

All About Clothing

How to build a minimal wardrobe

Having a minimal wardrobe means a different thing to different people. Some would say you have 5 pairs of jeans and 10 tops. Others would say 3 pants and 7 tops. You are going to have to make a decision based on your lifestyle to what that means. You ultimately don't need tons of clothing to dress nicely. If you have a few basics and ones that can be interchangeable that is the key to a good wardrobe. Here are three things to consider when decided how many of each item to have are:

1. Keep clothes that you really like
2. Keep clothes that you actually wear
3. Keep clothes that work with different pieces to create different outfits

You have already learned about going through and organizing your clothing. You probably have already gone through most of your wardrobe. The key is finding what sort of clothing you like and then getting similar types of styles. If you really enjoy the comfort of one type of shirt, see if you can find other colors of the same style.

Two things that are important for a man to carry

A pocket knife or Swiss army knife—you never know what sort of thing you will ever have to cut open, screw tighter, or slice apart. This is a very handy tool for all men to carry with them.

Another item is a handkerchief. Now you may be saying, "What? That is old-fashioned!" Just as a woman will carry a purse with many items inside of it, guys are in need of things as well. I am sure you have run into that embarrassing situation where your forehead started sweating up or your nose started running and you used your shirt sleeve, eeewww! How much easier to just grab it out and swipe your nose and put it away. It is much better than "sucking" up mucous. That is a very bad and inappropriate thing to do in public.

You treat a handkerchief as you would your underwear, throw it in the laundry each day after use. You can get a whole pack of these for very cheap. Maybe you have a sister who is handy with embroidery, she could embroider your initial on your handkerchiefs for a little style.

Tucking in your shirt

What shirts should you tuck and which ones to leave untucked?

- Undershirts—These can always be tucked, and should be.
- Polo shirts—These have an even hem and can be worn untucked. If you are going for a dressier look you can tuck them in.
- Hawaiian shirts—These and any other “loud print” shirts don’t get tucked.
- T-shirts—Opinions are going to vary widely on this one. Some like the visible belt buckle, others think it looks nerdy. In general, don’t tuck the T-shirt unless it’s a deliberate style statement.
- Any button up shirts—Any shirts that contain “tails”—an uneven hem needs to be tucked.

How to tuck:

You should have a clean line. It is an imaginary line straight down the front of our body. This line goes from your chin to your crotch. A well tucked shirts should sit so that the shirt placket (the rectangle of fabric where the front buttons are located) lines up precisely with the fly of your trousers. Your belt buckle and trouser button should be centered neatly in that same line. A clean line divided your body cleanly and emphasizes symmetry.

How to shape a baseball hat.

Sometimes you may get a hat and it is a flat billed cap. How do you get it to conform to your head? Well there are various ways to do it. Some guys take hot showers with the hat on and just let it dry on their heads. Or you can soak it in hot water and then place on your head.

But if you are not into a wet head, you can take the “bill” and shape it with your hands. You will have to have a “feel” for the perfect curve. It may take a few days worth of frequent manipulation to make it look right. The only problem is that you may wind up with a sharp bend instead of a rounded U. You want a nice upside down U not a V. You also want to make sure that the curve is symmetrical.

Another easy way is to place it inside of a coffee mug overnight. This is a no hassle and leaves a long-lasting, well-formed curve in your bill.

You can also wrap it around a soup can and secure with a rubber band. Leave overnight.

How to tie a tie

This may be one of those things that you look at an online video to learn how to do or find a book at the library that shows step by step instructions if you don’t already have someone in your home that can show you how to do this properly. If you really can’t get how to tie a tie, you can purchase clip on

ties that have already been done properly. But with a few simple steps and practice, you should be able to get it.

1. Drape the tie around your neck. The wide end should extend about 12 inches below the narrow end of the tie. Cross the wide part of the tie over the narrow end.
2. Turn the wide end back underneath the narrow end.
3. Continue wrapping the wide end around the narrow end by bringing it across the front of the narrow end again.
4. Pull the wide end up and through the back of the loop, under the chin.
5. Hold the front of the tie with your index finger and bring the wide end down through the front knot. (Push wide side into loop made from crosses.)
6. Tighten the knot carefully to the gills by holding the narrow end and sliding the knot up. Center the knot.

Ironing your clothing

This is something that every young man should learn how to do. Most of the clothing out there is wrinkle free. You can place it in the dryer for a few moments, take it out before it dries, and smooth the article of clothing, most of the time you will be wrinkle free. There will be some times when you will need to wear a dress shirt and dress pants that are wrinkled and you will want to learn how to iron them to make them wrinkle free. You don't want an unkempt appearance. It really only takes a few moments and makes all the difference in your appearance. This is another skill best learned from someone, maybe your mom or dad or an online video.

Learn how to press your dress shirt

1. **Iron the collar first.** This is the visible part of the shirt as it frames your face. Do the inside of the collar first and then the outside.
2. **Iron the cuffs.** Lay them out flat by unbuttoning them.
3. **Iron the shirt front.** Start with the side with the buttons. Never iron the buttons, work around them. If you have a pocket on the front, iron up the pocket not down.
4. **Iron the back of the shirt.** You can place the sleeve head into the square edge of the ironing board to make this easier. Do one half and then position the shirt on the other side and do the other half.
5. **Iron the sleeves.** Remember to make sure the fabric is flat and smooth before you apply the iron. Take each sleeve by the seam and lay the whole sleeve flat on the ironing board. Be sure to line up where any creases are.
6. **When finished hang up on a hanger.**

Learn how to press your pants

1. Check your iron and label of your pants to ensure that the temperature is correct for the right fabric. Turn it on. It only takes a few moments to heat up. If your pants are made of two different types of fabric, often called a blended fabric, choose the lowest setting of the two.
2. **Iron the linings of your pants.** Most dress pants have inside pocket linings. Although no one will see these, if they are wrinkly you may see them through your pants.
3. **Iron the waistband and top part of the pants.** Turn front pockets out and then press the iron on the top of the leg. Lift the iron up, reinsert the pocket and continue to press along the top of the pants, paying special attention to pleats. Move to the seat of the pants, and pull out the back pockets. Press these areas and then move up to the waistband. Finally move to the opposite front side of the pants, turning the pocket inside out and repeating the process.
4. **Now you are going to press your pants creases.** Mark the crease at the bottom. Lay the pant flat on the ironing board with the cuffs right at one end, waist dropped over the far end. The waist can hang off a bit if the board is short. Flip a pant leg up and off the board so that you are working with just one leg, lay it flat on the board. Look inside the cuff and find the two seams. Arrange the pants leg so that one inseam lies right on top of the other, dead center of the flat leg. With the inseams in the center, the edges of the pant leg are where you want to press the crease. Press down gently on each side of the leg. This should leave a visible crease at the cuff and an inch or two up the leg.
5. **Mark the crease at the top.** Find the same two vertical inseams and match them up, one on top of the other, just like you did but this time at the top of the pants. Lay the top of the pant leg flat with the inseams centered. Use the iron and gently press a crease into place along the edge, about six inches down from the waistband. Don't press the crease all the way up to the waistband. the bottom of the pockets is a good place to stop.
6. **Press the front crease.** Now that you have the start and finish of the crease marks, it is just a matter of connecting the two dots. If the inseams are still set one atop of the other, the crease should be the very edge of the pant leg as it lies flat. Press gently down in one spot with the iron. Then lift the iron, move up a bit, and do it again. Work all the way up from the marker at the cuff to the marker just below the pockets.
7. **Press the back crease.** The back crease should be directly opposite the front crease. Repeat the same process you used to create the front crease.
8. **Press down the pant leg.** Once you have your creases set you can press down the center of the pant leg between the creases to get out any small wrinkles or folds. Use the same motion you have been using: press the iron flat, pick it back up, and repeat again a little further along.
9. **Repeat the other leg.**
10. **Iron the seat and front of pants as needed.**

How to fold a shirt.

1. **Lay the shirt flat, make sure it is buttoned up.**
2. **Fold the sleeves to the middle of the back.** Fold in each sleeve horizontally so that the cuffs cross over the middle of the back. Take care not to fold in the shirt's side seam.
3. **Fold the sides to the middle.** Fold in both sleeves again, this time bringing the shirt's side seams in evenly from the shoulder to hem, so they meet under the collar, forming a broad V shape there. (The sides won't necessarily meet farther down the shirt.)
4. **Fold in half lengthwise.** Holding the bottom of the shirt with two hands, fold shirt in half lengthwise from the bottom up so that the bottom edge of the shirt rests below the bottom of the collar. Do this once or twice, depending on the length of the shirt and the depth of your storage space. Flip folded shirt over and store.

How to fold pants.

1. Hold pants by the waistband, give them a good flap to get a large portion of the wrinkles out.
2. Then put your hands in the both pockets and smooth them down.
3. Holding the pants by the waistband, fold them back on themselves—back pocket to back pocket.
4. Continue to hold the pants by the folded waistband with one hand and with your other hand, hold the pants by the crotch.
5. Now give them another good flap to get out the wrinkles and make folding easier.
6. Place them on your folding table and smooth flat with your hands.
7. Depending upon where you are storing them, you either fold in half or thirds.
8. While placing them on your shelf, to make them stack neater, alternate the waistband while stacking. This simple means to turn every other waistband the opposite way. This will make your pile sturdy and look nicer on your shelf.

Your goal with folding is to create a square shape. It will fit in your drawer's easier and they will stack better when storing on a shelf.

Some other things to consider folding: underwear and socks. You don't just have to throw these in your drawers. You can fold these as you do your other articles of clothing. For socks, you place the matching pairs side by side and then wrap around each other.

How to shine your shoes.

1. Find an old towel to place over the area you will be working on.
2. Clean the dirt and the dust off the shoes with a brush or damp rag.
3. Cover the entire shoe with a generous amount of polish, using your shoe polish brush. Allow the polish to dry for about 15 minutes.
4. Brush the entire shoe vigorously using the shine brush. The point of this is to basically brush off all the excess polish, leaving only a small film on the outside of the shoe.
5. Then focus on the toe and heel for extra shine. Dip a cotton ball into water and squeeze out the excess moisture so it is damp. Then get a little polish on the damp cotton. Apply the polish on the toe and heel using small circular motions. This will take a while.
6. Repeat step 5 until you are satisfied with the level of shine. Use a new piece of cotton each time and to remove all excess polish before applying a new coat. The initial shine is the hardest, it should get easier each time you do it.

If your shoes have never been polished, your first time may take you awhile. The next time you do it, it will be less.

Laundry

Doing laundry is a necessary part of life. Even if your mother does the laundry, you should still learn how to do this for yourself one day.

To begin, sort your dirty laundry:

- Pile for towels, rags, washcloths
- Pile for bedding
- Pile for lights, whites, etc
- Pile for darks
- Pile for work clothes
- Pile for reds---these may “bleed” onto lighter fabrics

It sounds like a lot of piles doesn't it? Not everyone will have that many it depends upon their families needs. A generalized way is to sort your lights from your darks. Otherwise your lights will start looking dingy. If you have red clothing, sometimes the colors will bleed onto others, check the labels for any new clothing as how to launder it.

You can throw a few towels with their respective piles (light or dark) if you have only a few to launder. If you have nicer item clothing like dress clothes, keep those separate from your work clothes.

To begin, put them in your washer. Make sure to evenly separate the clothing around the drum in the washer. If you put heavier items all on one side, it can make your washer off balance when spinning. Unroll pants and put them around the washer, instead of stuffing them in the same place. Do the same thing for bedding, wrap it around, instead of stuffing it into a ball.

Add your desired amount of soap. Check your labels. Typically you can wash everything in cold water. It saves on your utilities bill. The only item we washed in hot water was cloth diapers. We needed the hot water, to get rid of the bacteria. Skip the fabric softener, it is unnecessary. If you want a natural choice, use one cup of vinegar instead of commercial brands. Your clothing will not smell like vinegar when dried.

Make sure not to over fill your washer. The clothing needs to be able to move back and forth to wash it. If it is too stuffed or compacted it can't get clean.

Double check the settings for:

- Proper water fill
- Water temperature
- Wash settings—a regular wash is normally fine for everything

When it is done, you can take it out and put it into the dryer on a regular dry mode. For towels and beddings, a higher heat setting is needed. If you have access to a clothesline, hang out your items. Let the sun dry your items, its FREE. Be sure to hang just the ends over the rope, you want most of the item to blow freely to dry thoroughly.

Tips for hanging clothes on clothesline:

In the warmer months, this is a very effective way to cut back on your utility bills. By utilizing the “free” warm air outside, you can have dried clothes in a matter of hours. It sometimes takes some getting used to the stiffened clothing and towels, but if you think about how much you are saving---sometimes it is worth it. The stiffness will go away.

I recommend getting all of your washing done in the early morning hours ready in baskets to be hung out when the sun comes up. Take all of it out and begin hanging on the line. If you are going to be doing this much of the time, I recommend getting something to put your basket on top of so that you don't have to bend as much when getting clothing out. You can keep your clothespins in a utility bag as to not lose them. Typically, depending upon the humidity, your laundry should be dried by early afternoon and ready to be brought in and put away. I like to take like items off and set them in the baskets. That way when we put them away in each person's room basket, it is much easier than having to sort them. Towels we fold right from the line to the basket.

Here are some tips on how to hang clothing properly:

Jeans/pants/skirts

Hang them by the waistline.

Shirts and blouses

Hang them upside down by the side seams. If you hang them on the top by the shoulders you will have puckers from the clothespins when dried.

Sheets

Hang folded over the clothesline

Towels

Pinch one end and hook to line with clothespin. Take your next towel and let it overlap the first one just a tad and then hook that corner with a clothespin. You can do this for washcloths too. It saves on using up all your clothespins and the amount of time to remove each pin when dry. Just be careful how much you let overhang together.

Undergarments and socks

If you don't want the whole world seeing these, hang them on the back of the line or in the middle row. Hang socks by the toes. You can put a pair together.

How to get stains out

There is nothing worse, than having a stain get on your favorite shirt and then ruining it. Prevention is best, but obviously that is impossible at times, but knowing what to do comes next.

Know that if you put the item through the dryer or wash in hot water, the stain WILL set. Try and take care of it immediately. If you spill something on your clothing, take it off and rub a little bit of laundry soap and water on the area. If it is a heavier duty item, like jeans, you can use a small brush to help scrub away the stain.

The sun, is a great natural stain remover. If you scrubbed the area and it is still there a little, go hang it directly in the sunshine. Typically it will bleach out the stain.

Here is a handy chart for reference for certain stains:

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| Chewing gum Adhesive tape | Apply ice to harden surface, scrape with a dull knife. |
| Blood | Rinse in cold water. A squirt of peroxide will usually remove the blood with ease. Test an area first. |
| Crayons or candle wax | Scrape off with a dull knife. Place stain between 2 clean paper towels and press with a warm iron. Change towels frequently to absorb more wax and to avoid transferring stain. |
| Ink | Sponge the area with alcohol, rinse thoroughly then wash. |
| Any other stains | Apply detergent, or even dish soap with water and try and scrub it out. Dish soap will help remove any grease type stains. |