

In Search Of The Perfect Fit

In terms of your image and attractiveness, just how important is it that your clothes fit properly?

Crucial, vital, essential, imperative, pivotal, necessary – I literally went to [Thesaurus.com](https://www.thesaurus.com) to find more synonyms to make this point.

To put it another way,

If you do everything else right, but completely miss the fit part, your outfit will be “meh...” AT BEST.

On the other hand,

Even if you completely mess up everything else, but master the perfect fit, you’ll still have a pretty solid look.

So yeah, its pretty damn important!

And with this guide, we’ll make sure you have it covered.

What is the perfect fit?

Even though fit in fashion and style is a more comprehensible topic than, say, choosing colors and color coordination, it’s not as straight-forward as it may appear from the first glance.

You see,

Every significant period of time has their own guidelines and best practices for what defines the perfect fit.

These guidelines are quite definitive and precise, i.e. there should be about a centimeter’s worth of space between your neck and a buttoned collar of a dress shirt or the length of a sleeve should be just long enough to end where your palm meets your arm.

But because there's something inherently rebellious about trying to be stylish and fashionable, fashion-forward men throughout history would look for spots where they could get an extra edge and create an even more attractive image by breaking the current rules in a way that is appealing and intriguing.

When they do it right and it works, over time other men start following them and it becomes a new trend. If this new trend sticks around long enough and converts enough followers, it becomes the new norm and then these same fashion-forward men look how they can leverage their style knowhow to once again break new ground in fashion.

A common example from recent history was the introduction and popularity of skinny and slim cuts in menswear. When this trend started and you could hardly find any skinny jeans made for men, I remember reading threads on men's style forums looking for tips on buying women's jeans to achieve the desired look.

(Yup, being fashion-forward is not easy and a risky endeavor on its own.)

But don't freak out, these cycles usually take years to really catch on, so no, you don't need to completely revamp your image every season. And no, you don't need to be fashion-forward to look sexy as a man (unless fashion is something you're naturally passionate about, then go for it).

We'll dig deeper into how you can leverage these trends to your advantage later in this section, but for now we need to grasp a few key takeaways:

- ✓ At any point in time, there are best practices for fit that you can follow and look amazing. These guidelines are here for you to fall back on whenever you're in doubt.
- ✓ These best practices are not set in stone and can be broken **if you know what you're doing**.
- ✓ But before you even consider breaking them, you do need to understand and master them in your outfits.
- ✓ Fit in general is about creating an interesting and visually flattering look for yourself.

The way clothes fit you, will shape how your physique and body composition looks to others. **So you can look more fit, more muscular and taller, or sloppy, out of shape and shorter than you are, simply by adjusting how clothes fit you.**

How Clothes Should Fit You

We'll start this guide by focusing on the best practices for how clothes should ideally fit you right now, to create visually flattering proportions for your body.

If you take just one thing from this whole guide, let this be it, because it will make a bigger impact on how attractive you look than any other single aspect of image.

Buttoned Shirts, Jumpers And Cardigans

What to look for:

- ✓ The shirt nicely but tightly presses around your chest, without stretching the buttons.
- ✓ Very little extra fabric around the torso, no “muffin top” or loose fabric when tucked in.
- ✓ Very little extra fabric around your hands, but also shouldn't restrict your movement.
- ✓ Sleeves reach to the point where your palms meet the arms.
- ✓ Tightly molds around your shoulders.
- ✓ In terms of length this varies from shirt to shirt: longer shirts that almost fully cover your buttocks are meant to be only worn tucked in, while an example here can be worn either tucked in or untucked.



Skinny cut



When layering with cardigans and jumpers main focus should be avoiding loose fabric around torso or it will look like you have a beer gut

T-Shirts, Henley Shirts And Long-Sleeved Shirts

What to look for:

- ✓ The shirt should tightly and firmly mold along your chest and shoulders.
- ✓ Very little extra to no fabric around your arms (if your arms are underdeveloped there will probably be some extra fabric. Time to start hitting the gym).
- ✓ The shirt visually shapes your torso (if it starts looking like you have “tires” around your torso, it’s too tight). The exact tightness will vary based on the cut and you can see in the examples below how differently my physique appears based on that cut even though all photos were taken in the same afternoon.
- ✓ Length-wise, the shirt should end below your belt line.



Regular cut



Slim cut



Muscle fit

Jeans And Trousers

What to look for:

- ✓ The fabric firmly molds around your buttocks and thighs (it should be fairly difficult to put a phone or a thick wallet into your pockets).
- ✓ Next to no extra fabric around the thighs.
- ✓ The fit around your calves will depend on the cut, so it's okay if it's a bit more relaxed there.
- ✓ In terms of length, when wearing shoes there shouldn't be any unnecessary folds forming while standing still.



Slim cut



Skinny cut



Skinny cut dress chinos

Quick note on the examples: I have skinny legs and if I tried to "hide" it with looser cuts (such as regular) it would actually only emphasize the problem as I wouldn't be able to "fill" them up. It's a common mistake.

Blazers

What to look for:

- ✓ Blazer tightly presses against your shoulders.
- ✓ Very little extra fabric around your hands.
- ✓ Length of the blazer ends just below the belt line.
- ✓ When buttoned, the blazer firmly presses against your torso.



Regular cut

Jackets And Coats

What to look for:

- ✓ Firmly molds around your shoulders and chest (if zipped/buttoned up).
- ✓ Very little extra fabric around hands.
- ✓ Fairly tight around your torso.
- ✓ Coats should form a slight hourglass form.
- ✓ Jacket length can vary, but usually designs that meet the points above will be quite short and end around your belt line.
- ✓ In terms of coat length, again there's no "ideal" length and depends on factors like the rest of your outfit and your height.



Designer cut

What Is Anti-Fit And How You Can Use It

Now,

If you've been following the recent trends in menswear you might find yourself thinking, "then how do longline, and relaxed, oversized clothes play into these guidelines?" After all, by design they're meant to break the rules of what we understand to be a good fit.

This is where the concept of "Anti-Fit" comes into play.

Anti-fit as a term originated with jeans, but this rebellion against fashion rules is prevalent with all types of clothing: from t-shirts to jeans to outerwear. The whole idea behind it is that you consciously and purposefully introduce clothes that don't follow the current standard of what's typically acceptable.

A Case For Anti-Fit Clothes

If executed just right, anti-fit clothes will make your image cooler, trendier, more casual and will give you an aura of devil-may-care rebelliousness.

Not necessarily a great combination for someone going for a Sharp or Smart - Casual look, but can be very effective on those who prefer the ever popular bad boy look.

Notice the key words are "if executed just right" because if you just put on some oversized clothes without much thought, you'll end up looking sloppy and out of shape, not cool and stylish.

Another important point is that anti-fit clothes will usually still adhere to some of the basics of good fit. For instance, certain longline tees look their best when they hug the shape of the shoulders nicely - just like regular tees.

The point is that showing off your physique in the best way possible is still going to be important. Like I said, it must be "executed just right" and some guys are better off not bothering because good regular standards for fits will look superb anyway.

So before we cover how you can incorporate anti-fit clothing into your outfits, we first need to discuss who can pull them off and who should stay away at all costs.

Who Should Consider Adding Anti-Fit Clothes And Who Should Avoid Them

From seeing way too many guys crash and burn with this strategy, the list of who should and who shouldn't wear anti-fit items is surprisingly simple:

When You Should Avoid Anti-Fit Items:

- × **If you're below average in height** – oversized clothes will make you look shorter, so you need to have enough baseline height to afford losing a few centimeters visually.
- × **If you prefer sharper, more elegant styles** – anti-fit is for the rebels, the men who disdain traditional rules and couldn't care less if someone thinks they look inappropriate.
- × **If you're extremely skinny** – even though you don't need to be the size of a strongman, anti-fit clothes will only emphasize skinny physiques in an unflattering way.
- × **If you have a beer gut to hide** – it might seem that more relaxed, oversized clothes should fit bigger guys well, but in reality they just emphasize the image of someone who wants and needs to hide his physique, it looks sloppy overall.

If you fall into any of these categories, your best bet is to practice the guidelines of a great fit noted above – your physique will look the most flattering as long as you stick with them.

Who Can Pull Off Anti-Fit Clothes

As you see, when we take away all the guys who can't or shouldn't wear anti-fit clothes, there's not a lot of occasions left to actually wear them.

Here's who's left,

- ✓ If you are above average in height (preferably 6+ ft.)
- ✓ Have a lean and muscular physique
- ✓ Prefer Edgy or Elegant – Edgy images and want the aura of nonchalance

Then you are a prime candidate for pulling off anti-fit clothing with style!

How To Wear Anti-Fit Clothes

Buttoned shirts

Simply don't. The most relaxed cut you should ever pick on a buttoned shirt is a regular cut, and that's for linen shirts to wear during summer for extra ventilation and keeping cool.

True anti-fit on buttoned shirts is almost never the best option (I'd say 100% never, but I'm sure there's a 1-in-a-1000 exception where it might work, I just can't think of any.)

Tees

Longline tees are one of the best ways to introduce anti-fit clothes into your wardrobe. The key to making it work is to not make it your uppermost layer.

In practice this means that if you wear a long-line tee you should also aim to wear a tighter cut jacket on top (one that follows the guidelines of a traditional perfect fit).

This way you'll have the cool, edgy vibe from the longline tee, but the jacket on top will make sure your shoulders are nicely defined and will frame your torso so it doesn't look like you're hiding a beer gut.

It doesn't mean that you always must be wearing a jacket with a longline tee, but you should understand that when you don't you will look a lot less impressive.

One exception to this are guys with truly godlike physiques, I mean when you look like you just came back from a photoshoot for Men's Fitness.

In that case, even an anti-fit tee won't be able to deny how great your physique is, but it will make it look like you're consciously playing it down and that can be a very attractive look (a sort of anti "try-hard" image).

Knitwear

The best example here would be a longline cardigan (likely buttonless and/or hooded).

First things first,

You don't want to combine anti-fit knitwear with anti-fit tees – it will just look like you raided your dad's closet, a very sloppy and unflattering look. Instead, look for a traditionally well-fitting tee (preferably V-neck or Scoop neck).

Secondly, as with tees, the best looking combination will include a well-fitting, tight jacket on top and whenever possible should be worn with the jacket unzipped.

That said, in contrast to anti-fit tees, it's not that big of a deal if a longline cardigan is your uppermost layer as long as it's cut nice and tight around the shoulders. A fitting tee will make sure that your lean torso is clearly noticeable.

As for other types of anti-fit knitwear, such as oversized (but not longline) cardigans and jumpers – I would highly advise staying away from them. Simply put they would negate any and all hard work you put in the gym.

Outerwear

Technically doable, but I would highly recommend against it. It's almost never a good idea to go for anything looser than a regular cut, and even then you should only go for it in colder seasons when you need to accommodate multiple layers underneath.

Jeans And Chinos

I'm a big advocate of tightly fitting trousers, whether that's jeans or chinos. In practice this means that in nearly all situations your best bet is to stick with slim and/or skinny cuts.

But that said,

When it comes to anti-fit there's a place for regular and relaxed cut jeans in our wardrobe.

Namely, for Edgy and/or Rugged-Masculine images when (because of the colder weather) you're wearing outerwear with room for multiple layers, and thus wearing slim/skinny trousers would create too much of a contrast between the proportions of your upper and lower body.

In other words, if you need to wear regular cut outerwear, you're going for an Edgy or Rugged - Masculine image and looking to maintain proper proportions.

Note: If you have boots that you will be tucking your jeans into, going for anti-fit jeans that have extra room around your thighs but then slightly narrow around the ankles to be suitable for tucking into boots can be a good idea.

What About Short Cut?

Even though short cut is not usually associated with anti-fit, it does fit the description – a cut that deliberately breaks the rules of what is traditionally considered to be good fit – and so it deserves to be discussed.

Especially since its such a great choice for many men.

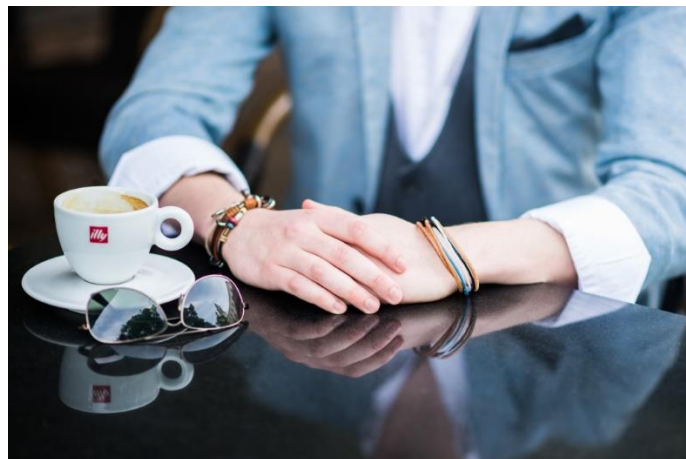
Being most popular with outerwear – blazers, jackets, coats – short cut simply means that the garment’s length is shorter than usual, its sleeves will be shorter and the garment itself often won’t last pass the belt line.

Typically short cuts are cut close to the body (the equivalent of a slim cut), and in turn they are simply godsend for guys of average or below average height because picking outerwear in a short cut is one of the easiest ways to appear taller.

Having shorter sleeves, this cut also provides a great opportunity to naturally showcase your hand accessories.

Very tall guys (6’ 3”+) should generally avoid short cuts as it will look like they are wearing something they had outgrown.

Other than the length (including sleeves), other guidelines for great fit are the same for short cut as for regular and slim cuts.



Two Ways To Find The Perfect Fit

But knowing how clothes should fit is just half the battle, we also need to be able to find these elusive perfectly fitting clothes.

And first things first, please understand that you should be shamelessly and unapologetically picky about fit on clothes. No matter how good looking a piece of clothing is, if it doesn't fit it needs to go.

With that in mind, there are two ways to go about this:

- ✓ **Experiment with brands to find one that's standards for cut works with your physique**

Brands tend to have different standards for their cuts, for example a pair of slim fit jeans from Levi's will look quite different than a slim fit pair from Nudie or AllSaints, even if they are in the same size.

It's the same with shirts and other clothes too.

What this means in practice is that it's a good idea to allocate some time to go out shopping for brands. If you're lucky enough, you can eventually find a brand whose standards for fit works well with your physique and its clothes fit you just right off the shelf, without any need for further alterations.

Unfortunately, I can't help you much with this task because it literally involves going out to stores and trying out clothes. I know it can be a hassle if you're not a fan of shopping, but doing this once and finding the right brands will save you A LOT of time and frustration in the future.

One thing I would recommend is starting with big clothing stores, such as Nordstrom, that sell menswear from multiple brands – it's the easiest and fastest way to try out multiple brands and see which ones work with your physique best.

- ✓ **Getting clothes altered to fit you just right**

But what about those that don't have a "standard" physique: guys that are shorter, taller, have wider shoulders, longer/shorter arms or simply a small beer gut to deal with – how do you find clothes that fit then?

Well my dear friend, your best bet is to find clothes that almost fit and get them tailored.

Then downside here is that yes, it will take a bit more effort and money to find the perfect fit.

The upside is that as long as you follow the recommendations here, the fit on your clothes will be better than for guys who have a “standard physique” and wear clothes right off the shelf – you just can’t beat the personal touch.

Cheat Sheet To Getting Clothes Tailored

We’ll get to the specifics of what clothes can be altered and how, but before that let me stress a couple of points:

- ✓ **First, focus on finding a good tailor**

Just like with getting a great haircut, an expert in his craft will work magic and do the seemingly impossible, while an incompetent professional will struggle with even the basic tasks.

And when it comes to tailoring, the last thing you want to do is buy an expensive item that requires adjustments only to see it ruined and made unwearable by an incompetent tailor.

To find a good local tailor, your best bet is feedback from his other clients. Or, in other words, word of mouth and online reviews.

Given that these days almost everything is digitized and even small businesses have some sort of presence online, you should be able to find reviews for a particular tailor.

If you live in a small town, word of mouth can be even more powerful as people who got burned by a bad tailor won’t shy away from saying so.

Alternatively, if you really can’t find any reviews, visit for a consultation, discuss what can be done and how he plans on doing it (you’ll have your cheat sheet to make sure he or she is not blowing smoke).

Also, if you're going in "blind" (as in without any recommendations), I would first experiment with getting a cheaper, less important piece of clothing tailored first to make sure the quality is there before bringing him your favorite pieces of clothing.

- ✓ **Secondly, when shopping for clothes, look for items that come closest to resembling the perfect fit so the least amount of alterations are required**

You'll learn what can and cannot be done with certain items clothing in just a second, but I want to share a sort of rule of thumb when it comes to getting clothes tailored:

- ✓ For the upper body, anything that requires working with shoulders should not be done. Therefore, first and foremost, when shopping for clothes pay attention to the shoulders.
- ✓ For chinos, small waist alterations can be made and length can be adjusted but trying to alter the cut itself (i.e. make it slim fit) is almost never worth it.
- ✓ For jeans, given the amount of cuts and sizes available, the only thing I would recommend to tailor on jeans is their length.

Use these tips to quickly discard clothes that don't fit you and determine if the items are even tailorable.

By the way, when I say that something cannot be tailored, it simply means that it's extremely risky and hardly worth it – technically almost anything can be tailored and reconstructed, it's just that in most cases it would be very expensive and even then chances are the result would end up unwearable.

So now, what can and what cannot be tailored:

Buttoned shirts

Can be adjusted:

- ✓ Collars can be replaced
- ✓ Sleeves can be shortened
- ✓ Sides taken in (made slimmer)
- ✓ Adding darts (a “dart” is an overlapped piece of fabric / pinched-in seam on a garment to bring in its dimensions.)
- ✓ Replace cuff

Not worth it:

- × Letting sides out (made looser)
- × Lengthen sleeves
- × Lengthen shirt

Tees

Can be adjusted:

- ✓ Can be tightened

Not worth it:

- × Given the low cost of a typical t-shirt, making any alterations (including tightening) will usually cost more than a tee itself.

Knitwear

Note: any alterations to knitwear are delicate and require a splendid tailor to do it right, also not all knitwear can be altered.

Can be adjusted:

- ✓ Sleeves can be shortened
- ✓ Sides taken in (made slimmer)
- ✓ Adding darts

Not worth it:

- × Any lengthening or loosening
- × Any alterations to synthetic and wool-synthetic blends
- × Any alterations to knitwear with heavy detailing such as pockets, emblems, etc.

Blazers & Coats

Can be adjusted:

- ✓ Lowering / raising collar
- ✓ Taking in / letting out side seams (tightening / loosening the fit)
- ✓ Taking in / letting out center seam (tightening / loosening the fit)
- ✓ Moving buttons
- ✓ Shortening / lengthening sleeves
- ✓ Closing vents
- ✓ Shorten sleeve from shoulder
- ✓ Shorten collar
- ✓ Padding shoulders
- ✓ Reducing chest

Not worth it:

- × Reducing shoulder points
- × Rotating sleeves
- × Alter lapels
- × Change / remove pockets
- × Shorten jacket (would ruin the proportions)

Note on leather jackets:

Technically, most of the same alterations made to blazers and coats can be made to leather jackets,

BUT!

Given that leather is a completely different fabric to work with than say, cotton, it requires special knowhow and even equipment, so before even considering it you will need to find someone who specializes working with leather.

On top of that, because leather jackets usually have way more detailing (zippers, quilting, ribbing, pockets, etc., etc.) every situation is unique so my best recommendation is to consult with a tailor who specializes in leather.

Jeans

Can be adjusted:

- ✓ Length made shorter
- ✓ Tapering (made tighter)

Not worth it:

- × Adjusting waist (can be done but rarely looks good as the pockets get too close to each other)
- × Increasing length
- × Re-adjusting the cut (i.e. going from regular cut to slim cut)

Chinos / Dress trousers

Can be adjusted:

- ✓ Shorter / lengthen inseam
- ✓ Waist In / Out
- ✓ Taper legs

Not worth it:

- × Lower waistband
- × Re-adjusting the cut (i.e. going from regular cut to slim cut. Can be done but usually will cost more than a new pair)

These of course are not the only alterations that a skilled tailor can make and the specific changes can vary based on the item at hand, but this quick cheat sheet will be helpful when evaluating whether a piece of clothing that doesn't fit you just right is worth keeping (or buying) or whether it's a lost cause.

I also purposefully avoided adding prices, as they will vary greatly from the country you live in and based on the tailor's experience.

Don't Forget To Be Smart

In this section I really tried to stress how important the right fit on clothes can be to your image and how attractive you look.

And yet there's one thing that's worse than imperfect fit and that's getting overwhelmed and doing nothing!

I want to remind you that putting in the effort to find great looking clothes, especially great fitting clothes, can make an incredible impact on your image. The process has been simplified for you, so that will make it a bit easier when shopping.

Also,

I want to give you tools to be able to really take your image to the next level, but at the same time you need to remember to simply stay smart.

A good example of staying smart would be if you're currently in progress of losing weight / gaining muscle mass; it wouldn't make sense to get your clothes re-tailored every time you lose a few pounds, nor would buying an expensive dress shirt that fits you perfectly right if you plan on adding an inch to your shoulders in the next few months.

For example,

This spring I bought one of the most expensive items of clothing I've ever owned – a superb biker leather jacket – it's "designer fit" and I went a full size higher than what constitutes a perfect fit.

Why did I do that?

Because I'm adamant on adding ~9-10 kg (~20 pounds) of muscle mass to my physique, and with an expensive purchase like a quality leather jacket, I want to wear it for years to come.

(And yes, it's the same jacket that you just saw in the examples. From the time of purchase it required me to gain 4-5 kg to my physique so I can showcase it as an example of solid fit and it will look even better with another 4-5 kg to my frame!)

I sacrificed raw aesthetics in the short-term, but not only will it be worth it in the long run, having this amazing jacket motivates me even more to stick with the plan and gain that muscle.

After all,

Having a sexy image means that it works in the real world and empowers your life, not encumbers it.