THE GUIDE

to

MEN’S SUITS.

HOW TO BUY THE PERFECT OFF THE PEG SUIT
OBJECTIVES

The objective of this guide is simple; To banish the myths and confusion away from buying an off the peg suit.

This is unbelievably simple to do when you know what to look for in a suit. A man in a badly fitted suit is an all too common sight to see, especially in the big cities of the world where the suit is a very important garment. This issue of bad fit is wide spread & could be a work suit, a casual suit or even a funeral suit, no matter what the occasion is your suit should make you look your best.

By the end of this guide you’ll know exactly what you should be looking for

Here’s what this guide will help you do;

1. Understand what a suit does for your image
   Doing what other clothes don’t.

2. Understand your best fit
   This will be done using a very simple calculation.

3. Understand the best colours
   The best colour for you & the occasion.

4. Understand the best fabrics & patterns
   Make the most out of the subtleties.
THE 3 GOLDEN RULES

For a long time the suit has been the most exquisite & stylish item of a man’s wardrobe and will continue to be so for a long time yet. This is so because the suit, consisting of two garments made of identical cloth, is the most effective way to pronounce a man’s best features, to make a man look his most naturally attractive.

To achieve the most natural look and to pronounce a man’s most attractive features tailors worldwide recognise the need to achieve three simple aims when cutting & producing a suit. These are the three golden rules;

1. To give the appearance of a slim waist
2. To make the chest appear wider than the waist
3. To make the legs of the wearer appear longer.

By following these three rules the wearer will appear taller, slimmer and naturally attractive. When we say naturally attractive this takes into account some very simple principles; proportion, balance and scale.

A man’s proportion refers to the equality of the measurement between the upper torso (from the waistline to the top of the head) and the length of the legs (the waistline down to the toes) this is decided by the cut of the garments. Balance refers to the notion that ‘the man is wearing the suit’ rather than, ‘the suit is wearing the man’ and takes into account the colour of the suit. Scale refers to the pattern on the cloth and the detailing. The detailing might be very fine or very bold, this is dependent on the wearer, the choice of the scale comes in choosing the fabric.

We also have to take into consideration, the occasion as it is the occasion that decides the correct combination of the cut, the colour and the fabric.
THE STYLE

Before deciding on the cut, the colour or the fabric it's best to decide the style. The style can be something that you adapt to your personal style or could be dependent on the occasion. First of all you must decide to wear either a single or a double breasted suit.

The single breasted suit is the most popular style currently and has been for a number of years. It comes with a choice on the number of buttons, typically from one to three buttons. A two button single breasted suit is the most popular followed by the single button suit. This style is accepted at most occasions from business to weddings.

The double breasted suit is a style that was popular many years ago but has recently seen a popular resurgence. The double breasted suit helps to slim the waist significantly. This style of suit is much more suited to a man with a slimmer frame where as the man with a more rotund frame should stick to a single breasted suit for the best effect.
THE CUT

First and foremost the cut is the most critical factor for a well fitted suit, above the colour and the fabric which we’ll talk about later. The best cut for you depends entirely on your body shape. Different body shapes require a different cut in order to adhere to the 3 golden rules of a suit.

A man with a small, slim build is best suited to a slim fitting single or double breasted jacket, with a very close fitting waist, chest and slim leg trousers. The jacket would require very little shoulder padding as too much padding would throw his proportion and balance miles off, the lapels of the suit should also be slim cut.

A man with a more rotund figure would suit a completely different cut of suit to a slim man. A single breasted suit with broader lapels would maintain the scale of the wearer. The shoulder padding should also be kept to a minimum, if even none at all. Heavy shoulder padding would make his large frame appear boxed and incredibly wide at the shoulders, which ultimately makes the wearer look larger.

THE DROP

A quick and simple way to decide on the best fit of suit for you is to work out ‘the drop’. The ‘drop’ refers to the drop in size between the chest measurement and the waist measurement. For example the chest measurement could be 38 inches and the waist measurement could be 30 inches. This would be a ‘drop 8’. If you have measurements like this then you would suit an incredibly slim fitting suit.

The lower the drop the more relaxed the fit of the suit becomes.

To help decide what cut is best for you then you need some accurate measurements of your body. From there you can match your ‘drop’ figure to the table on the following page.
KNOWING YOUR SIZE

To get your perfect suit you’ll need 3 crucial measurements. Off the peg suits are labelled 38R for example ‘38’ refers to the chest measurement and the ‘R’ refers to the suit length. Off the peg suits have three different fits which are typically, 1. Regular/relaxed, 2. Slim/tailored, and 3. Skinny. Use the following method and measure your body as follows to learn how to get the best cut;

CHEST – measure across the widest part of your chest and allow space to get two full finger widths between the tape measure and your body. Remember to breathe in when the measurement is taken.

WAIST – Measure your natural waistline – this is the point where you would normally wear your trousers, a good indication is around halfway down your pelvis (hip bone).

INSIDE LEG – measure from your crotch to your ankle bone.

To work out what cut you should be wearing:

Chest Measurement – Waist measurement = Drop

To work out what length of suit you should be wearing:

Use the chart below, right.

FOR YOUR BEST FIT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drop</th>
<th>Your best fit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>= 6 inches or less</td>
<td>Regular/ Relaxed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>= over 6 inches, below 7 inches</td>
<td>Slim or Tailored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>= over 7 inches</td>
<td>Skinny</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Height - inches</th>
<th>Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5'5 - 5'7</td>
<td>(S) Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5'8 - 5'11</td>
<td>(R) Regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6' - 6'2</td>
<td>(L) Long</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If your ‘drop’ figure is positive, where the waist is wider than the chest then a relaxed fitting suit is the best fit for you.

For example, let’s say you have a 38 inch chest & a 31.5 inch waist meaning that your drop is 6.5 inches, and you’re 5 foot 11 inches tall. To achieve your best fit you’d be looking for a slim fitting 38R suit.
THE FABRIC

The fabric is a very crucial factor when you’re choosing your suit. Think for a moment where you’ll be wearing your suit, will you be travelling to the office from your warm house or apartment, in a heated car to a heated office? Or will you be going outside waiting for a bus or waiting on a station platform? Or will you be wearing a suit on holiday? The fabric you choose should suit the climate that you’ll be wearing it in.

KEEP WARM

The time tested best natural fabric for a suit is wool. Wool doesn’t crease very easily and even if it does, the creases fall out soon after. Modern suits tend to be made of a wool & polyester blend, or a polyester & viscose blend. Fabrics of this nature are best suited for a work environment and should be worn without a waistcoat (a vest in America). Modern business wear doesn’t require a waistcoat because offices and cars are heated, although consider wearing a waistcoat if you’re going to be stood waiting for public transport.

BE COOL

In the summer, wool is still a good option but in a much higher gauge, making the fabric finer and lightweight. Wool is not the only option you have though; there are some good alternatives to wool.

Seersucker is a cotton based fabric that gives a slightly ‘wrinkled’ appearance due to the way the fabric is woven. The wrinkled effect comes from the slight ‘bunching’ of fibres, a seersucker suit or shirt is ideal for summer because this ‘bunched up’ fabric allows for air circulation, keeping the wearer cooler.

Mohair is a cloth made from goat hair and produces a sheen effect. This is why it’s a popular material for tuxedo’s although a mohair suit works great in bars, nightclubs & for informal occasions. The sheen of the fabric catches the light which adds a more interesting and expensive element to the wearer’s look.
THE PATTERN & COLOUR

The pattern on the fabric is a subtle yet important factor when you’re choosing your suit. A large check generally suits a larger man where as a fine, detailed pattern on a larger man would make him look even larger. The opposite is true for a slim or short man. That is as hard as the rules have to be, a regular sized guy should wear patterns that aren’t too fine or too bold, a large guy should wear regular to large patterns & not small detailed patterns.

The traditional rules that govern the choice of a suit pattern aren’t adhered to as strictly these days, rules such as ‘check jackets should only be worn at the weekend or for sporting occasions’ or ‘only black for dinner jackets’. However there are still a few simple rules to follow.

BUSINESS

A plain patterned fabric is acceptable for an office or meeting situation in the colours below, however some patterns may help people take you more seriously for business. White pinstripe on a dark blue cloth is the staple for city workers who want to be taken seriously, the high contrast between the stripe & the cloth make the wearer appear serious and ‘ready to do business’, a more discreet pattern is a dark grey pinstripe where the stripes are much narrower.
SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Weddings, funerals & christenings all fall under the category of special occasions & special occasions require the correct garment.

1. **Wedding** – Most weddings aren’t as formal as they used to be but that’s no excuse for not looking your sharpest. Stick to a block colour, a plain pattern. The idea is not to out dress the groom who will most likely have a morning coat and striped trousers. Dark grey is always a winner with a peak lapel.

2. **Funerals.** This is simple. Wear a black or very dark grey/ navy suit with a white shirt & a very dark tie to match the suit. Black is the best.

3. **Christenings** – There’s no hard and fast rule, go for a light grey suit & a light tie to match, after all the nature of the occasion isn’t a serious one.
ON THE TILES

A suit isn’t always the garment of choice for a night out but more so just the jacket of the suit. The low lighting in bars and night clubs can result in the wearer blending into the background or to the rest of the crowd. However, by choosing ‘shorn’ wool or any other blend of wool with a ‘sheen’ effect such as mohair, or a wool, polyester & viscose blend the wearer will become instantly more noticeable.

A suit with a sheen effect will catch the light in bars and nightclubs which will draw positive attention to the wearer that would otherwise go elsewhere.

This type of suit jacket is made to look much more expensive when worn with a contrasting colour of jean rather than a matching pair of trousers.

This type of suit wouldn’t be suitable to any other type of occasion as it would be considered too ‘showy’, especially at a funeral but more so at a wedding and especially in a business situation.

Due to the informal nature of a bar and night club environment the wearer can afford to wear extra details on the suit jacket that would otherwise be too showy for other formal occasions. Here are a few simple things that will help to enhance the wearers look;

1. **Piping** – Piping is the small lengths of material sewn to the edge of lapels or pockets that are there specifically to add extra detail.
2. **Colour** – Loud, more vibrant colours are acceptable in a nightclub/bar environment & if the wearer wants he can wear colour acceptably.
3. **Contrasting colours** – This refers to the contrast between the colours on lapels and pockets with the jacket colour. Details such as this would be unacceptable for more formal occasions.
ATTENTION TO DETAIL

When compared to the range of choices that women have in their clothing, men never seem to have as much choice. Therefore to make the most of your suit it’s imperative to pay attention to detail.

Any dry cleaner, alterations shop or tailor can alter your suit at a relatively inexpensive rate. Consider having your suit altered if the garment isn’t an absolutely perfect fit, here are a few simple tips to ensure a perfect fit;

1. The length of your trousers should allow the hem of the trouser leg to sit half way down the rear of your shoe & to cover the laces at the front of your shoe. There should also be a small gather at the front of the trouser as this prevents the trouser leg from riding up the front of your shins when you’re seated or walking.

   - Trouser Length - Cost of an alteration - between £5 & £10

2. The length of the sleeves of the suit jacket is a crucial point to consider. The sleeves should end around the wrist bone and shouldn’t cover the hand. This allows the wearer to show the cuff of the shirt sleeve underneath the suit.

   - Arm length - Cost of an alteration - between £5 & £10

3. The taper of the trouser leg is also very important. A trouser leg that’s too wide will make the wearer appear shorter & a trouser leg that’s too slim will make the wearer appear constrained, which can produce an unnatural body shape. The general rule is this: slim, thin boned men suit tapered trousers, larger men suit wider leg trousers.

Bear in mind that if you purchase a suit that’s too slim fitting that it can’t be made wider; therefore it’s always best to buy something larger and have it taken in.

   - Taper on Leg - Cost of an alteration – between £10 & £20
SUMMARY

The aim of this guide was to help you understand & to give you an informed choice when purchasing an off the peg suit. A perfect fitting suit can really benefit your wardrobe and help you to appear much more naturally attractive, using your own personal attributes.

From this guide you should understand;

1. What a suit does for your image
2. Your best fitting suit
3. The best colours
4. The best fabrics & patterns
5. What suit to wear for different occasions.

If you’d like further information or one-on-one consultancy with a style consultant perhaps for a suit fitting, a style consultation or personal shopping then get in touch;

Contact info@kezia-noble.com

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