

7 Common Mistakes Men Make Buying

CUSTOM CLOTHING

Presented by **Real Men Real Style**



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So have fun and learn to dress sharp!

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Introduction

So you're considering buying custom clothing - Congratulations!

A tailored suit, shirt, or coat can be one of the best investments a man makes.

Done right, a good piece of tailored clothing will last for years or even decades, fit like a dream, and make the wearer look great.

There are, however, pitfalls that even an experienced clothing buyer can stumble into along the way to a great custom outfit.

USE this guide to learn the ins and outs of custom clothing from the pros!

The advice in this work is brought to you by me, Antonio Centeno, the owner of A Tailored Suit and men's style resource Real Men Real Style.

My first-hand experience on both sides of the custom clothing buying experience and years as a men's fashion expert have uniquely placed me to guide you past the seven major mistakes men make when buying custom clothing.

Sincerely



Antonio Centeno
Founder, Real Men Real Style



Mistake #1: The Rush Job

Buying Too Much Too Quickly.

This is going to sound like crazy talk coming from a guy who sells package deals on custom clothing, but here it is: you don't have to buy the whole wardrobe at once.

In fact, you basically can't buy an entire wardrobe at once, not and expect it to all go well together and fit you well.

The biggest mistake, the number one error a guy can make, when he decides "yes, I'm going to take the plunge; I am going to be a custom clothing man from here on" is to run right out and order half a dozen suits and a dozen shirts from the same tailor.

There are a couple reasons this is a bad idea: number one, it's letting your tastes at a single moment in time shape the bulk of your wardrobe. Tastes change and sensibilities develop over time.



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You don't want to sink a big pile of money into one look, and then realize a year later that you hate wearing the bulk of your clothing options.

The number two reason to avoid this mistake is that it frontloads your tailor with the bulk of the work he's ever going to do for you at the time when he's least familiar with your measurements and your personal tastes.

Start with a few pieces and give your tailor detailed feedback on what you like and don't like about those before ordering more clothing. The finished product will be that much better for it.



Want to know how to communicate with your tailor? [Here's a quick video.](#)

None of that is to say you should avoid package deals. A suit and a couple of shirts, maybe even two or three suits and an overcoat and a handful of shirts? That's fine for a starting place.

It's a good balance between giving your tastes and your relationship with your tailor time to develop, but also having a decent variety of sharp, custom-tailored looks available right out of the starting gate.

But if you had any thoughts of throwing everything out and starting all over with an entirely hand-tailored wardrobe bought all at once, think again.

It's not the way to do it, even for the lucky few that could afford a whole new custom tailored wardrobe cash on the barrel.

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Mistake #2: Lost in the Woods

Not Understanding the Custom Process

While we're on the subject of cash, it's worth having a decent idea what you're getting into in terms of the process and the costs of custom tailoring.

Individual dollar prices are going to vary widely depending on the skill of the tailor, the level of customization, local economic conditions, and (often more than any other factor) the cost of the raw cloth used.

Custom tailoring can be broadly broken down into two categories:

1. Made To Measure
2. Bespoke

Made to measure tailoring uses an existing pattern adjusted to an individual's measurements.

Other than changing the measurements, and sometimes offering a selection of cloths, the tailor is essentially making the same garment over and over again.

That reduces effort - and cost - but also limits the customization, and typically only adjusts the fit to a half-dozen to a dozen measurements.

Bespoke tailoring is customized from scratch.

The tailor may build most of his garments along the same lines, of course, but the details of the garment are individually tailored, and the tailor will likely use dozens or even hundreds of physical measurement to determine the size and proportion of the garment.



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While it's not a given, bespoke tailors also typically offer a wider selection of fabrics and materials, all the way down to the suit lining or the button threads.

Unsurprisingly, bespoke tailoring is substantially more expensive than made to measure.

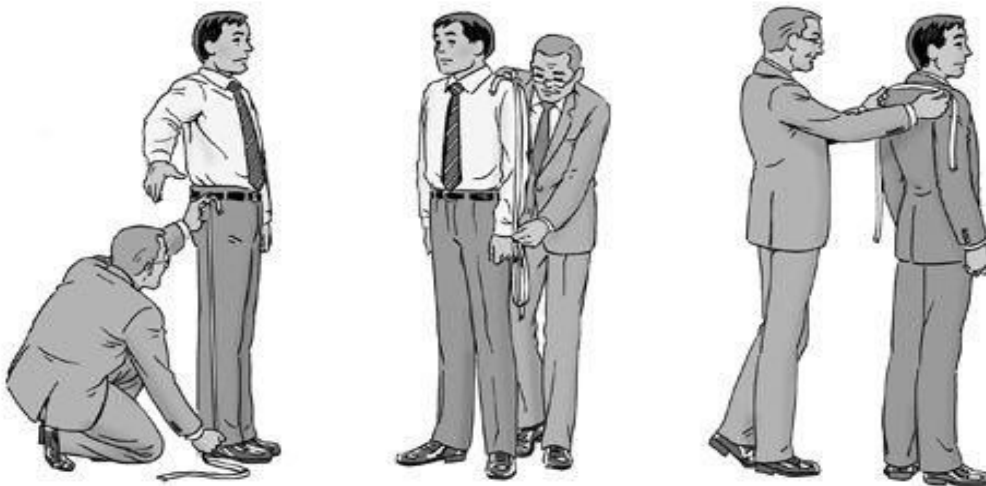
A bespoke garment also requires more input from the customer, and will take longer to complete. (Any traveling "overnight custom shirts/suits/etc." operation will almost certainly be made to measure - there isn't time for a true bespoke experience in a hotel lobby).

If you're new to custom tailoring, made to measure isn't a bad starting place. The result is still going to be customized for you, giving a much better look and fit than even an adjusted off the rack garment.

For the best visual and physical results, bespoke will always be the way to go, but the buyer should come prepared with a firm idea of exactly what he wants, and an understanding that the process will involve multiple measurements, plenty of input from both tailor and customer, lengthy production times, and of course a higher price tag.



What do you get from buying custom clothing? [Click here](#) to see.



Mistake #3: Getting Fancy

Not Buying Simple Classic Styles First.

Customization can get overwhelming - and intoxicating.

When you've got a skilled professional on board to make you literally anything you want to wear, there's going to be a temptation to get pretty wild with it.

Something that's worth remembering is that well-made custom clothing lasts. It's not a short-term investment.



Assuming your body doesn't change shape too dramatically, you could easily be wearing the same shirt for years; the same suit for decades.

That means you don't want to get too experimental or trend-driven, unless you've got the budget and the inclination to keep buying new custom clothes on a regular basis.

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Start out with a couple of timeless classics so that you'll always have them in the closet, high-quality and fitted just for you.

Some good starting pieces for the first-time custom clothing buyer might include:

- 2-3 dress shirts in solids and light patterns, inc. a crisp white shirt
- Charcoal gray or navy blue business suit
- Lighter gray flannel suit for business-casual and social wear
- A navy or camel hair blazer
- Corduroy sports jacket

These are all pieces of menswear that just about anyone can find a use for. They've stood the test of time.

You won't necessarily look like you're setting the latest fashion trend in them, but you'll always be able to at least look respectable in them.

Starting with those timeless classics is good because it guarantees a usable end product your first time through the custom tailoring process.

It's worth applying this rule not just to styles, but also to fabrics: don't start off with luxury or exotic fabrics your first time through with a custom tailored.

Stick to simple three-weather wools, cotton shirts, and the like, rather than going straight for the vicuna or the triple-digit ultra-ultra-ultra-fines.

Your wardrobe will come out a little less flashy, but much more functional.

Further down the road, if you decide you like your tailor and his work, you can start investing in some more unique pieces or rarer fabrics.

Are You Ready to Take Action?
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Mistake #4: Giving the Tailor a Pass

Not Negotiating or Interviewing.

Once again, this is going to sound crazy coming from a professional tailor, but here it is: don't settle for the first custom tailor you find!

Shop around a bit. Compare cloth options, clothing styles, customer service, and yes, price - although that last is probably not what you want to base your decision on.

Custom tailoring isn't retail shopping. You're essentially commissioning a piece of custom craftsmanship. And in this case, it's craftsmanship that you're going to display on your body, so you've got extra incentive to get exactly the product you want.

Don't give your tailor the benefit of the doubt. Look at several, and pitch them all on a garment you might potentially want made. Sound them out on the cut you're looking for.

Ask what fabrics they have available. Inquire what customizations they make in addition to fit - can you add an extra pocket, for example, or have the button stance moved higher or lower?

Haggle a bit, if you're planning on dropping serious money.

There's no harm in pitching a basic order (a simple suit, say), and then suggesting that you might be willing to invest in a spare set of trousers and an additional sports jacket if the tailor throws in a custom shirt or two.

Not every tailor negotiates (although more will than won't, especially if you're looking outside North America and the UK), but how they react gives you a good sense of how flexible and engaged the tailor is.

Remember that no matter how good a price you find, you'll still be looking at a serious chunk of money.

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Chasing the lowest price isn't the way to find a custom tailor.

You don't want to pay "just" \$450 for a so-so suit when you could have a perfect suit for \$1000.

Yeah, you saved money, but the product you got is only barely worth the money you paid, as opposed to something that would have been well worth what you paid and then some.

It's worth shopping around for tailors - and shopping critically. Say "no thanks" as often as you need to.

Ideally, you want to find someone who carries fabrics you like, routinely produces pieces in the styles you like, and will be willing to work with you on customization, multiple fittings, and satisfaction guarantees.

That's a lot to ask of a tailor. Not everyone does. Be sure you do.



Mistake #5: Trying the New Clothes On Once

Here's something tailors don't like to admit: even the most detailed measurements aren't precise.

They can get very close. But numbers on paper are still only going to be an approximation of the body the clothing eventually has to go on.

Expect that your custom tailored clothing will require adjustments after the first version is "finished." Count on it, in fact.

Typically, you'll be measured in detail once, and then the tailor will make your clothing. After that, you come in, try the clothing on, discuss the fit, and have it adjusted as needed.



Check ahead of time and make sure your tailor is willing to repeat that last step as many times as necessary.

This alone is a good reason to choose - or not choose - a tailor; see our previous point on not giving tailors a pass on customer service and adjustments.

Once you've put the first version on and taken care of any immediately obvious adjustments, take it home and wear it around for a while.

Try it on that day; try it on the next day. Wear it at different times and in different temperatures. Try the clothing out at different levels of physical activity. Practically sleep in it. Then go back and tell your tailor what's working and what's not.

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If you found a part that catches when you move, or a cuff that rides up when you sit, or anything else that isn't entirely perfect - talk to your tailor about it! Get it fixed. That's what custom clothing is all about.

If you pass this step up after the first fitting, it could be weeks until the clothing gets a real "trial by fire" out and about in the living, breathing world.

That's not when you want to notice problems.



Spend some serious time trying the clothing on as soon as you get it, and make sure your tailor is willing to make some final tweaks after a few days of test-wear.

Mistake #6: Missing the Break-Even

Not Wearing the New Clothes Enough.

What is good clothing really worth?

That's not entirely a philosophical question. You'll know, at the very least, what you paid for a finished piece of custom clothing.

Ideally, you should be wearing your custom clothing (and anything you buy, for that matter) often enough to "break even" on that price.

Think of it in terms of dollars per outing. Wear a \$1000 suit to a single gala event, and that evening of looking good cost you \$1000. But if you wear it to the gala and the wedding, it only cost you \$500 to look good at each one. And so on, divided by however many useful wears you get out of your piece of clothing.

This is where custom clothing - if it's selected wisely - starts to earn its high price tag. Say you're a trial lawyer with a decent number of court appearances every year.



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You could buy a mass-market, off the rack generic business suit for maybe \$250 on sale. That'd have you looking at least passable, and it'll probably last you two or three years.

Alternatively, you could have a tailor hand-make you a bespoke suit from high-quality materials for \$1000. If it lasts a decade, and you wear it as often as you would have that cheaper, less sharp-looking suit, you've broken even on cost alone, and you've looked better the whole time.

That said, if you're not using your custom clothing regularly, it's going to take you a long, long time you hit that break-even point. That's an argument for being careful what you buy, and than you necessarily need to in a lot of situations.

Go ahead and break the suit out from time to time even when you could have gotten away with a blazer and slacks. Wear the custom dress shirt casually untucked with some jeans. Put the wardrobe to use. Don't make the mistake of tucking your best clothing away in a sealed bag for most of the year and only dusting it off for the most important occasions.

Clothing was meant to be worn. If your tailor did his job right (and if you're cleaning the clothes and doing preventive maintenance as needed), your custom-made items should hold up to plenty of hard wear.



Put them on your body where you belong. Otherwise, the money you spent is just hanging in the closet unused.

This, incidentally, is another reason to only buy a few pieces at a time, and to stick to classic styles at the start - you don't want to overload your wardrobe with so many flashy new pieces that each one only gets worn a couple of times.

Start out with a couple really great, really versatile pieces and put them through their paces hard. It'll tell you a lot about the quality of your tailor's work, and it'll get you to that break-even point much more quickly.

Mistake #7: Forgetting to Upgrade Accessories

With a few oddball exceptions, no custom tailor will be providing your entire wardrobe.

Shirts, suits, jackets, trousers, and overcoats, yes. Those are the bread and butter of your modern tailor (and, if we're being honest, quite a few long-dead tailors, too - the job hasn't changed all that much over the years).

You'll even find people custom-making things like jeans and tight-fitting henley shirts, long-sleeved T-shirts, even plain old athletic tees, especially for young, fashion-conscious consumers with lots of money to spare (think the movie and music industries).

But for the most part, you'll only be wearing custom clothing for your "core" items: your trousers and whatever sort of jacket you're wearing, and maybe your shirt. That means the rest is completely up to your discretion - and that's where a lot of people stumble.

Make sure you're upgrading the rest of your wardrobe to look sharp if you're spending money on custom clothing. It doesn't make sense to drop \$1000 on a suit and then wear it with a ratty pair of trainers (unless, of course, that's the look you're going for, because there is a certain rock star appeal to a dark suit and colored canvas sneakers in the right setting).

Plan on pairing custom clothing, for the most part, with good leather shoes and belts, with long wool or cotton overcoats, and with accents like pocket squares and wristwatches. You need those finishing touches to complement the elegance of a perfect fit.

Conclusion: Spend Wisely, Spend Freely

For the first-timer, custom tailoring can seem like an impenetrable world of moneyed elites. But in reality, it's a worthwhile and accessible investment for most people, rich or poor.

Choose your first forays carefully. Shop around for a good tailor, and start with one or two pieces along timeless, classic lines.

Have a clear idea what you want, and don't be afraid to pay a decent chunk of money once you find the man (or woman) who's going to be able to produce it for you.

Be bold but also be wise. Remember that not all custom clothing is good clothing, and that even the best fit in the world won't make you happy with a piece that doesn't fit your personal style or your life needs.

Buy something that's going to be one of the most-used pieces in your wardrobe, and then get out there and use it.

Because at the end of the day, that's what custom tailored clothing is all about: giving you something you'll use, over and over again, long past the point where a cheaper, off the rack option would have given out.

- The End -

...or is it just the **beginning of your style journey?**

[Click here to check out my other free eBooks.](#)



See you on the other side!