

The Ultimate Guide to

DRESS SHOES

Presented by **Real Men Real Style**



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So have fun and learn to dress sharp!

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this eBook to [Ace Marks](#).

There's a saying that people judge or measure a man by his shoes (and it's been that way for centuries).

Want to look smart and classy every time? You will need the help of luxury footwear.

Imagine getting \$600 Italian Dress Shoes for less than \$300...

That's what makes [Ace Marks](#) a great brand. Their products are:

1. Comfortable to wear all day
2. Made of world-class, durable material
3. Timeless in design

With Ace Marks shoes - guys like you and me can be AMAZINGLY stylish from head to toe.



Introduction

You're on a first date.

You're dressed to impress. The trousers are clean pressed, shirt is starched, pocket square and watch look great!

When you arrive, she's smiling at you and then looks down and sees it.

Your cracked, 10-year-old, square toed leather shoes.

FAIL

The first impression is done. Dress shoes, gentleman. They can make or break an outfit.

Many studies have shown that shoes are one of the first things women notice on an outfit. So how can you be sure to make a killer first impression?

This eBook gives you everything you need to know about men's dress shoes. From which ones to buy first, to how to care for them correctly.

Sincerely



Antonio Centeno
Founder, Real Men Real Style



Chapter 1: Dress Shoe Style Introduction

This guide is an overview of men's dress shoe formality meant to help you "generally" understand shoe types, the levels of dress, and what style shoe can be worn with what style clothing.

Note - this ebook does make generalizations that some shoe aficionados may have issue with.

I admit it's not perfect - if you have suggestions, email me. In later chapters we'll tackle the issue of color matching and address specific styles like suede and cordovan.

Like most things in life, if you break it up into sections and apply a few guidelines it turns out to be pretty simple.



Balmoral (Bal)

The dressiest oxford men's footwear selection.

Sleek, refined, most often sold in black or brown but appropriate in any dark conservative color.

Style variations include plain, toe, cap toe, brogue, and whole cut.

Appropriate for a suit, if casually styled works with sport jackets and odd trousers. Do not combine with jeans or chinos.

Every man who owns a suit should own a pair of classic oxfords that are minimally styled. If you wear suits daily, you should rotate three pairs or more.



Bluchers

Less dressy than Bal oxfords, and identified by lacing system sewn outside of shoe.

Well-dressed men know these can be worn with a suit, but are better with an odd jacket and trousers. They can be worn with jeans assuming they are casually styled.

Style variations include cap toe, wing tip, brogue, wide variation in materials like suede and mixed leathers.

Common Variations

- Saddle shoes
- Derby's
- Spectators
- Laced moccasins

A classic shoe that should serve as your 2nd or 3rd pair depending on needs -the more extreme the styling, the less versatile the shoe.

Men's Boots

Dress boots are meant to be worn when the weather dictates protecting the ankles from water, mud, and snow. In levels of formality they should not be worn with a suit, although they can if the weather calls for it.

If wearing under fair weather conditions, boots should be worn under the rules applicable to a pair of informal bluchers. Style variations include cap toe, wing tip, brogue, wide variation in materials especially water resistant leather cuts.

Appropriate for a sport jacket and odd trousers or jeans. Only wear with suit in rainy/snowy weather.

A man should consider boots if he is exposed to conditions that warrant their wear -otherwise, reserve them for your 4th to 5th pair.



Men's Loafers or Slip-ons

The least dressy choice, they are a product of comfort and convenience.

Only with a suit when traveling, they are at home with a casual odd jacket and trousers minus necktie. Can be worn with jeans or chinos as well.

Style variations are wide -usually the more delicate and closer resemblance to oxfords the dressier. Also, the greater the exposure of sock the less formal.

Common Variations

- Monk Straps
- Tassel Loafers
- Penny Loafers
- Unlaced Moccasins.

Loafers are a traveler's best friend -easy to slip on and off when going through airport security or when relaxing on the plane.

I recommend they be the 2nd pair a traveling man owns or the 3rd pair for a man who like to look sharp around town in jeans and button down shirt.

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Chapter 2: Shoes Every Man Should Own

And in what order to buy them.

Shoes are arguably the most important investment a man can make in his closet. The average man owns at least 10 pairs of shoes.

Truth is, you actually need just a pair of black cap toe leather oxfords for formal occasions, brogues for everyday use, dress boots for less formal occasions, loafers for casual days/weekends and trainers for sports or a workout.

The Black Leather Oxford

Black cap toe oxfords are the first shoe you should start with.

The sleek simplicity makes the Oxford the perfect choice for formal occasions. Whether you are wearing a tux to a black-tie event or a business suit, these minimal shoes will complement and add a dose of formality to your attire.

The difference between an Oxford and a Derby is the closed lacing system - the bottom of an Oxford shoe's lacing section is sewn closed.

The shoes should be made of box calf leather and it should not have any broguing. Oxfords are the best worn with business suits and professional attire, but not suitable for casual occasions with jeans or khakis.

Keep in mind that the Oxford is a dress shoe- purchase a pair with leather soles and be sure to shine your Oxfords thoroughly to prevent them from dulling.



The Brown Leather Brogue

A footwear staple for the contemporary gent.

Originating in the marshy bogs of Scotland, brogues were initially designed with real holes to drain out water.

The traditional perforations on the shoes upper - the brogueing - gives the shoe a distinctive character that other smart shoe styles lack.

What's so unique about the brogue is its versatility.

Although a brown wingtip brogue is ideal, leather brogues in tan, chestnut or chocolate all work seamlessly with your wardrobe, allowing you to create the maximum number of outfit combinations.

These shoes are suitable for outfits ranging from smart to smart-casual. For a smart casual and comfortable, yet refined look, wear them with a white button-down shirt and rolled-up dark denim jeans.



Slip On - The Suede Loafer

Moving down the formality scale, a loafer is a slightly more casual shoe.

The laceless silhouette features an elegant design that makes the loafer a highly versatile style, right after a leather brogue.

The slip-on loafer was originally designed as a house shoe for King George VI. Loafers offer the ideal silhouette for going sockless, making them the choice of footwear in warm weather locations.

The most popular options for slip-on shoes are a pair of double-monk straps or penny loafers.

The comfort of these shoes is best matched with smart and smart-casual ensembles. Dress up or down a loafer with a light-weight linen suit or a button-down shirt and chinos.

The Leather Lace-Up / Slip-On Boot

If you have already secured yourself a quality pair of oxfords, brogues and loafers, the next pair of shoes in line to complete your shoe selection is a pair of leather dress boots.

Your options range from lace-up leather boots (suede desert boots for smart-casual warm-weather looks), leather brogue boots (dressier take on rugged), hiking boots (practical and trendy) or Chelsea boots (for rock-star chic).



Leather boots can be teamed up equally well with tailored jackets during the work week as with a pair of jeans and a T-shirt at the weekend.

A pair of rugged leather lace-up boots, ideally with rubber soles will keep you sure-footed in rough weather.

Wholecut Leather Shoes

This one's a wildcard. They are not a required item in your shoe wardrobe in terms of functionality, but in terms of elevating your style.

Wholecut leather shoes exude pure elegance through a minimalist, narrow shape, with clean lines and a smooth surface.

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The upper (the leather that is visible above the sole when a shoe is worn) of a wholecut leather shoe is constructed from a single piece of leather.

Probably the dressiest shoe you will own, these versatile high-quality leather dress shoe can accompany you through your entire day. Wear them from the office to a dressier evening event or pair them with a pair of smart jeans.

There is no set formula to build the perfect shoe collection.

These 5 shoes styles purchased in the order mentioned in this chapter will, however, meet all your shoe needs for most occasions.



Why do you need BOLD shoes? [Click here to watch the video.](#)

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and **Powerful?**

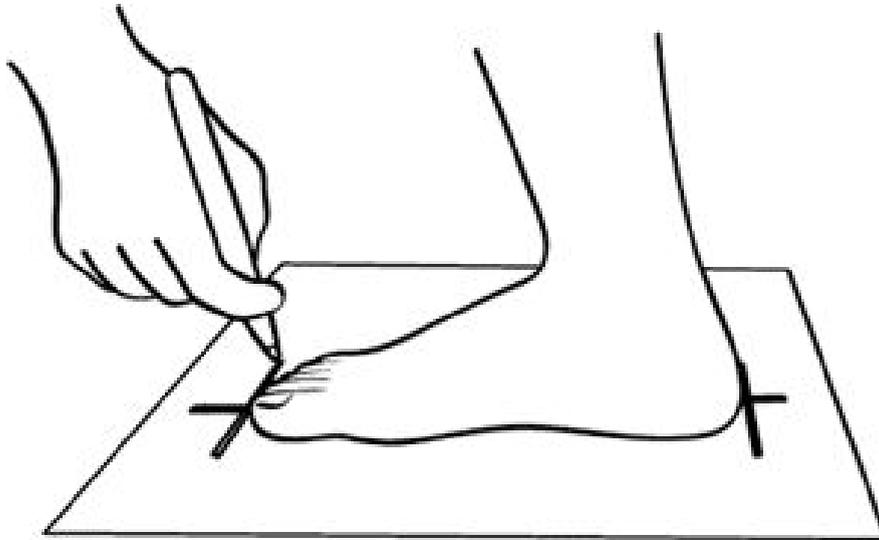
CLICK HERE to access **The Style System** - a course you can use to immediately transform your style.



Chapter 3. How To Buy Men's Shoes

Step 1: Figure Your Size

If you already know your shoe size, you're done here – skip to the next step. If not, you can either go to a shoe store with trained service that can measure for you, or you can follow these step-by-step instructions to measuring at home:



Tape a blank sheet of paper (regular printer size is fine) to the floor

Put on the type of sock you'll usually wear with the shoes you plan to buy (so that you're taking the sock width into the measurement)

Place your foot on the paper (at an angle if necessary) and bend slightly forward, so that your knee is further forward than the shin below it.

Trace the outline of your foot. The drawing tip of your pen or pencil should be snug up against the sock, not pushed out from it.

Now use a ruler to draw straight lines that just touch the outermost points on each side: front, back, right side, and left side. You don't need to extend the lines until they cross, but if you did they'd make a long, narrow trapezoid.

Take your measurements, rounded to the nearest 1/16" :

1. Length (from the front line to the back line)
2. Width (from the right line to the left line)

Repeat all the above steps for your other foot, and use the larger measurements. Most people have one foot slightly larger than the other, and you want the shoes you buy to fit your largest foot.

Step 2: Identify the Shoes You Want

Select a Material

- Leather w/leather sole – dress shoe standard
- Leather w/rubber sole – traditional “work shoe”
- Exotic leather (usually only for social wear, not business)
- Canvas/cloth uppers (skate shoes, espadrilles, etc.)
- Rubber/synthetic uppers (athletic shoes, etc.)

Select a Style

- Oxford/balmoral – highest business formality dress shoe o Blucher/derby – slightly more casual business style
- Brogue – casual, decorated leather shoe o Wingtip – heavily decorated casual style
- Saddle shoe – casual style; usually two-tone
- Dress boot – high-ankled leather shoe
- Loafer/driving shoe/moccasin – slip-on leather shoe
- Boater – leather upper with crepe rubber sole slip-on
- Sneaker – soft, rubber-soled casual shoe
- Athletic shoe – multi-piece casual shoe, often with breathable mesh
- Work boot – thick rubber sole with high leather or synthetic uppers
- Sandal – open-toed casual summer style

Select a Color

- Black – highest business formality standard
- Dark brown – acceptable for some business wear
- Oxblood/burgundy – acceptable for some business wear o Light brown – casual/social color for leather
- Two-tone – decorative, casual style
- White – flashy dress style (white bucks, etc.)

Dark blues, greens, purples, etc. – sometimes seen on suede shoes

Bright colors – usually reserved for athletic shoes, sneakers, etc.

The combination of material, style, and color gives you a very specific shopping target. Once you can narrow a store's selection down to something like "a dark brown leather brogue," there should only be a manageable amount of shoes left to choose from.

Step 3: Pick your Source

Select one or more of the following sources for footwear:

- o Department stores – cheap, but limited selection/quality

Chain shoe stores (DSW, etc) – cheap, with a wide selection, but mixed quality

Boutique shoe stores – limited selection and high prices, but often select only high-quality stock

- o Bespoke cobblers – custom-made shoes; very expensive but generally the sturdiest and most comfortable shoes available

Online shopping – easy and wide selection, but may take several exchanges for sizing

Step 4: Go Shopping

- Go to your target store or source for footwear (as chosen in Step 3)
- Identify the shoes that match your chosen style (from Step 2)
- Select the ones in your size (from Step 1)

These are your options! Hopefully, you should have narrowed the selection down to just a few pairs of shoes. If the store doesn't have any that quite suit you, move on – with your checklist, it's easy to browse multiple stores in a short period of time.

With shoes, be sure to try them on and walk around the store a bit even if you find a pair you like in exactly your size. Not all companies construct their sizes in exactly the same way.

Chapter 4. The Semi Brogue

Distinctive. Yet Subtly Stylish. This is how I describe the semi-brogue.

Why is subtle important? It allows for versatility and interchangeability.

Semi-Brogues are the perfect balance between being noteworthy and refined. Decorative enough to attract compliments, but conventional enough to wear repeatedly.

Ever wanted to get away with wearing the same shoes every day?

The semi-brogue allows you to do just that. These shoes are perhaps the perfect business casual shoe.

Historically, "brogue" refers to the perforations on a shoe that were originally intended to drain water from the feet of peasant workers in the Highland marshes of Scotland and Ireland.

That's right, these were the original crocs! In the present, the perforations are strictly aesthetic.



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Basic Characteristics of the Brogue

- Low heels
- Toe caps
- Heel caps
- Lace panels
- Decorative perforations (brogueing).

Over time, various designs of brogues have evolved although only a few grabbed mainstream attentions.

The most available brogue styles include the full brogues, semi brogues, quarter brogues and long-wing brogues. The distinguishing factor in each style is the toe-cap.

The full brogue has a winged toecap, hence the name wingtips. A semi brogue has a straight toecap.

Quarter brogues – The toe cap seam on quarter brogues are lined with decorative perforations, with no other brogueing on the shoe.

Semi-brogues – The only brogueing on the shoe is on the seams of the toe cap, vamp, and heel.

Full brogues – The perforations decorate the wingtip-like toecap, along the seams and often on the body of the wings which cover the entire shoe.

Longwing brogues – Similar to full brogues, except that the wings meet at the back of the shoe, forming a complete circuit of the shoe.

Any or all of these can also sometimes (but not necessarily) feature decorative edging or serrations along the seams, particularly the toe cap seam.

The focus of this chapter is the semi-brogue, or half-brogue style – perhaps the perfect business casual shoe.

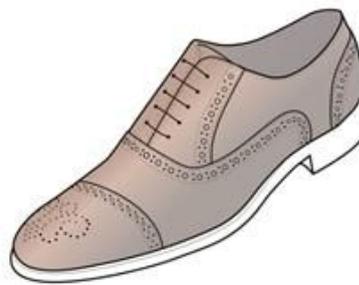
If you had to consider a formality scale for shoes, semi brogues would occupy the middle-ground.

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1. Dark colored plain Oxfords – Formal, suitable for black-tie events in the right color and style.
2. Wholecut shoes – Arguably the best dress shoe. Memorable for their sophisticated style.
3. Semi brogue – Perhaps the most versatile business casual shoe. You can dress it up with a suit or wear it with jeans and a polo shirt.
4. Wingtips – The fancier version of brogues. The extra broguing makes them less formal.
5. Chukka boot – A sleek casual boot that is more at home with smart denim trousers.
6. Loafers – Suited for smart casual outfits, it is possible to dress them up in certain styles.
7. Driving shoes – Designed for leisure wear, these are the most casual leather shoes for men.



Quarter Brogues



Semi Brogues



Full Brogues (Wingtips)



Longwing Brogues

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What are Semi-Brogue or Half Brogue Shoes?

The half-brogue was made famous by the legendary John Lobb, who introduced the shoe as an Oxford in 1937.

The style was produced to offer clients a middle ground between the bold design of a full brogue and the rather plain quarter brogue.

Characterized by a toe-cap, a semi-brogue shoe has decorative perforations and serration along the cap's edge, along with additional perforations on the heel and often times the center of the toe cap.

The perforations on a semi brogue cover the entire toe cap's edge. The unfussy decoration is appealing and adds classic simplicity to your outfit.

These are shoes that subtly add to the overall stylishness of your outfit without attracting too much attention to your feet.



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Formality of Semi-Brogues

Until the early 1900's, brogues were considered a casual shoe. Traditionally, they were designed to be outdoor footwear.

Brogues were not intended for casual or business occasions. Over time, they were adapted as walking shoes for country gentlemen.

The modern use of perforations solely for decorative purposes has allowed the brogue to be viewed as business casual and in some cases, even formal footwear.

The formality of a brogue is inversely proportional to the broguing. A shoe is less formal the more broguing it has. Semi-brogues are more formal than full brogues.

How to Wear Half Brogue Shoes

Semi brogue shoes provide the ideal balance between simplicity and fancy decorations.

Since semi brogues occupy the middle ground between the plainer design of a quarter brogue and the extravagance of a full brogue, they are suited for both business and casual occasions.

The lighter weight of the half brogue makes it a more elegant choice than a full brogue, while escaping the stark formality of a plain or quarter brogue oxford.

Classic colors for semi brogues are brown, oxblood and black. In oxblood and darker brown colors like chestnut brown, semi brogues are a versatile option and can be worn with a sports jacket or a brown suit.

Pair your semi brogues with jeans, chinos and moleskin trousers in a casual setting. Every variation of blue blends perfectly with the brown semi-brogue

Materials for Half Brogues

Brogues are most commonly made of box calf leather, with varieties now produced in other kinds of leather, including suede. The half brogue style is best presented in a smooth or uniform leather that makes the broguing shine.

Exotic leathers are not suited for brogues as the grain tends to overpower the decorative perforations. Whether you are a 'jeans and polo' kind of guy, or your preference leans towards sports jacket and colored suits, a pair of semi brogue oxford is a versatile pick.

Dress it up. Dress it down. These shoes are the perfect foundation to build a smart business casual outfit.



How do you straight lace your dress shoes? [Find out in this video.](#)



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Chapter 5: The Full Brogue (aka Wingtips)

Wingtips.

Full Brogue.

One in the same?

What's the difference between that and a quarter brogue, long-wing brogue, and a semi-brogue?

When an you wear Wingtips, and with what?

The wingtip shoe is instantly recognizable, but its function and the details of its form have changed over the years, from its peasant origins to 21st century updates and interpretations from some of the top shoe houses in the world.

What is a Wingtip?

In broadest terms, a wingtip is any shoe in which the toe cap is extended with low "wings" that reach around the side of the shoe.

Get much more specific than that, however, and you start encountering exceptions.

Most wingtips – but not all – are brogued, meaning they have decorative perforations along the edges of the toe cap, and often in other places as well.



Where does the Wingtip style come from?

Wingtips are part of the brogue family. Traditionalists and people who want to sound smarter than you will still insist on calling them “full brogues.”

Many wingtips – but not all – extend the wings all the way around to meet at the back of the shoe, creating a low band of leather that circles the shoe where the upper meets the sole.

And some wingtips, but certainly not all, opt for a “two-tone” color scheme wherein the body of the shoe is one color and the toecap with its wings another.

So there are many varieties, but they all share one defining feature: an extended toe cap with wings that reach around the sides of the foot.

That’s not wholly accurate, since shoes with wing tipped caps but no broguing have been around for centuries, but take it as a polite nod to history: the “wingtips” that entered mainstream British style, and from there American style as well, back in the early 20th century, were descended from the Irish and Scottish walking shoes known as brogues.



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Brogues were heavy shoes of thick leather with holes punched all the way through, to allow water to enter and then flow back out when the wearer was crossing boggy country.

That may sound unpleasant to modern ears, but in a world without waterproof coatings and machine stitching, walking inevitably meant wet feet, and brogues at least allowed them to dry faster.

Fashionable shoemakers eventually got hold of the style, and a whole family of shoes with decorative hole punching on the surface (but not all the way through the leather) evolved. The wingtip, or full brogue, was the most decorated and least formal member of the family:

Quarter brogues have a toe cap seam lined with decorative perforations, but no other brogueing.

Semi-brogues have brogueing along the toe cap seam, and also on the top of the toecap leather, but not anywhere further up the shoe than the toecap.

Full brogues extend the toe cap with wingtips, and have brogueing both on top of the toe cap and along the seams, and often on the body of the “wings” as well.

Longwing brogues is a term sometimes used to set apart wingtips where the wings meet at the back of the shoe, forming a complete circuit of the shoe. They are a subset of the wingtip style.

Any or all of these can also sometimes (but not necessarily) feature decorative edging or serrations along the seams, particularly the toecap seam.

How Formal or Casual Are Wingtip Dress Shoes?

Wingtips are a historically casual style, particularly the two-tone “spectator shoe” variety wherein the uppers and the toecap are contrasting colors.

These were historically leisure shoes, and the visually “busy” style means that in today’s fashion language they’re still more casual than a sleeker, non-perforated Oxford or other dress shoe.

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That said, they're not sneakers, either. Wingtips are smack in the middle of casual dress shoes (or dress-casual shoes, if you prefer).

You shouldn't wear them in serious and high-formality business settings, or to somber affairs like funerals, but other than that they're fair game for wearing with suits, slacks and sportcoats, or even just jeans and a casual collared shirt.

A lot will depend on the color and design of the shoe.

A black wingtip with narrow wings that stop midway around the foot and a single line of small perforations is relatively dressy; a two-tone shoe with white uppers and oxblood wings that go all the way around the foot is much more casual.

In general, the more holes the shoe has and the bigger the wings, the less formal it is. But color can play a part too – black will always be a bit dressier than brown, and other colors like red and white will always be on the low end of formality.



Should I buy a pair of Wingtips?

If you're looking for your first pair of really good dress shoes, the answer here is no – a wingtip shoe style is not where you want to be starting.

It's a striking look, and it can be a great one with the right outfit, but it's not as versatile as a pair of simple Oxfords. You should not be using wingtips as your go-to shoe for every occasion that demands leather dress shoes.

If, however, you've got a staid pair or two for dressy occasions, a pair of wingtips can be a nice step in expanding your dress-casual options. They add a nicely relaxed and fun-loving air to a social/leisure outfit.

Think of them as shoes that say "off the clock, but I still care about how I look." (They might be worn on the clock too, of course, particularly in relaxed but well-heeled sectors like the tech industry, but for most people's purposes wingtips should be social clothing first, and business clothing distant second or not at all.)

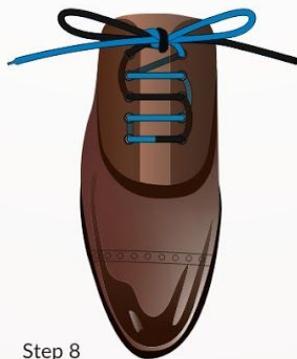
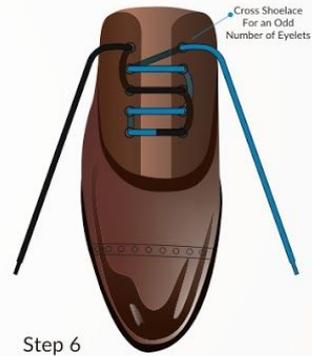
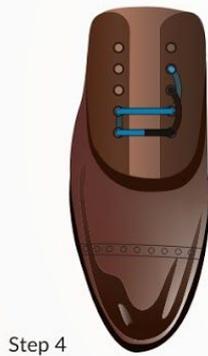
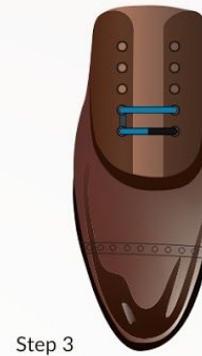
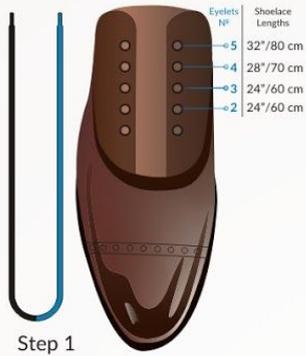
Summary: The Wingtip

Modern interpretations have given you a lot of options to choose from if you go the wingtip route, ranging from scaled-down versions that flirt with business formality to truly exotic, neon-colored two-tone showpieces.



How To Straight Lace Dress Shoes

Presented By: Real Men Real Style



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Chapter 6: The Formal Loafer

1926 A.D. King George VI is planning his annual summer retreat in his English countryside estate. There's one snag in the plan. His shoe collection is void of footwear that is suitable for wearing indoors. He commissions the royal shoe makers to design a pair of slip-on shoes that are comfortable and yet stylish.

The result?

The loafer.

This fictitious story created the mantra that loafers are traditionally a laid-back shoe. Over the years designers have modernized this casual slipper to achieve a higher level of formality.

These VERSATILE and COMFORTABLE shoes combine the convenience of slip-on shoes with the formality of business clothes.



4 Defining Characteristics of a Dress Loafer

If the slipper is the father, the moccasin is the mother of the loafer.

Loafers now have a wide range of formality from casual to dapper. Each of the different styles are discussed in more detail below. Some of the defining characteristics of loafers are:

- Ability to Slip On and Off
- No Buckles or Laces
- A Casual Shoe by Nature
- The Use of a Wide Variety of Materials

And the best part? You can wear them with or without socks.



4 Classic Styles Of Dress Loafers

Combing through the various styles available, loafers are right for you if you need shoes that are formal, comfortable, fashion-forward, classic and versatile.

1. The Penny Loafer

In 1876, George Henry Bass introduced the Mocc, a soft leather moccasin. In 1936 the Bass Shoe Co adapted the design of a Norwegian fishermen moccasin style shoe and called it Weejun combining the words Norwegian and Injun.

Weejuns are also referred to as penny loafers. The distinctive addition was a strip of leather across the saddle with a diamond cut-out.

The shoes feature a distinctive semi-pocket on the vamp, a strip of leather across the saddle. The diamond cut-out was perfectly suited to store a penny to be used in case of an emergency, hence the name penny loafer.

Penny loafers are the most versatile loafers and are complementary to your outfit when combined with chinos, flannel pants, or corduroys.



2. The Belgian Loafer

Belgian loafers are soft-soled slip on, elegant loafers with a small bow on the front.

Originally produced as a slipper for indoor use, these soft-soled shoes are made using the meticulous turned method. The shoes are sewn inside-out and flipped once they are completed.

This process ensures that each stitch on the shoe is flawless. The Belgian style has more of a slipper heritage rather than a moccasin heritage.

Belgian falls under the casual formality similar to the Penny Loafer.

3. The Tassel Loafer

Tassel loafers will be the most casual of loafers. Dating back to around the 1950's tassel loafers fall just below the Belgian loafer on the formality scale but are close cousins in design.

Tassel loafers feature dangling leather tassels which decorate the top vamp of the shoe. Black or oxblood tassel loafers present the same level of formality as a navy-blue blazer and gray trouser combination.

Originally designed as a wholecut style, the tassel loafer has a rounded toe outlined by a reverse seam. These loafers are often made of cordovan leather and have been known for their classic and timeless style, durability and versatility.

Tasseled loafers are a winning choice when paired with chinos and a blazer.



4. The Horsebit or Gucci Loafer

As the formality grew for loafers in the US, internationally they were still viewed as casual. It was uncommon to see loafers and suits worn together throughout the rest of the world.

It wasn't until the gucci (or bit) loafer was designed by the Italian powerhouse designer Gucci himself that it began to be accepted as a formal piece worldwide.

Although many brands now make bit loafers, Gucci remains the originator of this design.

The defining piece on the loafers is the gleaming snaffle or metal bar that looks like a horse's bit, in the centre of the vamp.

The bit loafer in black leather presents a fine option for suits, however, it doesn't climb all the way to a black or white tie affair.

Loafer Materials – Suede or Leather?

Most types of loafers are made of either leather or suede. Leather loafers are suitable for smarter looks, either with a full suit or a tailored outfit.

Suede loafers present a more casual approach. It is best to reserve suede loafers for the spring and summer months. They should be protected from moisture at all times. Leather loafers are sturdier than suede loafers and will also wear well over the years.



How Should Loafers Fit?

The comfort of your shoes is determined largely by how your feet fit in them. Since loafers can be worn without socks, avoid wearing thick socks when trying them on at the shop.

It is generally advised to buy one size down when the intention is to go sockless in a pair of quality leather loafers.

Measure your foot from the back of the heel to the tip of the big toes. Different manufacturers have different sizing standards – having your actual measurement handy is helpful in comparing sizes from various brands.

Pairing Dress Loafers with Clothes

Although the rules for pairing shoes with suits have relaxed in the past decade, it is best to choose slip-on shoes with an appropriate level of formality. Ensure the loafers have a high vamp and a heel.

How do you pair loafers with your clothes?

A laid-back evening – Jeans in a medium to dark wash and a button-down shirt. Undo a button or two and roll up the sleeves. Penny loafers would work best with this attire.

A date night – Dress up a polo shirt by pairing it with a navy blazer and brown suede Belgian loafers.

Avoid gaudy – Be careful not to allow gold or silver decorations on the upper to become so gaudy that they distract attention from your outfit by drawing the eyes to your shoes.

With suits – Most Italian style loafers are too sleek and lightweight for American-style suits.

Ensure the dress loafer you pair with suits has a thick sole and a heel. The horsebit loafers are perfect for this.

Loafers and shorts – Avoid pairing loafers with shorts.

Socks or no socks – This is a matter of personal preference. Socks with loafers can add visual appeal, but they are not necessary. Allow the weather and occasion to make the choice for you.

Loafer Color Choices

The wide variety of loafer styles and range of colors can make the process of choosing a pair slightly tricky.

Unless you are trying to make a fashion statement, stay with conservative colors – brown, black, navy and gray. These are the most versatile colors and will match most outfit combinations. The traditional color for dress loafers is black. Brown and oxblood are however, more versatile than black.

Does it fall into the loafer family? The lack of laces resembles the common characteristic of the loafer, however it falls on a totally different part of the casual to formal scale.

Yes it does, but more on why the monk strap is special in chapter 10.

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Loafer In Summary

Loafers straddle up and down the casual to formal scale, making this a staple for every man's wardrobe.

There are some who believe that wearing a loafer increases the leg line. The shoes make a man taller as a result of the legs appearing longer.

If you are on your feet a lot during the day, a combination of quality and comfort is essential for your footwear. Shoes are no place to skimp on quality.

Loafers have practically taken the shoe industry by storm in recent times because men all over the world appreciate the convenience and comfort they offer.

Chapter 7: The Wholecut

Refined. Flawless.

Expect to hear these words when you are spotted wearing a quality pair of wholecut leather shoes.



These shoes exude pure elegance through their narrow shape, clean lines and smooth surface.

This versatile high-quality leather dress shoe can accompany you through your entire day. Wear them from the office to a dressier evening event. They even look fine with a smart pair of jeans.

What are wholecut shoes? What are the pros and cons of this style? And are they suitable for any occasion and foot-size?

Listed below are 7 reasons why wholecut leather shoes are easily the only pair of dress shoes you ever really needed.

5 Key Defining Features of WholeCut Leather Shoes

Wholecut oxford shoes feature an upper (the leather that is visible above the sole when a shoe is worn) constructed from a single piece of leather.

Most dress shoes are made from multiple pieces of leather sewn together. In wholecut shoes, there are no additional pieces – no vamps or no quarters.

The sharper chisel toe on wholecuts gives the body of the shoe a little more purpose, an appearance of an elongated toe design thus dressier appeal. The raised bump on the toe speaks of intentional higher style that sets them apart from regular shoes.

The wholecut oxford has the distinctive closed lacing system and this along with the single piece construction gives it an extremely clean and sleek look.

Now let's get into the five reasons you should consider buying a pair of wholecut oxfords.

1. Wholecut Oxfords Are Versatile

The less adorned a shoe is, technically the more formal it is. The lack of decorative features tends to make wholecut leather shoes in patent leather appropriate for black tie or formal events.

These are formal shoes that can be worn with any outfit you pair with a jacket – anything less formal than traditional business casual starts to become to throw off the look.

Due to their design, wholecuts feature the same closed-lace design found on Oxfords. An all-black wholecut in patent leather or mirror polished calf leather works as an evening shoe as long as it has no broguing.

With clean lines and no seams – these type of shoes stand out for the minimalistic design. They represent the simplest and purest form of luxury shoe making.

Wholecut shoes provides the swagger of a patent leather tuxedo pump with the practicality of lace-up shoes.

While wholecut shoes in black are best worn with a suit, a brown or tan wholecut can be the perfect shoe to wear with jeans too.



2. The Minimalist Design

The simplicity of a wholecut oxford shoe adds style and elegance to any outfit. The design of wholecut oxfords makes them suitable for formal occasions, yet because of their minimalist cut they can still draw attention without shouting for it.

Understated elegance – that is the beauty of this shoe style.

Wholecut oxford shoes feature only a single visible seam at the heel in addition to the seam at the edge of the shaft.

The minimalist design creates an emphasis on the clean aesthetics of the shoes and adds sophistication to any gentleman's outfit.

The one-piece upper also makes wholecut shoes more durable and easy to wear.

3. High Quality Leather Ensured

The wholecut style is the most expensive and exclusive shoe pattern available as it demands flawless single pieces of leather.

The skins that are used to create shoe leather should be free of marks and blemishes. The texture of the leather needs to be consistent across the entire shoe.

The hides necessary to create wholecut shoes are rare, which increases the cost of making these shoes compared to more regular shoe styles.

These shoes are painstakingly assembled by an experienced craftsman, using only the highest quality leather.

From a shoe-making standpoint, the wholecut oxford is one of the most difficult shoe styles to last (lasting is when the upper part of the leather is attached to the bottom wooden form that is shaped according to your foot).

The making of wholecuts requires more leather because it generally has only one seam at the heel.

4. Wholecut Dress Shoes Are Easy to Maintain

With no stitching to get in the way of the shine, wholecut shoes absorb polish and display shine better than other styles of dress shoes.

The stitching does not become shiny and there are no extra folds of attached leather – ensuring a smooth and consistent shine across the whole surface of the shoe.

The high grade of leather used (generally calf skin) for wholecut shoes radiates a brilliant shine.

5. Wholecuts Will Conform to The Shape Of Your Feet

The leather on wholecut shoes is not restricted by stitching and vamps to conforming to the shape of your feet.

If made properly, the leather of a whole-cut shoe follows the shape of the foot – creating a sight of appreciation that is more appealing to the eye compared to shoes that have stitching.

Because wholecuts mold to your feet, they should fit snugly as they will slightly expand over the first few wears (especially if the leather used is thin).

A Few Points To Consider Before Purchasing WholeCut Shoes

Elegance is not the bottom-line with shoes. With clothes made from heavy fabrics with texture, you will need a larger look to the shoes.

Wholecuts are best suited for a suit or jacket/tie outfit in settings where an elegant, classic style effect is required.

Despite their simplicity, wholecut shoes are tricky to fit properly for the following reasons...

- Closed laces – these are slightly more uncomfortable for men with broader feet.
- The silhouette is trim and narrow – if you have borderline wide feet, a pair of cap toe oxfords are going to fit you better.
- Creases that develop are more apparent because there is no toe cap or wing cap to camouflage them.
- The shoe may feel tight for men with wide foot and a high arch – especially across the bridge of the foot.



Chapter 8: The Monk Strap

They say that the most noticeable item a man wears can be found on his feet.



Think about it, most men pay attention to the bigger portions of their body such as their upper torso and legs.

However, it is the details that set apart a stylish man from a regular joe.

One of the more popular shoes in menswear today is the double monk strap shoe. This is for good reason.

The versatility of the double monk strap is second to none.

It can be worn in multiple environments and in various settings. You will look equally sharp wearing them (with the right combination of course) in an important business meeting or a night out with your lady.

I am going to take a deep dive into double monk strap shoes and will give you the scoop on how to wear them, what to look for when buying a pair, along with what to wear them with.

The History of the Monk Strap

Although popular today, few people realize how deep of a history the monk strap shoe really has.

We are talking centuries here.

The double monk strap shoe found great popularity in Europe. Specifically, the monks were most notably known to wear these shoes during this era, which resulted in the naming of the shoe.

Monks wore these shoes for the additional level of protection they offered compared to the sandals they normally wore. The durability of these shoes made them the top choice for monks as their signature work shoe.



Originally, The monk strap had a difficult time being placed in either the formal or casual ends of the shoe-wearing spectrum. Considered too casual to be worn with a suit and too formal for many casual environments.

Moving right up to present day, this is the complete opposite. The double monk strap that can be found in menswear stores now are considered highly versatile and the shoe of choice for the stylish man.

The Double Monk Strap Shoe Defined

How do you define the double monk strap? First off, the most noticeable feature is the lack of lacing. Replacing the laces is a distinct combination of a dual strap and enclosing buckle that secures your feet within.

Giving the shoe a once over in more detail, the Double Monk strap resembles a Derby style shoe based on the upper quarters overlapping the tongue of the shoe. The main difference between the two is of course, the Derby has laces and the Double Monk Strap does not.

Color Selections

Color plays a key role into what you wear and how well it will look on you. The double monk strap comes in a variety of colors that really heighten its appearance.

Coupled with the material of the shoe (which will be outlined below) you can create a look that can stand the test of time:

Brown – A versatile color that ranges from light to dark shades. The great thing about brown is that you can wear it in pretty much any environment if you take black tie settings out of the picture.

Oxblood / Burgundy – Rising in popularity, this shade pairs extremely well with a navy blue suit. The oxblood and Burgundy colors also look great with a pair of blue jeans

Black – Not as popular as they once were, black is great in formal and semi formal occasions. I would recommend including a black pair of double monk straps to your collection if you do not already own them.

Material

There really are only two types of material I would recommend for the double monk strap shoes and they are the following:

Leather – Ultimately my top choice for the double monk strap. Stick with leather made in traditional European countries such as Italy, the UK or France. If the leather is made of high quality, your shoes will get better with age with proper care. There is nothing quite like a pair of shoes showing those subtle lines of age as the years go by.



Suede – My second recommendation to consider purchasing is the suede double monk straps shoes.

Although still considered leather, primarily made from the underlying skin of lamb, they should be listed under a different category.

One thing to watch out for with suede shoes is their durability. Suede shoes shoe blemishes and absorb liquid very easily. Keep this in mind if you live in a climate that is prone to harsh conditions.

How Do I Wear the Double Monk Strap?

Like I have already mentioned, you can pretty much wear the double monk strap shoe in any environment.

The first piece to cover is if you should wear the double monk straps with socks or no socks.

Both can be acceptable depending on the environment:

Socks: Wear socks if you are going to be in a more formal setting, especially if you work in the corporate world, meeting with clients or attending a gala event. Stick with black socks if wearing black monk straps and charcoal or grey when wearing brown and oxblood.

No Socks: Beside the black version, wearing no socks works well with the double monk strapped shoes in casual environments. The only thing you have to ensure is you have a slight break at the end of your pants.

When walking this will give a slight hint of your sockless sell and will not look out of line when you are sitting.



Double Monks With A Suit?

The double monk strap can work well in the most popular formal attire, the man's suit.

This assumes you're wearing a more formal style of double monks, and that the occasion isn't an interview or extremely formal event. When it comes to the black suit, only consider leather black double monk straps as any other color will not mesh well and suede will take away from the formality of black.

For charcoal and grey, a brown shade is ideal. Leather is still the acceptable form of material to be worn but suede is an acceptable alternative.

Finally, the navy blue suit works well with brown, burgundy and oxblood colors. Pair these with a matching watch strap and belt and you are on your way to looking sharp.

As far as the finish is concerned, look for something that is shiny to help your shoes stand out.

Business Casual & Double Monks

Remember when I mentioned how the double monk straps of yesteryear had a hard time of fitting in to formal or casual settings?

Well, make no mistake that these shoes were in both instances and right in the middle, which is business casual.

Here are my favorite combinations:

Classic chinos and a navy blue cardigan over a white dress shirt. Once you throw on a pair of brown double strap monks, you will be the best dressed in the office. .

This combination goes well with or without a tie. If the weather starts to heat up, lose the cardigan and the tie and you have an entirely new look while maintaining a great look.

Semi-formal options for monk straps:

- Put a grey V-neck sweater over a white dress shirt and a pair of blue dress pants and you have a great match for your burgundy double monk strap shoes. You can up the formality of this look by including a tie.
- Light blue dress shirt and navy blue dress pants with no tie as an extra sharp look with a pair of double monk straps.

Feel like going out with some friends and not in the mood to completely dress up, yet still want to stand out from the crowd? Wearing some double monk straps along with these casual combinations will make this a reality for you:

- A white V-neck t-shirt, blazer and blue jeans combination work well with a pair of brown suede double monk straps.

I advise having the blazer tailored to fit your unique body type to make this look the most impactful.

If you are really in the casual mood, lose the blazer and just wear the classic white t-shirt / blue jeans combo.

Leather jacket – This casual staple for menswear jacks pair really well with double monk straps.

Specifically, a black leather jacket and black double monk strap shoes work really well together.

A great option if you want to wear black yet not seem formal.

The key for all combinations is coordination and ensuring the color matches with your hair and skin tone. If you can nail this, then the options are endless.

Overall, the double monk strap is a beautiful shoe and one of my personal favorites. It is my go to piece when I am pondering what to wear on short notice.

If you haven't already, I would highly advise you include a few pairs for yourself. Trust me, you will be glad you did!

Chapter 9: The Chukka Boot

First, an answer to the inevitable question:

It's pronounced "chuck-ah."

Rhymes with the plant "yucca."

The word comes from polo, where a period of play is called a chukka or a chukker.

Now that we've got that out of the way, let's talk about the chukka boot.

This is a timeless piece of menswear, or at least a classic – the timing is actually quite well documented, since, like a lot of modern styles, this one originated in World War II.



Boots for Desert Soldiers

The style we currently call chukka boots first hit Western markets as the “Clarks Desert Boot.”

It was introduced through C. & J. Clark International by Nathan Clark, the great-grandson of the company’s founder, who encountered the style on British soldiers that had been deployed in North Africa when they joined him in East Asia.

Those soldiers had found their military-issue boots with high, stiff sides and heavy rubber soles ineffective in desert terrain. They’d turned to Cairo shoemakers, who had obliged their needs with ankle height, lightweight boots made of suede uppers and crepe rubber soles.

The same style persists today: an ankle-high cut, uppers made from suede or soft calfskin, and contrasting rubber soles (some manufacturers also make leather-sole chukkas, but usually keep the tradition of light-colored soles contrasting with darker uppers).

Chukkas have few pairs of eyelets relative to other boots and shoes: often only two or three pairs. Those connect a pair of quarters that on the original boot wrapped all the way around the back of the heel (the whole upper was only two pieces: the vamp and the connected quarters).

The goal was to create a tight tie-off at the top spreading out into a wider cone at the bottom, effectively creating an inside-out funnel for sand to slide down. Tightly laced, the boots helped keep sand from getting into soldier’s boots and irritating their feet during desert travel.

The Modern Chukka

In a testimony to good design, the chukka boot hasn’t changed much since its military use in WWII or its commercial introduction by Clarks in the late 1940s.

Chukkas, now made by many companies, are still low-ankled, and usually retain the relatively few sets of high-placed eyelets with a wide, spreading quarters below them. Suede and soft calfskin remain the most common materials for the uppers, and crepe rubber for the soles.

Like any style, there are periodic reinterpretations, and someone can be counted on to do an “inspired by” variation every few fashion seasons, but the traditional chukka remains consistent – and consistently popular.

Wearing Chukkas

A big part of that popularity is the chukka’s flexibility, both literal and figurative.

Because they’re lighter and lower than most boots, with a soft, bendy sole material, walking in chukkas is closer to walking in sneakers than it is to walking in Western boots or heavy hiking/expedition boots.

A stroll in a good pair of chukkas feels about like it would in Converse All-Stars or something similar, with a little more protection for the feet and ankles from the leather uppers.

The leather material also makes the shoe dressier than a sneaker, but the rubber sole (traditionally in a contrasting color) keeps it informal. The result is a shoe that dresses up casual clothes, and dresses down formal ones.

Wear chukkas with some decent jeans and a T-shirt and you’re relaxed but fashionable. Wear them with a well fitted sport jacket and trousers, and you’re dressy but not frumpy. They go both ways comfortably. Chukka Boots are versatile and can be worn no matter the occasion.

If you look around a gathering of well-dressed young men and find yourself seeing a lot of chukkas (and you will, if you’re looking around that sort of gathering), it’s not without good reason. Savvy dressers have learned to prize the dress-up/dress-down potential of the versatile desert boot.

Chukkas vs. Desert Boots

Since some manufacturers use these two terms interchangeably, it's worth clearing up a quibble of fashion nomenclature: "desert boots" is a more-specific description of a particular kind of chukka boot.

In other words, not all chukka boots are desert boots, but all desert boots are chukkas.

A chukka is, broadly speaking, any ankle-high boot with a low number of eyelets, regardless of material.



Desert boots are chukkas made from light leather with crepe rubber soles.

So your tan suede ankle boots with crepe soles? Definitely desert boots. Your shiny red cordovan chukkas with hard leather soles? Still chukkas, but not desert boots.

Broadly speaking that puts desert boots on the informal end of chukkas, but it really depends on the look and feel of the individual pair.

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A muted pair of desert boots with dark gray uppers and light gray soles are less flashy (and therefore easier to dress up) than shiny blue chukkas with a tan sole and heel, particularly if the rubber sole and heel are small and smooth.

Because of their simplicity, small changes in design make a big difference between individual pairs of chukkas. Choose the ones that fit your style and your situation, whether that's the traditional tan and gray desert boot, a brightly colored modern "attention" piece, or anything in between!

Chapter 10: The Chelsea Boot

The Swingin' 60s was the era of cool.

Rock 'n' roll was in its prime and one band was making waves across the globe.

The Beatles.

The band popularized a style of shoe that was originally designed as a walking shoe for Queen Victoria of England.



The Chelsea boot - the shoe that's now 165 years old and yet remains a favorite with contemporary styles.

Why would you consider wearing Chelsea boots?

- It is easy to slip on and off. Effortlessly pull them on and off using the heel tab at the back.
- No laces - adds to the minimized shape.

The slim silhouette makes it a smart option with tailored suits and with jeans.

Why are they a popular and functional style?

- They were originally designed for the Queen
- Worn by the most popular band of the last century
- They were worn by Darth Vader's Stormtroopers in all three Star Wars films
- Despite the uber-cool associations of this boot, the charm of a Chelsea boot is its simplicity.

What Are Chelsea Boots?

Chelsea boots are ankle-high, close-fitting boots which have an elastic side panel and no laces. A leather loop on the back of the boot (a heel tab) assists in pulling the boot on with ease.

In the Victorian era (this style is at least 165 years old), the Chelsea style of boot was favored by men and women. Originally designed as a walking boot, they gained popularity among the equestrian elite, making them a common riding boot.

History Of The Chelsea Boot

In 1851, Queen Victoria's shoemaker, J. Sparkes-Hall submitted a patent for a design that he claimed was his own and a favorite of the queen.

The invention of vulcanized rubber and the elastic gusset boot resulted in a boot that could be easily removed and put on again. It wasn't until the 1960s that the boot got its current name.

The King's road, a street in Chelsea, London was the stomping ground of rock 'n roll's elite. Named after the posh London borough that was the stomping ground for the mods.

The Beatles popularized the style further after all the band members decided to attach a Cuban heel to this slim boot and wear them with tailored suits. They are sometimes referred to as 'the Beatle boot'.

Characteristics Of The Chelsea Boot

The Chelsea boot is defined by the following distinguishing features:

- Low heels.
- Rounded toes. Some style (Beatle boots) can have a pointed toe.
- Ankle-length.
- The vamp and the quarters meet at the ankle, where a piece of elastic or vulcanized rubber holds them together.
- The elastic extends ends just below the ankle.
- The style can also feature a zipper and have a center seam running from ankle to toe.
- Two parts each made from a single piece of leather: the vamp and the quarters.
- The vamp and quarters are not sewn one on top of the other. Instead, they are sewn together in one plain below the ankle.

How to Wear Chelsea Boots

How to add this '60s staple into their modern-day wardrobes?

The Chelsea boot assimilates into your closet thanks to the simplistic design, allowing you to create several looks by pairing them with a variety of outfits.

Try on a variety of colors, designs and ankle heights to ensure that you find a boot that slots seamlessly in your current wardrobe.

- Look effortlessly stylish but timeless with a white t-shirt, a pair of dark slim jeans and a pair of Chelsea boots.
- Wear them with either denim or trousers (chinos, dress pants).
- Wear them with a suit. They look like a dress shoes (with a boot shape) and they add a flair that regular oxfords just don't have. Remix them in colored suede or patent finishes.
- They can also dress up a casual outfit, making them a smart alternative to a pair of sneakers.
- Just don't wear them with shorts. Chelsea boots can only be paired with pants.
- The classic choice of color is black, especially when paired with a pair of jeans. Brown, navy or green colored suede chelsea boots look better with chinos.
- Chelsea boots have a thinner boot neck, unlike your other boots with laces. Ensure that your trouser cuff covers the top of the Chelsea boot to maintain this streamlined shape.

Variations of The Chelsea - Different Styles

The traditional style of Chelsea boot is made of box calf leather, usually in black, occasionally in brown, with a leather sole.

Subtle differences in style can create a more nuanced look to the standard Chelsea boot. These are some of the popular variations:

- A Beatle boot is a skinny version of the Chelsea boot. They are tight fitting, with a slim and tapered silhouette, with a pointed front and a larger Cuban-type heel. A Beatle boot is the preferred choice if you lean more towards back-to-black rockstar style ethic.
- Jodhpur boots were originally riding boots, evolving over time into a casual or country gent style boot. The defining feature of these boots is the wrap around buckle closure replacing the elastic panels.
- For a weather-proof option, go with a commando sole Chelsea boot. Characterized by a rubber sole with treads, these boots are common in areas with rough weather.
- Broguing, the perforated design, is a matter of personal preference. While they are not unsightly on a pair of Chelsea boots, they are not as popular as the smooth silhouette of a traditional pair.

Tips For Purchasing Chelsea Boots

Here are some guidelines to keep in mind before buying a pair of Chelsea boots:

They should fit snug, but not tight

Keep in mind that these are laceless boots.

You can't make them any tighter with laces, so they need to be a snug fit when you buy them. Look for a pair that has a snug fit around the ankle - the elastic is bound to wear out first. The fit around the rest of the foot can be according to your preference and comfort.

A thinner sole is preferable

The silhouette of the chelsea boot is tapered, minimalist and streamlined. Choose a boot with a thinner leather sole to maintain the minimalist aesthetic.

Check the quality of the elastic fastening

In the absence of laces, the quality of the elastic fastening determines the life of the Chelsea boot. Cheaper options of the boot sport a lower quality elastic which deteriorates quickly.

The right style of Chelsea boot for your feet

Rounded toes are better suited for men with larger or wider feet. If you have smaller feet, stick with the pointed Beattie style. The style of the boot you choose should be determined by the size of your feet.

Leather or Suede Chelsea Boots?

Suede screams suave, but leather boots are easier to care for than suede.

Leather fares better in more weather conditions than suede. If aesthetics is your priority and you are not put off by the cost of maintaining suede, the variety of colored suede will keep you ensure you stand out in a crowd.

This extremely versatile boot works just as well with a tailored suit as it does with a pair of smart denim jeans.

The classic and versatile Chelsea boot never truly is out of fashion, which means that a quality pair will be a timeless investment for many seasons.



Chapter 11: Brown vs Black Shoes

Can you wear brown shoes in the evening?

“Dear Antonio, can I wear brown shoes in the evening? I know all the rules, no wine before nine, no brown after six, but do the rules cover all possible situations? No brown to a club, no brown to an informal social meeting, no brown to a museum, say, at 7:00 p.m.

I understand that I should only wear black shoes for an opera, formal meeting, or at a decent restaurant with dinner with an important client, but what about less formal events? Thank you in advance. Vlad.”

My quick answer is that yes; you can wear brown shoes in the evening. There are three factors that you’re going to want to pay attention to when you’re choosing really not just the color of your shoes, but the entire color of your outfit. I’m going to leave out your natural colors and tones. These are three things independent.



1. Occasion

How formal is the occasion?

If you're going to the opera, if you're going to something that's a formal event, you want to wear darker colors. And so, in that case, black shoes will suit most events.

However, dark brown especially if what you're wearing is, let's say, a navy suit, look fine and it can be pulled off in the evening.

2. Time of the Day

You want to look at the time of the day, and you did mention this as well. In the evening, you're going to see darker colors; during the day, lighter colors. So we've talked about the formality of the event and the time of the day.



3. Time of the Year

Is it summer? Is it winter? Usually with hotter temperatures with warmer temperatures, you're going to see lighter colors, so just look informal wear.

You'll see that whenever you're looking at black tie and smoking jackets, even dinner jackets, all that stuff right there, you're going to see lighter colors during the summer, so it's perfectly fine to have a dinner jacket instead of going black and black with your tux to actually have a white jacket with black bottoms with black shoes.

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We're not saying white shoes there, but what we are saying is that because of the weather, we're seeing lighter colors. So you'll see white box, you'll see spectators.

This is summer wear and it's associated with the season.

If you're going to an event that's in the summer, that's during the day and is informal, that's perfect for light-colored shoes to include tans, browns, like that.

If it's during the winter, if it's a formal event, and if it's going to be in the evening, these three factors lean me towards black shoes.

Anywhere in between, well, this is left open to interpretation. So if you're going to an evening pretty formal event but it's during the summer and you actually take into account that,



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“Hey, I have light colored hair, light colored skin. I’m going to be wearing a lighter colored suit,” you could pull that off because of the weather especially if it starts, let’s say, around 5:00 or 4:00 p.m. and then goes into the evening.

So it also depends on when – and this is kind of the wild card, is when do the event start and when does it end.

If you’re going to a wedding event and it’s starting, let’s say, two or three in the afternoon, maybe even a little bit later, you can still wear lighter colors into the evening despite it going until 2:00 in the morning.

There isn’t exactly a right or wrong answer. There are guidelines and hopefully that helps. You figure out your unique situation.



Chapter 12: Prevent Shoe Damage

How can you stop scuffing your dress shoes?

How do you prevent shoe damage? What do you do when your shoes are damaged from scuffing?

This chapter is a guide on taking proper care of your dress shoes.

I received an email: "Keeping my shoes clean and in shape is my biggest style problem. I don't know what it is, but I always seem to scuff up my shoes and run them down. As a result, I've started using cheaper brands in anticipation of simply replacing them. Do you have any tips or pointers that I could use? Thank you."

My advice would actually be to upgrade.

He didn't tell me exactly what brand he started with, but I'm assuming that he's – let's say he's in the \$75 to \$100 dress shoe range, so maybe Bostonians or something like that.

Low Price, Nice Quality?

We're used to sneaker prices, so for us, "I would never pay that." Well, you would pay that amount of money if you understood the value you're getting with a pair of Allen Edmonds.

Those are the uppers and that's the top part of the dress shoe. That's going to last you 30 to 40 years if you take care of it. You polish it. You keep it. You don't let water and moisture build up in there. These things are going to last for almost ever.

The other great part is whenever the heel of the shoe starts to fall apart you simply send it back to the factory. Yes, it's going to cost you a hundred bucks, but they will almost rebuild you a brand new shoe.

It's going to be your old shoe, but it's going to be like new again, and this is an awesome deal.

For men that are on their feet and understand that shoes are one of the first things that people, when they look you up and down, they take a second to look at your shoes and it's a huge factor. Just ask anyone.

It's something that they notice and they look on the man and they make very interesting decisions based on what he has on his feet.

Upgrade to Better Quality

"Well, how is that going to help? I'm spending more money, so am I going to be wasting more money?" No, because when you upgrade you get better leathers. You get a better build.

You're going to make sure to work with a salesman at a shoe store who knows and can help you get those first pair because he's going to help you not only with – most of us are used to, "Okay, I'm a 9" or "I'm a 9 ½" or "I'm an 11 ½". We're not used to actually widths on shoes, and he's going to help you find the right width.

ACE MARKS
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Advantage of High End Shoes

Whenever you upgrade to a higher end shoe: They can adjust on a lot of the higher ends the actual arch as well.

You're going to get a better fitting shoe, one that is much more comfortable because actually it's going to come closer to being the ideal fit on your foot.

Because the shoe feels better, it fits better and you're going to walk better. I don't know if you're dragging your feet or perhaps you're just being a bit clumsier.

When you upgrade to a higher quality, you get so much more than just the looks. You also have a wider variety of styles.

Seek Help from a Professional

Make sure to shine, to clean, to polish your shoes more often especially with polishing wax, cream, and conditioner.

That's great, but it's going to be that top layer, that polishing wax that whenever you scuff them or you rub them against something, it actually is going to rub off that wax layer and not get into the leather, so that's another thing that you're going to want to turn it into a habit, and you will whenever you start spending more money on shoes because you're going to realize that you're just more careful.

It's like driving a higher end car. I remember the first time I drove a really high-end car. I was incredibly careful when I was driving that vehicle because I knew the value of it.

With lower end shoes, you treat them like lower end shoes, so I don't think that's where you want to go.

Find a salesman that can help you out. These guys understand shoes. They'll be able to look at your feet and they will be able to find you the right pair for your needs both professional and personal.

If you've got a question about men's style, you know where to go, Men's Style Q&A. We've already got a couple hundred questions and answers there, and we are paying attention to this.

What leather conditioner lasts 4x longer?

Purchase the Leather Honey Leather Conditioner. It saves you time and hassle as you have to condition less yet you still protect your valuable leather from water damage and deterioration?



Chapter 13: The Proper Way To Shine Shoes

You're heading out to a date. She's a beauty, so you double check your outfit closely. It's flawless. Everything works. Button down, chinos, sports coat, check.

You even put in a pocket square. But then you look down and see your shoes....

Cracked, scuffed, and torn.

To be honest they're horrible.

The style is great but they're dull and the scuffs are more noticeable than the shoe! Terribly maintained shoes are the arch enemy to a great outfit.

Conversely, shoes that are kept in great condition will turn a mediocre outfit into a thing of beauty.

So how is this corrected? The spit shine, gentleman. So let's discuss how to shine your shoes like a marine.

Step 1: Purchase A Shoe Shine Kit

Shoe shine kits are not all created equal and can vary in cost tremendously. You can find them at your local shoe hospital or at a high-end retailer. The kit should include:

- Shoe polish – Make sure to get wax shoe polish
- Applicator brushes – Used to apply the polish
- Horse Hair Brush – Used For Cleaning & Buffing The Shoe
- Buffing cloth – You can use a plain white handkerchief if the kit doesn't have a buffing cloth.

- Carrying case – This is personal preference. A shoe shine kit has a few different pieces and a carrying case keeps them all together and organized. They are also very convenient when it traveling.

Shoe brands make shoe shine kits as well. Trusted companies such as Allen Edmonds, Johnston and Murphy, and Florsheim have full shoeshine kits.

There is no substantial difference between the lower priced (as low as \$9.99) shoe shine kits and the ones that are well over \$100.

The products listed above are generally the same. Some differences are seen in the craftsmanship of the materials. For example, in higher priced kits valet boxes with embossed leather and suede lining might be offered instead of a carrying case.

Other differences are seen in product offerings. Many times the higher priced shoe shine kits have protectants and cleaners included in them.

As a consumer and style aficionado, it's important that you do your research to make sure that the higher priced kits are worth the money and that you're not paying for the name or because it's found in a high-end store.

Step 2: Have A Designated Shoe Shine Area

This area is extremely important as it is a laboratory of sorts. With that, it should be extremely well lit.

Also, make sure to choose an open area that's free from clutter as shoe shine will stain. It's best not to use a carpeted space. There's an increased risk of soiling the rug in the event of a spill or dropped brush.

Make sure that you have a container or a tarp/cover of some kind to lay down your brushes and cloths that are soiled with wax and other products.

Additionally, be sure to wear clothing that you don't mind getting dirty. An apron is an option as well. The goal is to prevent staining.

Step 3: Remove Laces

Step 4: Clean The Dirt And Grime Off First

This process is integral and should always be done regardless of the level of shoe shine that you are trying to do! When shining a shoe, it's imperative that you rid it of all dirt, grime, and old polish. This will ensure that the polish will fill all the imperfections of the leather from wear and tear.

There are a number of different ways to clean a shoe.

- Use a horsehair brush to buff and clean. It should have a wood handle and natural heather-brown bristles. These types of brushes are needed because it can clean, apply polish, and buff your shoe to the desired shine.
- Soap and water – Take a cloth or sponge and wipe with some warm soap and water. Be sure that the cloth/sponge is damp and not overly saturated. Use this step first to help remove stains or film that the horse hair brush could not take care of.
- Nail Polish remover – If your shoe has been polished a few times before, you may need to remove excess polish from your shoe. This can be done using nail polish remover. Lightly wet a cotton ball or soft cloth with the nail polish remover and gently rub away the old polish. Removing old polish from the shoe will minimize uneven spots when applying the polish.

* Always let the shoe dry completely when cleaning with a solution or water.

- Water and White vinegar – The ratio should be 2 parts water and 1 part vinegar. This method is especially helpful if you live in an area with heavy winters. The mixture is great for removing salts and tough stains that may occur during such extreme weather.

I can't stress enough the importance of this step. It's vitally important as you want to ensure that you are polishing the leather itself instead of just rubbing polish over dirt and debris.

The goal of spit shining is to have the mirror shine. Mirror shine is a high gloss shine that you can see your reflection in.

Step 5: Rejuvenate the leather (Wash & Condition)

For Spit shining, this is the next step after cleaning the shoe. Leather once was skin on a live animal. Just like our skin, cleaning and scrubbing with a brush and soap can dry it out and cause cracking.

Thus, there is a product that is specifically designed to prevent this from happening. Three different types of products are available that will rejuvenate the leather. They are saddle soap, leather conditioner, or an oil renovator.

Saddle Soap – This product is used for cleaning, conditioning, and protecting the leather. It typically contains mild soap, softening ingredients such as lanolin, and preservatives such as beeswax. Specifically, saddle soap does the following:

- Cleans, softens, and preserves smooth leather
- Conditions leather to make it soft and supple
- Preserves the appearance of smooth leather
- Includes a quality wax for added protection

Use a damp cloth or a sponge to apply the saddle soap. Rub it lightly over to soap. This will produce a lather on the applicator. Next, apply the saddle soap to the surface of the shoe and let it dry for 10-15 minutes

Leather Conditioner – this preps the leather by softening and getting it ready to absorb the polish. Leather becomes less flexible and durable when it loses moisture. Cracking is a result of this process.

This breakdown and loss of moisture are prevented and treated by leather conditioner. Additionally, it removes any dirt and dust deposits that the brush may have missed.

Work the conditioner evenly over the entire shoe with a cloth and let it dry (15-20 minutes).

Oil Renovator – This is not a cleaner but it is necessary for the preservation of the leather. An oil renovator is essential to nourish the leather much like lotion does for skin.

It helps to replenish the moisture that is taken out of the shoe from constant cleaning and polishing. When applying an oil renovator, be sure to allow at least 10 minutes for the oil to set in and absorb.

Another benefit of the rejuvenation process is the protective elements. The products above also help to protect the leather.

Choose one of the above products depending on the condition of the shoe and your preference. The end goal is to make sure that the leather is supple, nourished, and ready for the polish to be applied.

Step 6: Apply the Cream Polish

This is the first round of polish, which should be cream based and the same color as the shoe.

Use a cream based polish as it is best for color rejuvenation.

There are many different colors of shoe polish but occasionally there are times where the exact color match may not be an option.

If you run into this problem you want to use a colorless (neutral) cream polish. Neutral shoe polish doesn't have color pigment added.

Neutral can be used on shoes that do not need to have color put back into them or shoes that you just can't seem to match the color with a polish.

It's also convenient if you don't want to buy a polish for every pair of shoes. For example, you may have a pair of oxblood wholecut oxfords.

It would be difficult finding shoe polish in that color so a neutral, colorless polish would work best. Neutral polish is also good to use if you don't want the stitching in your shoes to change colors.

Generously spread the shoe polish with a moist cloth or polish brush. Apply thinly yet evenly over the whole shoe. Buff with a horsehair brush. Allow shoe to sit and dry (15-20 mins).

Step 7: Add Wax Polish

Use a beeswax with turpentine polish as this provides the best luster. Do this by hand with a soft cloth or an old t-shirt. Evenly apply in firm, circular motions.

You know, "wax on, wax off"! Apply 1-2 layers of the wax polish.

This will completely fill in the pores of the leather. The wax also acts as a leather protectant from the elements.

Buff it out with the horse hair brush afterward. Let the shoe sit (10-20 mins).

Note: Only apply polish to the leather of the shoe. Polish is not meant to go on the heels as they are not leather.

Step 8: Lightly Sprinkle Water on the Shoe & Buff

Use small drops or dabs of water from your finger. Don't sprinkle water all over the shoe at once - this will oversaturate the leather.

Once you dab the shoe with the water, take the cloth with wax polish and buff the shoe lightly.

Repeat this step 3 times allowing 20 minutes to dry after each step.

This is necessary for the perfect Mirror Shine. After the 3rd application, allow drying overnight for best results.

Step 9: Final Buff With Soft Cloth

This buffs out the toe to give it the final mirror shine.

Step 10: Final Product

As you see this process takes time but it's important that you are really detailed and meticulous as you don't want any clumps, dull spots, or uneven coloration in the shoe.



If you'd like to know how to 'spit shine', check out [this video](#).



Chapter 14: 6 Alternatives to Square Toe Shoes

The square-toed men's dress shoe has become ubiquitous. Somewhere along the line guys seem to be getting the idea that a dressy shoe is a flat, squarish one.

They're everywhere, especially stores that sell mass-produced men's shoes fairly cheaply.



If you only own one pair of dress shoes, they should not be this style. In fact, this men's shoe style is not at all classic, and only looks acceptable with a few style and body types.

Please note square toes aren't inherently bad. Men with wide feet may find square toes the only comfortable option.

Other men looking to add a little visual bulk – very slender or undersized men – can benefit from the widening effect. They have their place.

But they're hardly a fashion be-all and end-all, and for the vast majority of men there are better footwear options.

Pointed Toe Men's Shoes

- Good for small/short feet
- Help add an impression of length/height to a man
- Appropriate for all levels of formality

Your basic pointed-toe or narrow-toe dress shoe is a flexible style that works great for anyone with smaller feet.

Everything from formal black oxfords to casual moccs look fine with narrow toes. Avoid the cowboy-boot extreme unless you're deliberately wearing a Western style – pointed doesn't mean triangular, just tapered – and you should be set to wear pointed-toe shoes just about anywhere.

Cap-Toe Men's Shoes

- Help shorten the impression of large feet
- Add an extra visual element to make shoes more interesting
- Suitable for most levels of formality.

A cap-toe can be added to just about any style of shoe, including narrow toes or the square-toes we're suggesting alternatives to.

Cap toes have a seam across the front of the shoe, perpendicular to the wearer's leg. There may be an extra leather "cap" actually in place over the toe, or more commonly the seam simply joins two pieces of leather; occasionally the shoe is actually a single solid piece of leather and the seam is strictly decorative.

The effect shortens the foot's visual impression, making it a good style for men with large, long feet. Very formal black dress shoes meant for the most serious business and social occasions should stay as simple as possible, but any other shoe in your collection will do just fine with cap toes.

Split-Toe Men's Shoes

- Uncommon and distinctive style
- Helps draw attention to shoes without shortening their visual appearance
- Appropriate for most settings

Split-toe shoes are something of a rarity. A vertical seam – the “split” – runs down the front of the toe, which wraps around like a more restrained wingtip.

This adds a bit of visual interest to the shoe without breaking the vertical lines up, making it a better choice for smaller men than the horizontally-oriented cap toes. Like a cap-toe shoe, split toes can be worn at most levels of formality, but not the strictest of business dress.



Medallion Men's Shoes

- Decorative, punched-leather pattern
- Suitable for business-casual or casual wear

Decorative leather punching is called “brogue” styling on men’s shoes, and is referred to as a “medallion” if the tooling is limited to the toe of the shoe.

A medallion toe can work with any shape, but is most common on pointed or wing-tip toes. The more tooling a leather shoe has, the less formal it becomes – medallion shoes can be anything from fairly dressy business wear to an entirely casual option.



Wingtip Men's Dress Shoes

- Highly decorative style
- Works well with a variety of casual ensembles

If you're looking to make a statement, wingtips are the way to go. The decorative style is on the casual side, and will usually only be seen on point-toed shoes.

Wear it any time you want your footwear to be actively decorative and noticeable.

Wingtips work well on boots or on brogues and slip-on moccasins, but keep them to your casual wardrobe.

They're usually not good business wear, unless you're working in a very casual setting.



Two-Tone Men's Shoes

- Very decorative style.
- Distinctively "retro" look

Two-tone shoes are eye-grabbers. Expect to attract attention and comment if you wear them!

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Save the style for social occasions – it’s too flashy for business settings – but keep it in mind for your dancing clothes. A two-tone shoe adds a classic twist to a modern outfit.

Try to avoid wearing them with anything else distinctively “retro,” though, or you’ll risk looking like you’re just wearing a costume instead of a style.



Most of these shoes are easy to come by – ask at any good men’s shoe store (not a generic or department store), or shop around online.

The internet’s done wonderful things for shoe shopping, and even men with unusual sizes can usually get a good selection.

So with all that choice...skip the pilgrim shoes.

Are You Ready to Take Action?
[Click here](#) to get your **Free Style Consultation** with me!



Chapter 15: Dress Shoes with Jeans

Is that even possible?

I'm here to tell you that it is.

The key to pulling off this look seamlessly is to make sure that you abide by a few rules. 3 dress shoe and jean rules to be exact.

So what are these style rules?

1. Make sure you are wearing the right type of jeans

There are a million types of jeans out there. Well, maybe not that many – but a lot

While all jeans are casual there are some kinds that are dressier than others. Opt for the dressier variety.

Distressed jeans, jeans with holes, and jeans with a lighter wash are all ultra-casual and will NEVER go well with dress shoes.

Instead, opt for denim that fits well in the waist and the hips. Watch the length of the jeans and see to it that they are not too long and drag.

Find jeans that have a more tapered fit at the bottom. Boot cut jeans will not work with dress shoes. Never go with a baggy fit but opt for a slim or regular cut. As for color you will not go wrong with dark indigo jeans or even a black pair.

It may surprise you but colored denim – provided it is the right fit and length – can work with black or dark brown dress shoes.

The main thing to make sure of is that there is enough contrast between the shoes and the jeans so they do not appear to match exactly.

2. Wear the right type of dress shoes

It's not just the jeans that play a part in making sure that your whole ensemble works. It is equally important to be mindful of the dress shoes that you choose.

When picking out dress shoes select a pair that leans more on the casual side.

Oxford shoes are great dress shoes but they are on the more formal end of the spectrum and will therefore not work with jeans. A better style to go with is the Blucher, Loafer or the Derby dress shoe style.

The shape, construction and vamp placement of these shoes lend a more casual vibe than compared to Oxfords.

Other options for shoes include monk straps, desert boots, chukkas and slip-ons will work beautifully when paired with jeans.



3. Balance other elements of your outfit

Even though you're wearing jeans – the fact you've thrown in dress shoes as your foundation means you need to elevate the whole look.

A t-shirt or sweatshirt just isn't going to cut it.

Balance out the look with a well-fitted collared button down or dress shirt. Keep your accessories simple.

Consider completing your ensemble with a hat if you are confident that you can pull that off, and if wearing the above mentioned dress shirt consider a wool or woven necktie.

Make sure that every element that you bring in to your ensemble matches with your chosen dress shoe.

Warning – If you are a larger man be aware that dress shoes can make your feet appear smaller.



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Tread carefully with the dress shoe and jean combination especially if you have a bigger midsection.

A solid solution would be to cover up the midsection with a beautifully cut sports jacket.

This can bring balance back into the outfit and prevent you from appearing disproportional



Thinking about pairing jeans with dress shoes? - [check out this video.](#)



Chapter 16: How To Match A Shoe With Any Suit Color

Black shoes and a black suit work great if you're going to a funeral, but most of the time we're a little more colorful in our wardrobes.

How does a man wearing a navy, light-grey, or brown suit match his shoes with the suit color?

That's what this chapter is about!

Take a moment to get to know the following chart.

It pairs the five most common suit colors – navy, medium or mid-gray, charcoal, brown, and black – with three different shoes to show you which colors work with which leathers.

Now, are these shoe matching rules absolute?

Not entirely – but it's a very safe guide to follow.

If you're bucking the advice here, it should be because you're going for a really unique look or you know the rules and make a conscious decision to ignore them!

For example, we don't have the burgundy shoes paired with a black suit.

But a rocker might wear a black suit with red Converse All-Stars, and that would be, if not exactly timeless men's style, certainly a style choice that could work. There are going to be exceptions.

But there aren't many of them, and if you're sticking to classic business and business-casual dress, let this chart be your guide.

Most of the time it's not too hard.

Strict business formality is easy – a charcoal gray or navy blue suit and plain black shoes.

But as the suits (and the business climate) become more relaxed, you get the option of wearing different colors of leather with them. That's a stumbling block for a lot of men – and the wrong color of shoes and belt can ruin even a fine suit.



Here's how most of these combinations play out in practical, day-to-day dress:

Navy Blue Suits

Pair with:

- Black shoes
- Brown shoes
- Red or burgundy shoes

Navy can go comfortably with all three of the main color families of men's leather shoes. You can probably even make a navy suit work with more exotic colors if you have them, although blue is generally too close to make a good contrast.

The leather color mostly affects the formality and attitude of a navy suit. Black shoes are business dress, while brown are more relaxed, and red or burgundy give it the most playful, social feel.

Medium And Light Gray Suits

Pair with:

- Black shoes
- Brown shoes
- Red or burgundy shoes

Medium gray suits are less formal than navy suits, and share a similar flexibility.

You can pair them effectively with just about any color of leather.

In the case of medium gray, black is the best option when you're wearing a white shirt and a necktie.

It's still not proper business dress (the suit itself is too light), but it's quite typical in offices where suits are mandatory but somewhat relaxed.

Brown and burgundy shoes make it more of a casual/social look, and work best when the shirt has a bit of pattern or color to it as well.

Brown Suits

Pair with:

- Brown shoes
- Red or burgundy shoes

Do not pair with:

- Black shoes

Take a caveat here – brown suits work with most brown shoes. You want a visible contrast between the color of the shoe leather and the color of the suit. If they're identical or almost-identical, it looks off.

Apart from that, brown's great with most casual leather shoes.

It's generally better to have the shoe leather darker than the suit (helps keep the eye from being drawn downward), but either way can work so long as you have a clear contrast.

Charcoal Grey Suits

Pair with:

- Black shoes
- Burgundy shoes

Do not pair with:

- Brown shoes

Here's where we get to our first firm "no" on the list: don't pair charcoal suits with brown shoes.

Dark browns look like you're trying for a close match and coming up short. Light browns are too informal, and draw the eye jarringly downward.

Plain black works best, or a deep burgundy for a look that's relaxed but still elegant.

Black Suits

Pair with:

- Black shoes

Do not pair with:

- Brown shoes
- Burgundy shoes

Black's not very flexible. That's why we generally recommend charcoal gray or navy blue in its place as a first suit. If you own one, pair it with black shoes, and save the outfit for funerals and strict business dress occasions.

Any other color of shoe is going to look too casual with black.

Other Colors

The chart I included is built around the most common colors of suit and leather dress shoes.

You'll probably end up with more colors of suit/trouser than just those five, and more colors of shoe than those three.

That especially gets true once you start wearing leather shoes with casual trousers (like jeans), or dress suits with casual shoes (like canvas sneakers).



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Experiment and find out what works for you. The more casual the outfit, the less strict the rules, so if you're doing something deliberately convention-defying (like the rocker example we used at the start), don't sweat it too much.

If it looks good in the mirror, go with it, and don't worry whether it's "right" or not.

As with all colors, the most important thing to remember is to avoid things that are close but not quite matching.

Those are the worst-looking clashes – it looks like you tried for a unified outfit and screwed it up a little. Keep the contrast clear and you should be fine.



I made a quick video on matching shoes with any suit color. [Click to watch.](#)



Conclusion

Care about the shoes you wear. They take an outfit from good to spectacular.

If cared for properly, quality dress shoes will be the best investment you ever make.

This eBook is just the tip of the iceberg. There is so much more to learn about the dress shoe. We would like to invite you along on the journey to be a shoe aficionado!

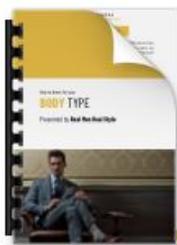
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- The End -

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See you on the other side!