Buttoning or zippered sweaters that open in the front. No college student should be without a thick, loose, blanket-like wool one. Nothing is better for draping around a girlfriend's shoulders, or just looking stylish in on the way to class. Lighter, more fitted versions in cotton or light wools like cashmere are good for fall and spring.

#### **Sweaters**

Any style of pullover sweater can work well either on its own or paired with a sports jacket.

### Footwear and Accessories



#### **Work Shoes**

Doc Martens are the classic example: dark leather with a rubber sole and thick stitching, for a look that's sturdy but not sloppy. An ideal alternative to sneakers in almost any outfit.

#### **Work Boots**

Similar to work shoes but thicker, taller, and sometimes more varied in color.

For the most part practical in use, but throw them on with jeans and a lumberjack shirt when you just feel like looking tough and outdoorsy (even if you're just walking down to the store or across campus).

#### Sandals

A good pair with dark leather straps keeps you looking sharp in the summer. The Birkenstock brand isn't required, but it's a good example of the style, and the soles are comfortable.

#### Canvas Sneakers

A pair of colored canvas sneakers like the Converse Chuck Taylor All-Stars is good for dressing down an outfit. Throw them on with a blazer and odd trousers or even a suit for a nightclub/concert look. Just don't wear them with jeans and a T-shirt unless you're trying to look sloppy.

#### Chukka or Desert Boots

Desert boots are a practical sub-species of chukka boots, which are a low-ankled, loosely-tied style of casual leather boot. They're good for both practical outdoor use and casual social wear, and make a nice alternative to casual leather shoes.

#### Leather Shoes

Everyone needs a pair of plain black oxford balmorals for dress purposes, but beyond that it's good to have a few pairs with casual accenting.

Brogues (shoes with perforated patterns), saddle shoes (two-tone shoes with a horizontal band across the upper), wingtips, and other styles that feature strong decorative elements are all good for wear with everything from blue jeans on up.



#### **Dress Watches**

Stay within your budget, but have one. Either a metal or a leather band is appropriate, though you should always match your leathers, making a brown leather band useless when you're wearing your best shoes and belt. Anything from a good Timex to a Rolex can work, but stick to small, simple faces so that you can wear it with suits as well as your day-to-day gear.

<u>Click here</u> to read my article on dress watches.

#### **Decorative Belts**

Again, everyone needs at least one in black leather, but for casual wear consider stamped or tooled belts, or plain leather ones with interchangeable buckles.

Colored leather, canvas, or cloth belts can be a great way to turn an outfit from just "sharp" to "unique," so long as you don't go too overboard (the belt should never be the most noticeable piece).

#### **Metal Pens**

A seemingly small touch, but one that makes a great impression. Have a good, metal-barrelled pen in your jacket pocket any time you wear one.

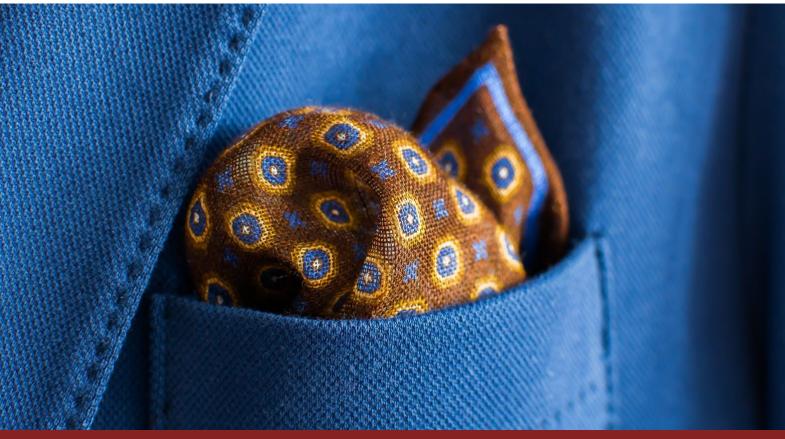
That way you always look prepared, and when you pull it out you look a bit fancy, unlike someone with a plastic Bic.

## **Pocket Squares**

A final accent, and one you should have every time you wear a sports jacket, blazer, or suit jacket.

Own a couple in plain white and then as many as you want in colors and patterns.

Your jacket isn't complete without one.



## **Dressing For Special Occasions**

## Dressing for Class (High School)

High school fashion is a rough game! Too sloppy and you'll catch grief from your teachers (not to mention have a hard time impressing girls), but too natty and you're likely to get teased (or worse).

Dark-colored jeans or corduroys and an untucked dress shirt is a good middle ground, especially when worn with casual leather shoes of some kind – it's clearly different from your classmates, but it's not stuffy.

And if you find yourself in trouble with a teacher or administrator, you can tuck the shirt in quickly for an instant respectable look.

### Things You Need

Dark indigo jeans, colored corduroys or cotton slacks; casual collared shirts (both dress shirts and softer, thicker work shirts work well).

## Things to Avoid

Blazers or sports jackets (unless part of the school uniform), neckties (way too stuffy, and likely to get pulled on as well); very fancy leather shoes.



What are the style mistakes to avoid? <u>Click here</u> to watch the video.

## Dressing for Class (College)

Ah, college. Master of your own fate at last.

For most of us, this is our first chance to dress ourselves and head out into the world without any input from anyone, and there's usually no dress code to worry about unless you picked a very conservative school.

But nothing attracts a professor's negative attention like a stereotypical college slob – show up in ripped jeans, a hoodie, and flip-flops, and you're basically taking points off your grade, in the form of his or her lowered expectations.



If your professor thinks you're a slacker, he or she reads your paper like a slacker's – just looking for opportunities to dock points.

So raise the bar at least a little.

You also want to make a good impression on any potential romantic prospects you meet, so don't be afraid to out-dress your peers.

Sure, they might give you a hard time if you show up in a sports jacket, but they'll get over it – and you'll still look good. The ideal college look is usually something a little more formal than jeans and an untucked shirt, and a little less formal than a tucked-in dress shirt and navy blazer.

Good middle ground options include colored and patterned dress shirts (tuck or untuck it depending on how sharp you want to seem), very casual sports jackets (tweed and corduroy are your friends here), dark jeans, colored cotton slacks, and cardigans or pullover sweaters.

### Things You Need

At least one or two sports jackets (seriously, try it if you haven't), dark jeans, some decent cotton slacks, maybe a pair of gray wool trousers; sweaters for the cold months.

## Things to Avoid

Neckties (although a colored bowtie can look whimsical and fun, if you wear it with confidence), matched suits, severe leather dress shoes (casual styles with some decorative elements to them are fine); ratty blue jeans and hoodies (too sloppy).

## **Dressing for Graduate School**

At the point where you're out of undergrad the responsibilities change, even in academia – you're no longer just responsible for yourself.

Graduate students are almost always either part of a research team, part of a teaching team, or both.

You end up representing a lab, a department, or a particular professor, and you need to be making a good impression.

You probably won't get thrown out of your program for being sloppy...but if the research isn't going well or you screw something else up, it sure won't help your case.

Grad students who teach undergrads need to look dressier than their students.



#### **REAL MEN REAL STYLE**

#### **CASUAL STYLE: A YOUNG MAN'S GUIDE**

That means wearing either a jacket or a tie – you don't need both, though you can wear both if you want to, but if you don't have either you're probably underdressed.

If you don't teach class sections but you do work in a shared lab or office, you can relax a little - tucked-in collared shirts are probably fine, though a sweater or jacket will certainly make you look sharper.

The ideal look for a grad student at work is usually a sports jacket or blazer (with a pocket square – always a good way to improve the sharpness of your look), a dress shirt tucked in, and either wool or cotton slacks.

Dark, fitted jeans can work, but at that point you're almost looking like a well-dressed undergrad. Dress slacks will give you a little more personal authority.

### Things You Need

A couple of good blazers and sports jackets, plenty of colored/patterned dress shirts, leather shoes and belts; a few neckties and pocket squares.

## Things to Avoid

Matched suits (except at formal presentations), sweatshirts or performance fleece, sneakers; blue jeans.



Success tips for a young man? Click here to watch the video.

## Dressing for Work: Office Casual

Obviously, not everyone's going to have an office job. "Dressing for work" could mean everything from a bespoke suit on down to a pair of hip-waders, depending on your employment.

But for the most part, recent graduates end up somewhere in between those extremes, in an environment where full suits and ties aren't required but jeans and a T-shirt would be frowned upon.

It's a range filled with boring options, so rely on variety and details to spice your outfits up – and on jackets, which no dress-casual worker should be without.

#### **REAL MEN REAL STYLE**

#### **CASUAL STYLE: A YOUNG MAN'S GUIDE**

They give you a sharper body shape than a guy in just a dress shirt, and they add the possibility of a pocket square, which is one of the most stylish accents out there for men.

Blue jeans might be allowed in some workplaces but don't ever look particularly professional, so go for wool trousers or cotton slacks instead.

Neckties may or may not be mandatory, and if they're not consider wearing one anyway – at least a few days a week, enough to make it clear that you enjoy the added style.

The first time you try it someone will probably tell you "oh, you don't need to wear a tie," but you can just reassure them that you felt like looking a little sharp anyway.

### Things You Need

A pair of gray flannel trousers (really, every man needs one at some point in his life), a couple sharp-looking blazers, light-colored or lightly- patterned dress shirts, leather dress shoes; plenty of pocket squares.

## Things to Avoid

Suits (unless you need them for meetings or the like), blue jeans, sweatshirts or performance fleece; sneakers.



Should you follow work dress codes? Click here to watch the video.

## Dressing for the Weekend: Daytime Errands

When you don't have class or work, it's tempting to wear the oldest and most comfortable clothes in the wardrobe, but try to save those for working around the house.

When you go out in public, it's worth a little time and effort to look sharper than the average guy on the street.

You never know who you might run into, after all – friends, bosses; maybe even a future spouse.

Who knows?

#### **REAL MEN REAL STYLE**

#### **CASUAL STYLE: A YOUNG MAN'S GUIDE**

That's sort of the point - and why you want to be nice- looking any time you venture out.

"Nice" in this case definitely doesn't mean "dressy," however – there's definitely no need for a necktie. Instead, wear something like blue jeans and a sports jacket that's making a nod toward nice dress without being too formal.

Most people aren't trying to wear their most eye-catching styles during the day (save those for socializing in the evening), so jeans or plain-colored slacks are usually the best trouser option, paired with just about any kind of shirt you please and a jacket or sweater on top.

Shoes can be leather or stylish canvas sneakers.

### Things You Need

A couple pairs of well- fitted jeans (deep indigo is best, but a lighter blue is fine during the day), comfortable walking shoes, casual sports jackets.

### Things to Avoid

Dressy blazers or suits, brightly- colored trousers, sweatshirts/hoodies or T-shirts with nothing over them.

## Dressing for the Weekend: Evening Socializing

When you head out at night with friends, it's time to look your best.

Not your most formal, necessarily (though you may need a suit and tie at some specific events and establishments), but well-styled and striking.

That means breaking out the more unique wardrobe items: patterned blazers, colored trousers, and deeply-colored shirts.

You don't have to wear all the colors of the rainbow – just gray slacks, a black shirt, and a light-gray blazer can look plenty sharp – but you should be wearing an outfit that you definitely wouldn't wear to work.

This is where a lot of guys run into trouble, since our "dressed up" wardrobe tends to also be our "work appropriate" one.

It's worth investing in some blazers, shirts, and pants that you wouldn't necessarily wear outside of a social setting, so that you're not one more guy in khakis and a blue button-down when you do go out for the evening.

Casual suits aren't something that every guy owns, but they can be a good look for the evening. The trick is finding one that's clearly not a business suit – the fit should be close, and the color or pattern should be obviously informal.

Worn without a necktie, you can look pretty sharp in a close-fitted leisure suit (a phrase with unfortunate associations from the 1970s, but as long as you steer clear of polyester and bright colors you'll be fine).

### Things You Need

Colored/patterned/textured blazers, colored trousers, casually-patterned shirts; colored canvas sneakers or casual leather shoes.

### Things to Avoid

Solid-color dress shirts, plain blazers or jackets, work shoes.

## Dressing for a Date (or When You're Looking for a Date)

Ahhh, romance! A part (hopefully) of every young man's life at one point or another.

But how to dress for love?

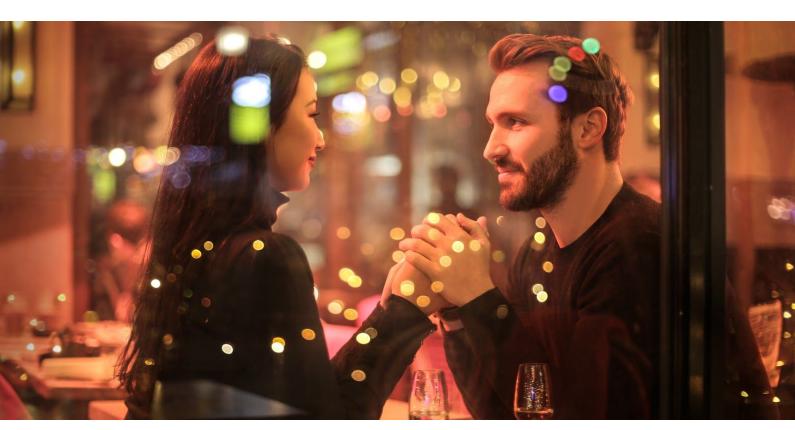
Happily, the outfits for going out stag and hoping to find a date are basically the same as the outfits you'd wear on most first dates (unless you do very fancy first dates).

A pair of dark jeans or cords, a light-colored or lightly- patterned dress shirt, and a casual sports jacket or sweater will keep you looking both "nice" and "relaxed" – the two traits you really want to be projecting when you're looking for love.

A sharp-dressed guy who seems to care about his appearance is much more attractive than one who's sloppy with his grooming, so pay attention to your details.

A recent haircut, trimmed nails, a good shine on the shoes, and, of course, a colored pocket square to liven up the jacket all speak well of the man wearing them.

Avoid deliberately "sexy" looks, however. Whatever television has told you, most girls are not looking for skintight pants and shirts unbuttoned halfway to the navel.



Look comfortable, confident, and neat, rather than slick. Seriously.

## Things You Need

Dark jeans or corduroys, sports jackets and blazers, lightly-colored dress shirts, casual leather shoes; pocket squares.

### Things to Avoid

Light-colored jeans, T-shirts, sweatshirts and performance fleece, sneakers or athletic shoes; business suits.

## Dressing for a Job Interview

The basic rule for interviews is "wear the uniform of the job you want, plus one level of formality higher."



So if you're applying for a job as a high school teacher, where you'd expect to wear collared shirts and either a jacket or sweater most days, you show up at the interview in a suit.

If you're applying to dig ditches with the state Department of Transportation, on the other hand, you probably don't want to show up in anything fancier than khakis and a button-down.

That said, most job interviews for the kinds of jobs young men gravitate toward are suit-and-tie affairs.

It rarely hurts to be a little overdressed, and you make the best impression you can when you're wearing a sober, well-fitted suit.

As a result, most young men benefit from owning an "interview suit" even if they have no other need for a suit.

The basic interview suit – acceptable everywhere – is either charcoal gray or navy blue, single-breasted, two-button, and has notch lapels.

Some small variations are fine – you're not going to lose a job opportunity because you wore peak lapels – but that basic formula is always reliable and conservative enough for anyone's tastes.

You should wear the suit with a necktie; if you feel the interview is too casual for a tie it's also too casual for a suit.

Suits without ties speak of leisure, which isn't the image you want to project.

For a non-suit interview, wear a pair of plain-colored slacks and a dark blazer instead, with a light-colored or lightly-patterned dress shirt and an open collar underneath.

### Things You Need

At least one good, simple suit in a plain, dark color; black oxford balmoral dress shoes.

### Things to Avoid

Casual suits, suits without neckties, jeans, casual shoes.



**CLICK HERE** to access **The Style System** - a course you can use to immediately transform your style.



## Summary

## Dress Young, Dress Sharp

No matter what you're dressing for, the key for a young man is to have options.

Most of your peers are dressing alike: if they're in school they're wearing jeans and sweatshirts; if they're working in an office they're wearing khakis and button-downs.

There's a whole lot more options out there. Corduroys, cardigans, sport coats, blazers, loafers, canvas shoes, belts, graphic T-shirts, polos, Henley shirts, saddle shoes, dress boots, cashmere sweaters, topsiders – the list goes on and on, and you should experiment with it freely.

Because as a young man, you've got everything to gain by standing out – and your poorly-dressed peers are making it easy on you.

#### - The Fnd -

...or is it just the beginning of your style journey?

Click here to check out my other free eBooks.











See you on the other side!