

In Fashion: Top dress tips for men during the holidays

by Sharon_Mosley

Who better to give guys tips on dressing for this holiday season, but the editor of a popular men's style magazine, Matthew Edelstein. As a contributor to the new "Details Men's Style Manual" (Gotham; \$30), Edelstein keeps hundreds of thousands of men up-to-date on the most current trends and tips for looking sharp, including dressing for the holiday season, when every special occasion seems to be all about wearing black tie.

THE RIGHT FIT - Created by the editors of 'Details' magazine, the 'Details Men's Style Manual' provides tips on everything from how to dress for work to how to find the perfect dress shirt — even the right underwear. CNS Photo courtesy of 'Details Men's Style Manual'. "Black tie dressing is about elegance and confidence," says Edelstein. "Evening dress is absolutely not the place to make a statement. Keep it simple and refined when wearing black tie."

Here are Edelstein's tips for wearing the ultimate evening attire - a tuxedo:

One - The Fit

"It's so important when wearing a tuxedo that it fits well. If possible, avoid renting a tuxedo and invest in one that actually fits you. Single-breasted or double-breasted is a personal choice. Try both styles on and decide what is most flattering to your body type. In my opinion, younger men should wear single-breasted tuxedos."

Two - The Jacket Collar

"Tuxedo jackets come in a variety of collars. Just like any suit, choose a collar that flatters your face shape and build. Single-breasted tuxedos have traditionally come with a shawl collar, but you can also find them with a notch or a peak lapel."

Three - The Tie

"Never wear anything but a black tie. Evening dressing is not the place for personal style. You don't want to stand out in the crowd at a black tie function. Today we have the choice of a bow tie or a straight tie. A bow tie is dressier and more classic, and a straight tie is a bit younger and more modern.

"What tie you wear is a personal choice. Always wear a bow tie that needs to be tied. There's nothing more tacky than a pre-tied bow tie. Take the time and learn how to tie one. It's easy once you get the hang of it. Plus, it looks great untied at the after party!"

Four - The Shirt

"You have some options here. The most classic is a bib-front or pleated tuxedo shirt. Another option is a classic white dress shirt. It should have French cuffs and be refined enough to wear to an evening event. That means well laundered and pressed, with no stains. Avoid at all costs any kind of ruffled or colored shirt. Wear one of those and you will definitely look like you're on your way to the Pretty in Pink prom."

Five - The Vest or Cummerbund

"A vest or cummerbund can be worn under a single-breasted tuxedo. Nothing but a shirt should be worn under a double-breasted tuxedo. Remember that pleats on the cummerbund should always face up. They were designed to hold opera tickets.

"In my personal life, I never wear a cummerbund or vest. I think that they look old-fashioned and bulky. If you decide that you cannot bear to be without one, then please make sure that the vest is white or black and the cummerbund is black. Absolutely no other options allowed."

Six - The Studs and Cuff links

"Some tuxedo shirts require shirt studs which take the place of buttons. Generally all evening shirts have French cuffs which do require cuff links. If you have exquisite taste and a cache of family heirlooms then by all means have fun with your studs and cuff links. Otherwise, keep it simple and classic."

Seven - The Pants

"Your tuxedo pants should be perfectly fit to your body the same way any suit pants would be. It is OK if they have a slightly shorter break than your standard trousers have."

Eight - The White Dinner Jacket

"A white dinner jacket is appropriate at a function in a warm climate. It can look very 'old-Hollywood' if worn in the right way. You will get attention when you wear a jacket like this, so it's all about having the confidence to pull it off. Channel your inner Clark Gable and you'll be fine."

Nine - The Socks

"There is nothing more un-chic than seeing a man wearing casual socks with a tuxedo, even if they are black. It is not OK to wear anything but the most dressy black socks. I promise you that people will notice your socks when you sit down and cross your legs. It seems like a small thing, but it will make or break your tuxedo. No patterned socks. Not ever."

Ten - The Shoes

"One cannot wear a day shoe to an evening event. It's just gauche and people will notice. A pair of black lace-up, patent leather shoes is appropriate to wear with a tuxedo. Another option is a slip-on in silk, velvet or patent leather. If you're not sure, or a novice black tie dresser, stick with lace-ups. You can't go wrong with those."

Sharon Mosley is a former fashion editor of the Arkansas Gazette in Little Rock and executive director of the Fashion Editors and Reporters Association.

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