



GENTLEMAN'S
GAZETTE

15 Style Mistakes

— & —
How To Avoid Them



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First Edition

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MISTAKE #

1

Forgotten Tags and Logos

Have you ever seen a true style icon wearing a flashy fashion brand? Rarely, if ever. Overt labels and fashion brands are a thing of the modern fashion world, and therefore do not belong in a gentleman's wardrobe. It is simply tacky to attempt to impress with a Hugo Boss, Ralph Lauren or Tommy Hilfiger tag; instead, opt for a great fit, a bold color, or adept pattern matching to show your sense of style. And, never forget to remove sleeve labels!



KEEP IN MIND:

- Logos and tags are flashy and tacky
- Make sure to remove all visible tags and logos
- Use color, pattern and fit to impress instead

Mismatched Shoes and Belt



Shoes and belts are meant to be matched. When combining your shoes and belt, ensure you both match the colors AND the degree of formality. So, black shoes go with a black belt and brown shoes go with a (closely) matching brown belt. Pair a fine leather belt with Oxford Shoes and a canvas belt with canvas shoes. Wider belts with larger buckles are best suited to more casual outfits and shoes; avoid pairing them with fine Oxfords, for example.



Good To Know:

- Shoes and belts should match in color and formality
- Wider belts or large buckles are more casual
- Pair fine leather belts with oxfords
- Pair canvas belts with canvas shoes

MISTAKE #

3

Buttoned Single-Breasted Jacket While Sitting



Each kind of suit jacket has a protocol for buttoning. Single-breasted jackets are worn buttoned when standing and unbuttoned when sitting. Not only does the latter look better, but it is also more comfortable.



Always
unbutton your
single-breasted
jacket when
sitting

MISTAKE #

4

Unbuttoned Double-Breasted Jackets

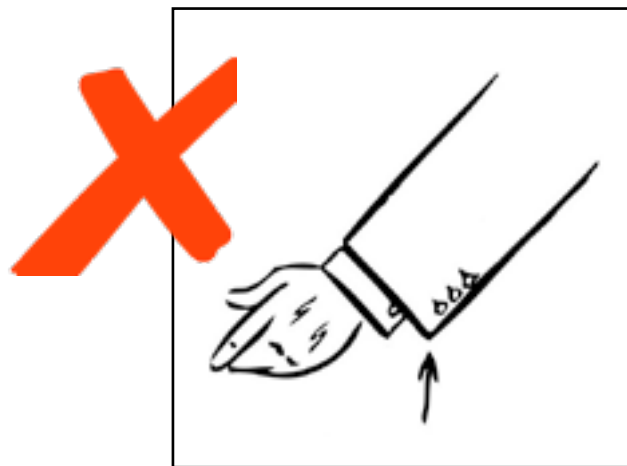
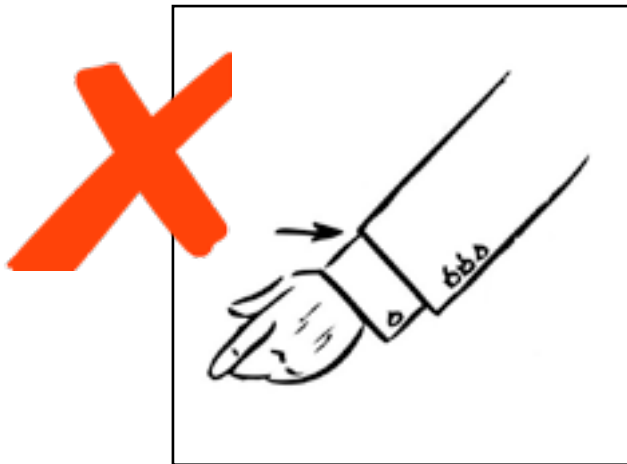
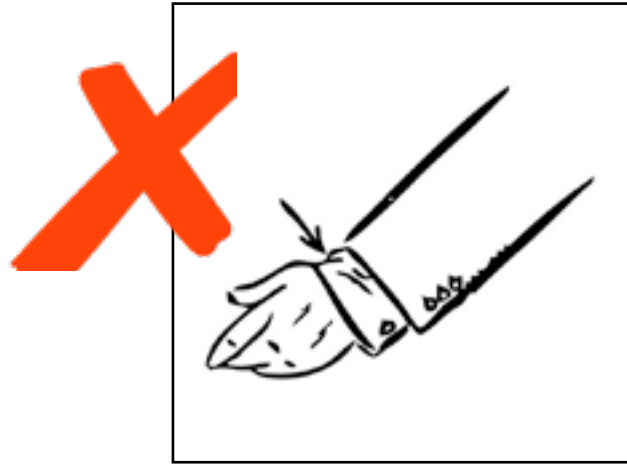
Double-breasted jackets are designed to be buttoned at all times for the overlap of the fabric to lie properly. When sitting, the bottom button can be opened if you have two or more closing buttons. The upper button should remain closed.



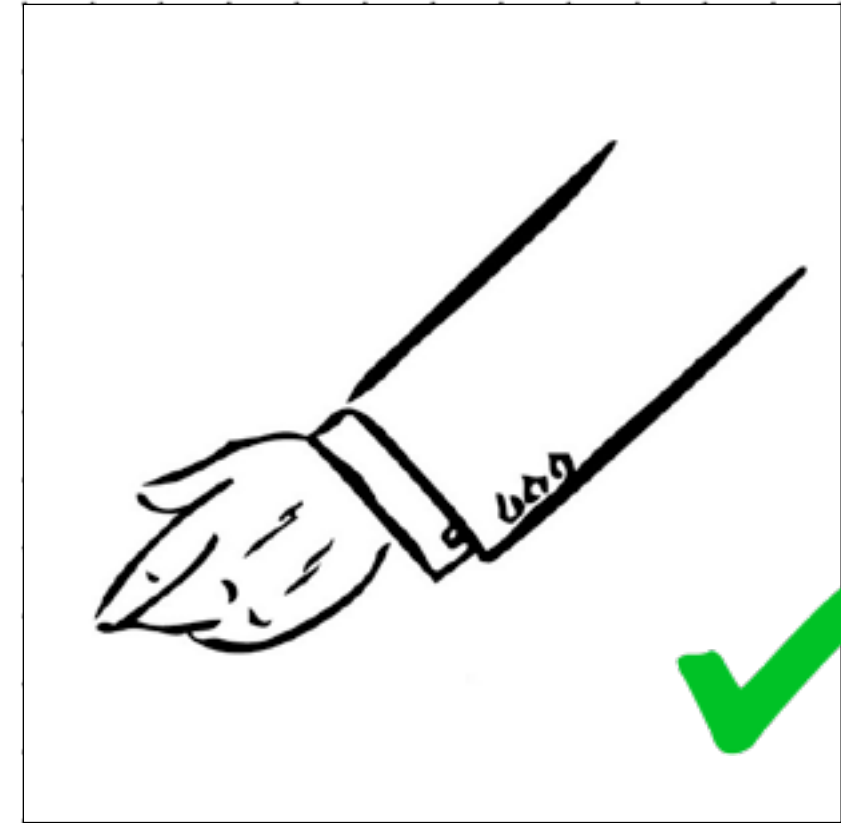
REMEMBER:

- Double-breasted jackets are intended to be worn buttoned
- Only unbutton the bottom buttons if desired

Knuckle-Grazing Sleeves



Sleeves that are not the proper length will either make you look sloppy or like you have outgrown your clothes. Shirt sleeves should end at the wrist, by the base of the thumb. They are too long if they cover your hand or too short if they expose your wrist. Jacket sleeves should be a bit shorter than the shirt sleeve. An overcoat should be a little longer than the jacket and shirt sleeves. For more on sleeve length, [read our article](http://www.gentlemansgazette.com).



KEEP IN MIND:

- Sleeves should be worn at the proper length
- Too long looks sloppy
- Too short looks like you have outgrown your clothes
- Jacket sleeves should be slightly shorter than shirt sleeves
- Overcoat sleeves should be slightly longer than jacket sleeves and shirt

MISTAKE #

6

Wearing a Belt With Suspenders

Pants are designed to be worn with EITHER a belt or suspenders, but never both. Choose one or the other, if you have the option. Ideally, pants intended for suspenders do not have any belt loops.



DON'T FORGET:

- Pants should be worn with EITHER suspenders or a belt—never both!
- Pants should ideally only work with one or the other



MISTAKE

7

Puddling Trousers

Wearing overly long trousers has become near epidemic in the US. Simply because trousers do not drag on the ground does not mean that they are wearable in off-the-rack lengths! Trousers fabric that “puddle” around the ankle draws the eye down and gives the impression of sloppiness. A bit of a break (defined as a bend in the fabric) in the trouser leg is acceptable; any more than one break is too much. Slimmer trousers call for shorter lengths, and very slim trousers may not touch the shoe at all. Having the trousers shortened at your alterations tailor will cost you \$10–15 and it is totally worth it.



GOOD TO KNOW:

- Trousers not dragging on the ground is not enough to ensure that they are the proper length
- Anything more than a single break (or bend) indicates that the trousers are too long
- Trouser width is an important factor in determining length

MISTAKE #

8

Wearing a Vest With a Belt

Vests have become popular lately, but unfortunately many men wear them with a belt. This destroys the clean lines of the vest, which is intended to cover the waistband entirely and lie smoothly against the pants. Under a vest, always wear suspenders or opt for trousers with side adjusters. **Never. Wear. A. Belt.**



HERE'S A RECAP:

- Vests are popular again
- They should overlap the waistband entirely
- Belts add bulk, and should not be worn with vests
- Suspenders are the best choice with vests

MISTAKE #

9

Matching Neckwear & Pocket Square

For the sake of ease, some men reach for matching tie and pocket square sets for weddings or formal events, which is only guaranteed to make one look like one has no taste. Elegant, stylish men never wear exactly matching accessories. When in doubt, a simple white linen pocket square will always do the trick and you can wear it with any tie or bow tie you like—well, tasteful ones!



DON'T FORGET:

- Matching pocket squares and ties miss the point of accessorizing: to express your taste
- Always choose complementary but contrasting pocket squares and ties

MISTAKE #

10

Pre-Tied Bow Ties

Wearing a pre-tied bow tie makes you look like a 13-year-old boy at prom, end of story. It looks stiff, cheap and too symmetrical. Self-tied bow ties help you show your personality through texture, asymmetry, and knot variations. Check out this [how-to video](#) that shows beginners exactly how to tie a bow tie, step by step.



REMEMBER:

- Pre-tied bow ties are stiff, cheap, and too symmetrical
- Self-tied bow ties help you show your personality via asymmetry, texture, and different knot styles

MISTAKE #

11

Monotone Outfits



You may see celebrities like George Clooney wearing monotone suits in black and gray, but in reality these combinations are boring at best and lazy at worst. Clothes should be a way to express yourself, and a monotone palette will make you blend in rather than stand out. Matching ties, shirts and jackets lack contrast and therefore, visual interest. If you are tempted by the simplicity or the lack of risk of monotone, add some contrast with easy pieces like a white shirt or a red tie.



KEEP IN MIND:

- Monotone is boring!
- Use your clothes to stand out, not blend in
- If you prefer dark colors, add contrasting shirts and accessories to keep your look interesting

Too-Long Ties

A tie is a decorative object that should help you look more attractive and elegant. Throughout history tie lengths have varied, but the basic principle was proportion; the tie should never be longer than your waistband. A too-long tie will draw the eye down and away from your face. Quite simply, people should look at you, not your crotch. Though it is rare for a given non-bespoke tie to be made in different lengths, whenever a range is available buy the length proportionate to your height. Tie knots are often floated as the solution for length issues, but they create new proportion issues; short men make big knots, which overwhelm a small frame, and tall men make small knots, which are dwarfed by a large frame.



HERE'S A RECAP:

- Ties should end at the waistband, not above or below
- Too-long ties will draw attention down and away from your face
- Only purchase ties in lengths that do not force you to use tie knots to solve length issues

MISTAKE #

13

Wearing a Necktie with a Tuxedo

There are many contexts in which classic dress rules can be safely broken, but black and white tie are not among them. A tuxedo is always worn with a bow tie, period.



REMEMBER:

- Black tie rules shouldn't be broken
- Bow ties are always worn with black tie



Visible Undershirt



One of my biggest pet peeves is for a t-shirt or undershirt to be visible underneath a dress shirt at the neck. An undershirt should never be visible. In a nutshell, it is okay to wear an undershirt, just make sure it has a deep v-neck collar and is in a color close to your skintone. That way you cannot see the undershirt, even if you wear the top two buttons of your dress shirt unbuttoned. We discuss all the pros and cons as well as my favorite undershirts in our [Undershirt Guide](#).



DON'T FORGET:

- Visible undershirts detract from the overall outfit
- Treat undershirts like underwear: keep them covered
- Skin-tone-colored, deep-v-neck undershirts are best

Backpack with Professional Attire

If an accessory is originally designed for sporting or for children, you shouldn't use it in other settings. Case in point, the backpack—wearing one with a suit (or even in the city) will make you look like a lost Boy Scout. Furthermore, the shoulder straps will crush your suit jacket and the bulk will annoy those around you in public spaces. If you want to be taken seriously, keep the backpack in its intended domain and purchase a proper briefcase instead.



KEEP IN MIND:

- Backpacks look juvenile and out of place in the office or city
- They crush suits and annoy those around you
- Buy a proper briefcase and leave backpacks for hiking

Now that you know 15 key style mistakes to avoid... what do you do next?

The point of dressing well is to enjoy it while expressing yourself and your personality. But, avoiding mistakes is just the beginning! Learning the rules of great style will help, and we have [700+ articles](#), [guides](#), and [videos](#) to do just that.

To focus on learning style basics, check out our:

[GENTLEMAN'S PRIMER](#)

Read our most popular guides in:

[OUR BEST ARTICLES](#)

To find many of the accessories featured in this guide, check out:

[OUR SHOP](#)

Our brand, Fort Belvedere, offers a range of [self-tie bow ties](#), [black tie bow ties](#), [pocket squares](#), [ties in three lengths](#), and [shoelaces](#) to help you avoid these 15 mistakes!

Finally, welcome to the Gentleman's Gazette community. We welcome your comments, so [please let us know your feedback](#).